

# *Zion Lutheran Church*



**7 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Worship  
Christmas Eve  
December 24, 2025**

**As a people of God, we share Christ's love, grow in faith, and serve others.**

# **Welcome to Christmas Eve Worship!**

*We extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each of you as we gather on this sacred night to celebrate the miraculous birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Christmas Eve holds a special place in the hearts of believers, inviting us to pause, reflect, and rejoice in the wondrous gift of God's love made visible in the Christ Child. Whether you are a long-time member, a returning guest, or joining us for the first time, we are grateful for your presence.*

*For your convenience, **restrooms** are located by exiting at the rear of the Sanctuary and going down the stairs. There are also restrooms located near where you came in by the ramp. Just follow the signs on the wall and you will find them.*

*Families with young children are invited to make use of **Marc's Room, our nursery**, which is available for infants and toddlers. Marc's Room is located by exiting at the rear of the Sanctuary, going down the stairs, and then following the signs. You can watch the service by turning on the television. Relax though, please! God put the wiggle in children. Don't feel like you have to suppress it in God's house. Just know Marc's Room is there if you need it!*

*For communion this evening, we will have two stations. Communion will be distributed in the front of the sanctuary. We do have gluten free wafers and grape juice available if you need that. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive this night. If you would rather come forward and receive a blessing, just cross your arms over chest.*

***If you would like to learn more about our faith community, scan the QR code and leave us your contact information. We will be in touch with you after Christmas!***

*Should you need any help or have questions during your time with us, our ushers and greeters will be pleased to assist you. We encourage you to feel at ease and to participate fully in this evening's service as we celebrate the holy night when heaven touched earth. May the joy of Christ's birth dwell richly in your hearts tonight and throughout the coming year. **Blessings to you and your family on this Christmas Eve!***



To help everyone fully participate in our Christmas Eve service, an assistive listening system is available. It is located at the front of the church near where the ushers stand and near the baptismal front. We have both over the ear and loop systems available. Ushers are happy to assist you in finding a device to best meet your needs.

*\*Denotes Congregation is to stand, if able.*

<b>PRE-SERVICE SPECIAL MUSIC</b>	<i>Zion Hears the Watchmen Singing</i> - J.S. Bach	Kirk Denton, organ
		Katelyn McClinton, violin
	<i>Choral Prelude on "Unto Us a Boy is Born" and</i>	Kirk Denton, organ
	<i>Variations on "The Coventry Carol" – Robin Milford</i>	
	<i>How Great Our Joy! - Lloyd Larson</i>	Handbell Choir
		Kirk Denton, piano

**KALENDA** - The Proclamation of the Birth of Christ

*The Kalenda has been used by the Church as a way to place the birth event in the context of both secular and religious events.*

Ⓟ *The twenty-fifth day of December, when ages beyond number  
had run their course from the creation of the world,  
when God in the beginning created heaven and earth,  
and formed man in his own likeness;  
when century upon century had passed  
since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the Great Flood,  
as a sign of covenant and peace;  
in the twenty-first century since Abraham,  
our father in faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees;  
in the thirteenth century since the people of Israel  
were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt;  
around the thousandth year since David was anointed King;  
in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel;  
in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;  
in the year seven hundred and fifty-two since the foundation of the city of Rome;  
in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Octavian Augustus,  
the whole world being at peace, Jesus Christ,  
eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,  
desiring to consecrate the world by his most loving presence,  
was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
and when nine months had passed since his conception,  
was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judah,  
and was made man: The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.*

*Please stand and face the cross at the rear of the church.*

**\*OPENING HYMN**

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

ELW 283 (v. 1,3 & 4)

1 O come, all ye faithful,  
joyful and triumphant!  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;  
come and behold him,  
born the king of angels: *Refrain*

3 Sing, choirs of angels,  
sing in exultation,  
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!  
Glory to God  
in the highest: *Refrain*

*Refrain*

*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!*

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing: *Refrain*

**\*DIALOGUE AND GREETING**

**P** The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**C** **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

**P** Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, on them light has shined.

**C** **We have beheld Christ's glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.**

**P** To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**C** **In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people.**

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all.

**C** **And also with you.**

**\*CANTICLE OF PRAISE**

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

ELW 289 (v. 1)

**C** Angels we have heard on high,  
sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
and the mountains in reply,  
echoing their joyous strains.

Gloria in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria in excelsis Deo.

