

December 17, 2023



"Comfort,

COMFORT

MY ♥

PEOPLE,"

says your God.



Isaiah 40:1

MT. ZION

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Madison Heights, MI

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3rd Sunday in Advent

Pre-Service Personal Prayer: *Lord God, heavenly Father, send Your Son into our hearts by the power of Your Holy Spirit, that we, being strengthened by the Sun of Righteousness, may walk before You in fervent faith and all holy obedience. Watch over our little flock, and by Your Word strengthen our faith and renew in us a rejoicing spirit in our Advent and Christmas worship. Amen.*

Today's Worship!

Greeting and Prayer

Opening Hymn 344 *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

1 *On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings Glad tidings of the King of kings!*

2 *Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare For Christ to come and enter there.*

3 *We hail Thee as our Savior, Lord, Our refuge and our great reward;
Without Thy grace we waste away Like flow'rs that wither and decay.*

4 *Lay on the sick Thy healing hand And make the fallen strong to stand;
Show us the glory of Thy face Till beauty springs in ev'ry place.*

5 *All praise, eternal Son, to Thee Whose advent sets Thy people free.
Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Spirit evermore.*

The Invocation

We invoke ("call upon") the name of the one true God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

P In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen!

The Confession and Absolution of Sins

We come before our Holy God admitting that we are sinful and need His forgiveness.

P We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve Him as His dear children. But we have disobeyed Him and deserve only His wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to Him and plead for His mercy.

C Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against You and do not deserve to be called Your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray:

Have mercy on me according to Your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

- P** God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has removed your guilt forever. You are His own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to His will!

C Amen!

Lord, Have Mercy

Kyrie – Latin for “O Lord.” We approach our Lord with a cry for help in all the needs of our earthly life.

Lord, have mer-cy on us. Christ, have mer-cy
on us. Lord, have mer-cy on us.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of text, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

The “O” Antiphons *(Hymn 357:5-6 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel)*

Advent means “coming.” During the Advent season, we pray for the Messiah Jesus to come and make His home with us.

These hymn verses are a part of the “O” Antiphons—ancient chants which formed the basis for “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.”

C  *O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*



The Prayer for the Day

The main thoughts for the day are collected together in this prayer.

- P** Let us pray. . . through Christ Jesus, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Old Testament Reading: *Isaiah 40:1-8*

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

The Responsive Reading: *Psalms 85 Selected Verses*

- P** LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- C** You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin.
- P** You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.
- C** Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.
- P** Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.
- C** Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.
- P** Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- C** Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.
- P** Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
- C** Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.



The Epistle Reading: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. ² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. ⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

P Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.

Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le-lu - ia! These words are
writ - ten that we may believe that Je-sus is the Christ, the
Son of God. Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le-lu - ia!

The Apostles' Creed

We boldly confess what we believe.

- C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven; And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.
- I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn 347 *Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

1 "Comfort, comfort ye My people, Speak ye peace," thus saith our God;
"Comfort those who sit in darkness, Mourning 'neath their sorrows' load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover And her warfare now is over."

2 Yea, her sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved His anger He no more will see or heed.
She hath suffered many a day, Now her griefs have passed away;
God will change her pining sadness Into ever-springing gladness.

3 Hark, the herald's voice is crying In the desert far and near,
Calling sinners to repentance, Since the Kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise to meet Him And the hills bow down to greet Him.

4 Make ye straight what long was crooked; Make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits His holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token That His Word is never broken.

The Sermon: Matthew 11:2-10

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" ⁴ And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me." ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, "'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'"

Theme: BLESSED ARE THE UNOFFENDED

- I. Unoffended by the humility and grace of Christ.
- II. Unoffended to be the least in the kingdom of heaven.

