

**December 17, 2023, Third Sunday of Advent
Traditional Worship Service**



Zion
Evangelical
Lutheran
Church

*Zion matters to the
community by
showing the love of
Jesus Christ.*

**STAFFED CHILD
CARE**

Available during
worship service.
Infant thru
Kindergarten.

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The Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

Sundays and Seasons, Augsburg Fortress

Welcome from Presiding Minister (PM)

Please stand as you are able

Turn to follow the cross as it processes through the worship space

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.

Continued on next page



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950
Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen
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Congregation responses are in bold print

Three candles are lit as the following prayer is read

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

Amen

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism,
as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

Amen

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance.
Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection

Everlasting God,

you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

Amen

Let us pray,

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Please be seated

A reading from Isaiah:

(Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11, Pew Bible, New Testament, page 536)

The reading concludes with:

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God

Psalm Paraphrase
(Read responsively
the indented lines)

Psalm 126
Paraphrased by Pastor William

Photo by Nordseher at Pixabay.com

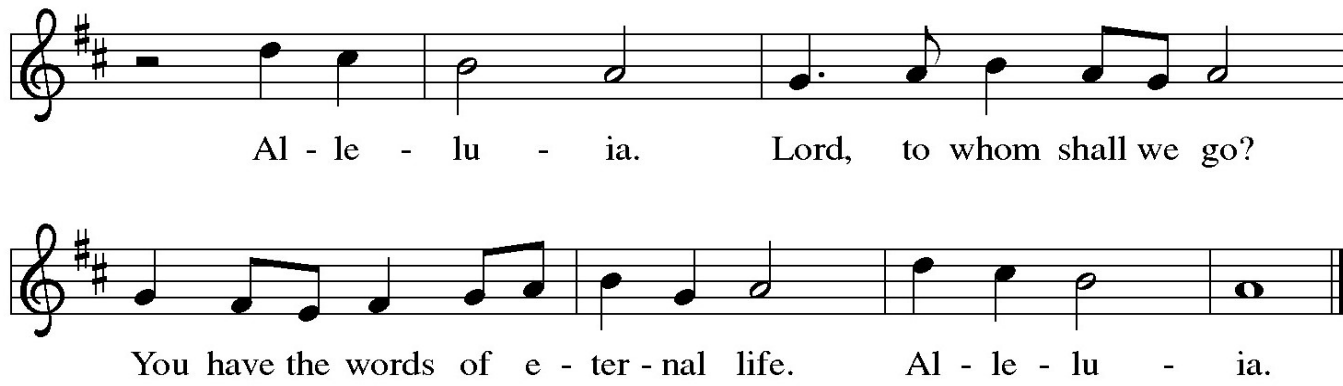
It was like a fantastic dream;
the LORD freed captive Zion.
We laughed from our bellies,
we sang loudly.
Even our enemies took notice;
they saw our LORD in action.
Keep it up LORD,
rebuild our challenging lives.
Give us meaning,
give us purpose.
Let our weeping, turn to joy;
as we turn our lives,
over to you.

A reading from 1 Thessalonians:

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 Pew Bible,
New Testament, page 159)

The reading concludes with:
Word of God, Word of Life
Thanks be to God

Please stand as you are able



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

The holy gospel according to St. John
Glory to you, O Lord

(St. John 1:6-8,19-28, Pew Bible
New Testament, page 70)

The reading concludes with:
The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

Please be seated

Children's Time with Pastor

Sermon

Please stand as you are able

All Earth Is Hopeful
Toda la tierra



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor

1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



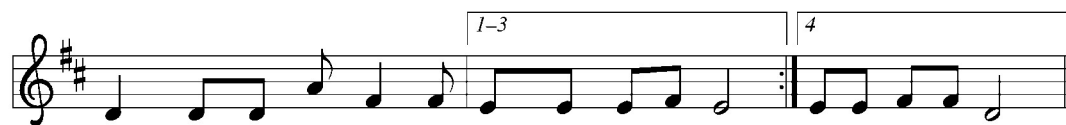
y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el

Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
"A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -

la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.

God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

AM: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence for personal prayer

Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Bless this week's marriages and help us support their life together.
Donna & Jerry Roan and Judy & Jeffery Arter

Thank you for the life of our birthday siblings,
Margaret Van Scoy, Mabel Kolarik, Carol McKimm and Drew Heller

With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.
Amen.