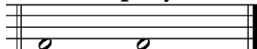
**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**



**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And al - so with you.

**P** Let us pray...



**C** A - men.

**FIRST READING**

Isaiah 9:2–7

**MUSICAL OFFERING**

*Susanni* - Ben Ludlow

Kirk Denton, organ  
Katelyn McClinton, violin

**SECOND READING**

Titus 2:11-14

**\*GRADUAL HYMN**

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

ELW 270 (v. 1 )

**☞ Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king;  
peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled."  
Joyful, all you nations, rise; join the triumph of the skies;  
with angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"  
Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**\*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**☞** The holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the second chapter.

**☞ Glory to you, O Lord.**

**\*GOSPEL READING**

Luke 2:1–20

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told

them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*After the reading of the gospel, the pastor and congregation will say:*

**P** The Gospel of our Lord.

**G** Praise to you, O Christ.

**\*GRADUAL HYMN**

*Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

ELW 270 (v. 2)

**G** Hail the heav'n-born Prince of peace! Hail the Sun of righteousness!

Light and life to all he brings, ris'n with healing in his wings.

Mild he lays his glory by, born that we no more may die,

Born to raise each child of earth, born to give us second birth.

Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"

**SERMON**

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY**

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

ELW 279 (v.1 & 4)

1 O little town of Bethlehem,  
how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
the silent stars go by;  
yet in thy dark streets shineth  
the everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
are met in thee tonight.

4 O holy child of Bethlehem,  
descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin, and enter in,  
be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
the great glad tidings tell;  
oh, come to us, abide with us,  
our Lord Immanuel!

## **\*NICENE CREED**

**☩ We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **\*PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*After each petition, the pastor and congregation will respond by saying:*

**☩ Lord in your mercy,  
☩ hear our prayer.**

## **\*PEACE**

**☩ The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
☩ And also with you.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **OFFERING**

*The work and mission at Zion can only happen through your gifts of time, talent and treasure. We cannot do our work without your support. To give financially, please give either online or drop your offering in the plate as it comes by you in the pew. You can also scan the QR code to be taken to our online giving portal.*

### **SPECIAL MUSIC**

*A Winter's Night So Deep - Brenda E. Austin*



Handbell Choir

**C** Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
 give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
 ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
 Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

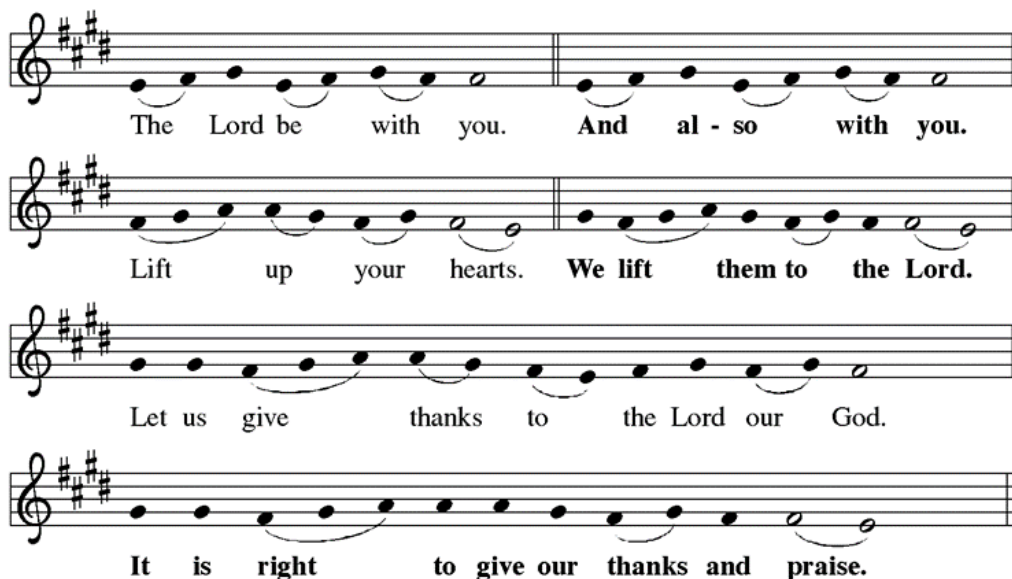
## \*OFFERTORY PRAYER

**A** Let us pray. Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be a blessing for others. With the trees of the field, with all earth and heaven, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C** Amen.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