Hymn 857 *Lord, Help Us Walk Your Servant Way*

**1 Lord, help us walk Your servant way Wherever love may lead
And bending low, forgetting self, Each serve the other's need.**

**2 You came to earth, O Christ, as lord, But pow'r You laid aside.
You lived Your years in servanthood; In lowliness You died.**

**3 No golden scepter but a towel You place within the hands
Of those who seek to follow You And live by Your commands.**

**4 You bid us bend our human pride Nor count ourselves above
The lowest place, the meanest task That waits the gift of love.**

**5 Lord, help us walk Your servant way Wherever love may lead
And, bending low, forgetting self, Each serve the other's need.**

The Offering of Thankful Hearts

In tangible evidence of our gratitude, we offer the Lord the gift of our money, remembering that He has first given to us that we might have to give to Him. If you wish to give your church offering electronically, you can do so by using the CashApp on your mobile device. The church's Šashtag is "Šclcmztzion". While the usher brings the offering plate forward we sing the following hymn verse

(788:1): **Lord, You love the cheerful giver Who with open heart and hand
Blesses freely, as a river That refreshes all the land.
Grant us, then, the grace of giving With a spirit large and true
That our life and all our living We may consecrate to You.**

Prayer of the Church – The Lord's Prayer

☩ Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Benediction

The blessing given by God for His people (Numbers 6:24-26)

Closing Hymn 354:4 *Arise, O Christian People*

**4 Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive You This blessed Advent-tide.
From stall and manger low Come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing Your praises gladly And forth Your glory show.**

LIVESTREAM on  YouTube @MtZionLutheranChurch

SERMON PODCAST on  Spotify @TheWordFromMtZion

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Worship at Mt. Zion

We have a singular goal in our worship: “Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools.” (Ecc. 5:1 NKJV)

Our service follows the historic Biblical style of using a liturgy. The liturgy is meant to give order and structure to the worship service. We try to keep our worship respectful in order to foster an atmosphere which allows us to focus on the power of God’s Word. Our service is also meant to be reflective so that each individual can hear, understand, and meditate upon the wonderful works of God! (Acts 2:11)

The Bible teaches that God creates and sustains faith in a person’s heart through the power of His Word: Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.” In our fast-paced society, meditative and reflective worship is sometimes considered outdated, irrelevant, or boring. Yet, God Himself says, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of God” (Romans 10:17). God has not changed His method of reaching people with the hope of forgiveness simply because our society has changed. He remains the same and His Word remains powerful.

If the worship service seems strange to you, don’t give up right away! Stick with it, try to learn something new each week, and develop a habit of being present in God’s house. The ability to quietly listen and learn is an acquired skill that takes time and practice. Our prayer each week is that we grow in our ability to listen to God’s Word and thereby increase our faith in Jesus. We hope you will continue to join us!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

If the LORD wills, we will do this or that. James 4:15

WELCOME EVERYONE! We pray that God's Word and our worship today will help you grow in the grace and knowledge of our Savior Jesus. We ask our visitors to please sign our guest book. If you are looking for a church home, we hope you've found it with us. Ask Pastor about a free Bible study he offers to explain our beliefs and teachings. Where & when? Your convenience.

3rd MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE: As we "get into" Christmas this year, our theme "Advent Passwords," will help us unlock the true meaning of the season. Join us this Wednesday at 7pm for our third and final Midweek Advent Service!

Date	Preacher	Sermon Text & Theme
Dec. 20	Pastor Stefan Sonnenfeld	Matthew 1:18-24 <i>Password: Trust</i>

JACKIE MCGRUDER CHRISTMAS GIFT BASKET: LIFT is collecting donations for a Christmas gift basket for Jackie McGruder. Jackie is a homebound member who suffers from lupus, a debilitating auto-immune disease. If you would like to contribute, please bring your gifts to church by Wednesday, December 20. Here is a list of items which Jackie's daughter, Asia, suggested: candles, lotion. Jackie's favorite color is purple.