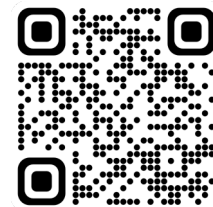
The Offering of our tithes, gifts and sacrifices is gathered for the mission of Christ's church, including the care of those in need.

ELECTRONIC GIVING

Scan QR code for mobile giving

PC = <https://onrealm.org/ZionLutheranChurchNC/give/now>

Smartphone = <https://abundant.com/ZionLutheranChurch/MobileGiving>



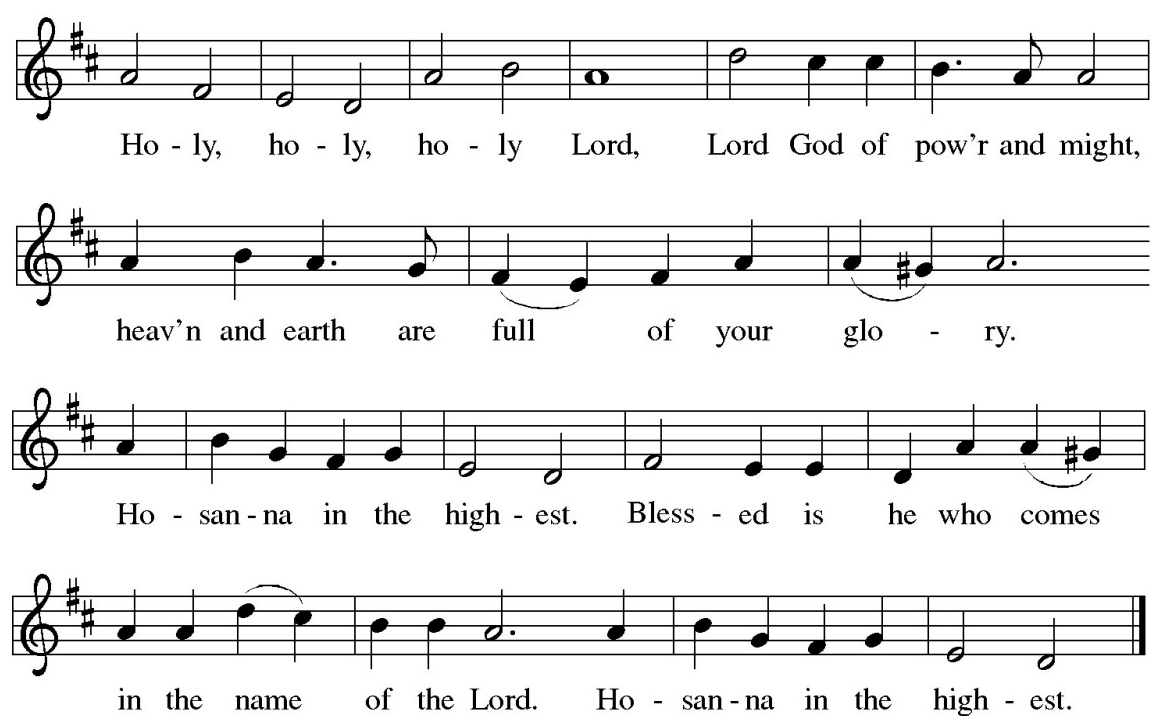
AM: Let us enthusiastically pray our prayer of stewardship, Holy Lord,
I gladly return, for your work, a portion of your abundant provision to me. All that I have is yours alone, entrusted Lord, to my care. Amen.

PM: The Lord be with you.
And also 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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



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.

Holy God, you alone are holy, you alone are God. The universe declares your praise: beyond the stars; beneath the sea; within each cell; with every breath.

We praise you, O God.

Generations bless your faithfulness: through the water; by night and day; across the wilderness; out of exile; into the future.

We bless you, O God.

We give you thanks for your dear Son: at the heart of human life; near to those who suffer; beside the sinner; among the poor; with us now.

We thank you, O God.

Words of Institution - Please look up, Pastor will be speaking these words

Remembering his love for us on the way, at the table, and to the end, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

We pray for the gift of your Spirit: in our gathering; within this meal; among your people; throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus, by your Spirit, in your church, without end.