## \*SURSUM CORDA



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

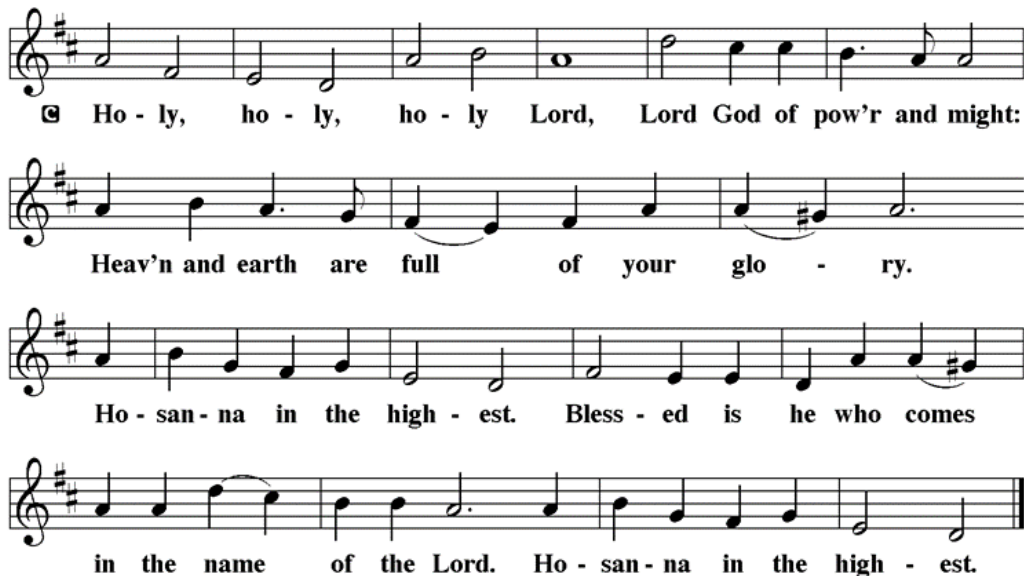
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

## \*PROPER PREFACE

**P** It is indeed right and salutary...join in the heavenly hymn:



**\*SANCTUS**



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:  
Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

**\*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

- P** Glory to you, Lord God...We join our voice with angels and all the heavenly choir:
- G** **Glory to God in the highest!**
- P** Glory to you, Lord God, heavenly King...all honor and glory is yours almighty Father, now and forever.
- G** **Amen.**

**\*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.**

## AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on

us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the

sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

## DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*All baptized Christians are welcome to receive communion this night. During communion distribution, an usher will invite your pew row to come forward. If you need the pastor to bring you communion, please let an usher know. When you come forward for communion, the pastor or assisting minister will say similar words: "The body of Christ, given for you," and "The blood of Christ, shed for you." Your response to each is "Amen." There are gluten free and grape juice options available if you need them. Know that Christ is fully present in the bread and the wine. If you are only able to receive one kind (such as only the host or only the wine), know that you will receive the same benefits as receiving both. Return your empty glass to baskets in the windows. Children and those not ready to receive communion this day may receive a blessing.*

## MUSICAL OFFERING

*Lullay, Dear Jesus*

Kirk Denton, organ

Katelyn McClinton, violin

*Weihnachten (Christmas) – Max Reger*

Kirk Denton, organ

## \*POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**A** Let us pray. Radiant God, with our eyes we have seen your salvation, and in this meal we have feasted on your grace. May your Word take flesh in us, that we may be your holy people, revealing your glory made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C** Amen.

**\*CANDLE LIGHTING**

*Tonight, we celebrate the light of God coming into the world by joining in a time of prayer and candle lighting. **\*It is very important that you do not tip your candle!\****

**P** The light shines in the darkness,

**C** and the darkness does not overcome it

**P** The word became flesh and lived among us,

**C** and we have beheld Christ's glory.

**P** To us a child is born, to us a Son is given.

**C** In the Word was life, and the life was the light to all people.

**P** Blessed are you, Son of God. You dwell among us as the Word made flesh.

**C** Through word and sacrament you continue to reveal yourself to us so that, we might bear your light to all the world.

**\*HYMN OF LIGHT**

*Silent Night*

ELW 281

Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.

Holy Infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;  
glories stream from heaven afar,  
heav'nly hosts sing, alleluia!  
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light  
radiant beams from your holy face,  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at your birth, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

**\*PRESENTATION OF THE CHRIST CHILD**

*During the singing of Silent Night, the Christ Child will be placed in the manger.*

**\*CONCLUDING PRAYER**

**P** Let us pray. O God, you have caused this holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light: Grant that we, who have known the mystery of that Light on earth, may also enjoy him perfectly in heaven; where with you and the Holy Spirit he lives and reigns, one God, in glory everlasting.