NICHOLAS JAKEL HELP FUND: The Church Council met Dec 12 and established a "Help Fund" for Nicholas Jakel. Being a self-employed landscaper, Nicholas is facing serious financial difficulty due to the car accident he was involved in Dec 8. The Church Council is asking the congregation to please consider donating to this fund in order to help Nicholas with his accident-related expenses. He is facing 1-2 weeks of lost wages, an Emergency Room fee, and the loss of his GMC Sierra Pickup (which also doubled as his work truck). If the Lord moves you to contribute to this fund, please make checks payable to "Mt. Zion Lutheran Church" with the memo "Nicholas Jakel Help Fund". CashApp donations can be sent to \$clmtzion with the subject line "Nicholas Jakel Help Fund." *Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

CHRISTMAS SERVICES SCHEDULE: Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, the voters have decided to forego the regular Sunday morning service. Which leaves us with just the two special Christmas services:

Christmas Eve Service, Sunday, December 24 at 4:00pm (See announcement below)

Christmas Day Service, Monday, December 25 at 10:00am

May the LORD bless our meditation throughout these days as we celebrate God's greatest gift—His Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. We hope you will join us!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Sunday, December 24 at 4pm, we will be holding our traditional Christmas Eve Service. All are invited to this special service where, with the help of the congregation's children, we will be reading through the Biblical Christmas account, singing favorite Christmas carols, and celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus!

AN AFTER-CHRISTMAS PARTY is being planned by the Outreach Committee for Friday, January 19. Food, games, and a white elephant gift exchange! Everyone is welcome, so please mark your calendar.

MT. ZION UPCOMING CALENDAR

Tue. 12/19	7pm	Board of Finance Meeting
Wed. 12/20	7pm	3 rd Midweek Advent Service
Sun. 12/24	9am	NO Bible Class/Sunday School
	10am	NO Morning Service
	4pm	Children's Christmas Eve Service
Mon. 12/25	10am	Christmas Day Service
Sun. 1/14	11am	Q1 Voters Meeting
Fri. 1/19	5:30pm	After-Christmas Church Party

SERVING US THIS MONTH:

Usher: Carl Ryan Church Cleaning: Troyans

OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL *Offering numbers are from 12/10/23

Last Sunday Service Attendance: 43 Bible Class/Sunday School: 26

Wednesday Advent Service Attendance: 24

General Fund Offerings Budgeted YTD:	\$100,826.92	Bi-Weekly General Fund Offerings Budgeted:	\$4115.38
General Fund Offerings Received YTD:	\$104,060.08	Bi-Weekly General Fund Offerings Received:	\$3563.00
Missions Offerings YTD (includes 10% of GB & individual offerings):			\$10406.08
Maisie Wittorp Christian Education Memorial Fund:			\$84,326.99

IN OUR PRAYERS <> ENCOURAGEMENT LIST

Be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. Ephesians 6:18

Jackie McGruder remains homebound as she continues to suffer from lupus. **Jay Sandeen** is deployed with his army unit in Kuwait. The **Naumanns** are expecting a baby in April. **CLC Pastor John Hein**, 56, Grace, Fridley MN, is being treated for thymic carcinoma cancer. **Kate Sauers**, wife of CLC pastor Rob Sauers, is being treated for lymphoma cancer.

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION SYNODWIDE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! Psalm 133:1

CLC CALL NEWS: Pastor Michael Wilke of Gethsemane, Saginaw, MI, **has returned** the calls from Calvary, Marquette, MI and St. Peter's, Iron River, MI. <> Pastor David Pfeiffer of Holy Trinity, West Columbia, SC **has returned** the call from Immanuel, Mankato, MN. <> Jennifer Wiese, teacher at Luther Memorial School in Fond du Lac, WI **is resigning** at the end of the 2023-2024 school year.

ILC CHRISTMAS CHORAL SERVICE REPLAY: A replay of the Immanuel Lutheran Christmas Choral Service *The King in the Cradle* from December 15, 2023 is online. The strings, flute choir, and band play the first portion. The choral service begins at the 47-minute mark. A copy of the program booklet is available. The video is located at: bit.ly/23ccs

NEW LINK FOR ILC MORNING CHAPEL: Immanuel Lutheran College morning chapel services provide daily edification for the ILC family. It has also served people across the CLC through an email subscription service. Unfortunately, the previous email delivery service is no longer viable. Another more reliable service has been set up, but previous users will need to re-subscribe. If you would like morning chapel sent to your email each day, simply go to <https://ilc.edu/faith-worship/chapel-list/>, scroll to the bottom, and sign up with your email address.