**C** Amen

**\*BENEDICTION**

**P** The Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life.

**G Amen.**

**P** The Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength.

**G Amen.**

**P** The Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world.

**G Amen.**

**P** And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**G Amen.**

*Please extinguish your candle and hold upright until the wax hardens.*

**\*HYMN**

*Joy to the World*

ELW 267

- 1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.
- 2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
- 3 No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.
- 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

**\*DISMISSAL**

**A** Go in peace. Christ is here!

**G Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE**

*Pastoral Dance on "On Christmas Night" – Robin Milford*

Kirk Denton, organ

## Our Mission

As a people of God,  
we share Christ's love,  
grow in faith, and  
serve others



## Our Vision

Zion aspires to be a  
church where all are  
welcomed and loved;  
God's purpose for each of  
us is found; and lives are  
transformed.

## 2025 Ministry Priorities

### Leadership

Called by the Spirit to be transformed as God's loving people, the Council will continue to discern where God is calling Zion in its defining of vision. We will be open to new ways and opportunities God is calling us to serve beyond our building in sharing Christ's love. We will support one another in our ministries as we share cherished traditions and try new things.

### Communication

Celebrating new tools we have learned to communicate information, we will hone and plan strategies to more effectively use them to share what God is doing at Zion. We will use these tools and new avenues to share how God's love is nurturing and changing us.

### Relationship Building

With Jesus as our example and guide, we will grow in building relationships with one another and those beyond our building through practicing welcome and invitation. We rejoice and celebrate our generational diversity. We will practice grace and understanding as we make mistakes. We will focus on serving one another in love, especially those in need and who are often forgotten.

☀️ **Curious about our faith community? We'd love to connect with you! Scan the QR code to share your contact information, and we'll keep you updated on our events and activities. Join us in exploring a journey of faith, fellowship, and friendship. We look forward to welcoming you with open arms! ✨**





The altar flowers are given to the glory of God and to wish everyone a  
“Merry Christmas” by Frank and Becky Ropp



### **Zion Prayer List 12-24-2025**

Requests remain on the prayer list for 30 days unless  
requested otherwise.

Alexander Turner, Roben Hansen, Jo Ahalt, Diana Fath, Pat McIntosh, Shirley Hyssong, Grace Blumenauer, Ronnie Kinna, Carrie Basler, John Hughes, Linda Kinna-Engel, Dave Gouker, Richard Brandenburg, Ruth Brant, Vicki Ringwelski, Elsie Warnock, David Shupe, Meredith Kinna, George Engel, Glenn Little, Sandy Bidle, Catherine Brown, Tristan Swiney, J. Richard Staples, Pastor Diane Day, Beverly Smith, The Gunsallus Family, Samn Huffer, Pat Hansen, Eric Kinna, Linda Stottlemeyer, Anita, Gary, Bruce Albright, Marty Appleby, Judith Smith, Jackie Bello, Trish Tollefson, Addison Hopson, Kevin Kinna, Deb Kahihikolo

*Please be sure the church is notified if you are hospitalized and if you wish to be placed on the prayer list or would like visitation.*

"Hello!"

Can you all whisper back to me?

Whispers are quiet, gentle, almost like a secret. You have to lean in close to hear them. And I wonder if

it's possible for the heavens to whisper at Christmas?

One silent night, far away, in a town called Bethlehem, the stars twinkled brighter than ever. And the

angels were there, too. It was as if the whole sky was whispering: "Something wonderful is happening ..."

Let's all look up at the ceiling like we're looking at the stars.

Can you twinkle your fingers like stars?

Now let's whisper together, "Something wonderful is happening ..."

The heavens weren't shouting. They weren't making a big noise. They were whispering, because whispers make us stop, listen and pay attention.

And what was the whispering about? A baby. A tiny baby lying in a manger.

His name was Jesus.

Can you pretend to rock a baby in your arms?

The night Jesus was born, the shepherds heard the whisper in the sky when the angels sang. The Wise

Men sensed the whisper in the star that guided them. And Mary and Joseph felt the whisper in their

hearts: "This child is special. This child is God's gift."

Sometimes we think God only speaks in loud voices or through big miracles. But Christmas reminds us

that God often whispers. God whispers love and kindness and peace.

Can you think of one kind thing you could whisper to someone this week?

So, this Christmas, listen closely. The heavens are still whispering: "Jesus is here. God loves you.

Share

that love with the world."

Let's all whisper together: "Jesus is here."

Now say "God loves us" in a joyful voice!

Amen.



The Rev. Yehiel Curry  
Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America





**Zion Lutheran Church**

**107 West Main Street**

**Middletown, MD 21769**

**301-371-6500**

**Website: [www.zionmiddletown.org](http://www.zionmiddletown.org)**

*For emergency pastoral care or to schedule  
an appointment, please call the church office  
for additional information.*

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**The Rev. Matt Day—Co-Pastor**

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**Emily Hopson – Children's Choir Director**

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