Amen.

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.

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together, Come Take your place at the table.
Thanks be to God!

The Lord's Supper (Communion) at this congregation is practiced as an open table – all are welcome. Jesus said this is his body and blood given and shed for you; come receive the loving grace God provides for you.

Those who do not commune may come forward for a blessing, for all are loved by God. Children who commune at their home congregation are encouraged to commune here today too.

Gluten Free wafers available. Request at time of receiving communion.

Please be seated

Communion Music: *Bleak Midwinter*

by: Gustav Holst and Douglas E. Wagner

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen

AM: Let us pray,

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Announcements

Please stand as you are able.

PM: Let us enthusiastically commit to our mission as we pray,

Lord, my hope and strength come from you. Open my eyes and heart to become the person you want me to be; a person who cares for the widows and orphans, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, frees the oppressed, and visits the sick and imprisoned. Give me and this congregation a vision to make a difference in our community. Enliven me to spread the good news of your Son. I pray this all for Jesus's sake. Amen.

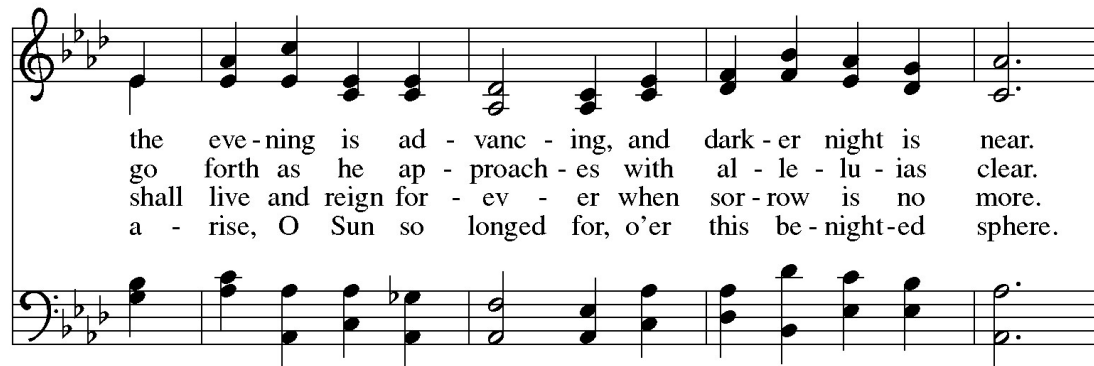
The God of peace bless you,
the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you, now and forever.
Amen.

Turn to follow the cross as it processes through the Worship Space.
Then follow it out to join in God's work.

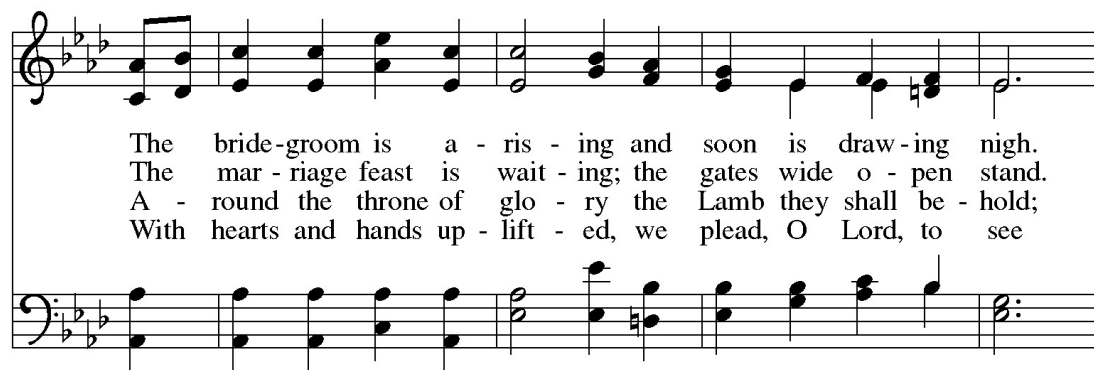
Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers



1 Re - joi - ce, re - joi - ce, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ring bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune


Go in Peace. Keep Awake.
We will with God's help.

Please join in fellowship with coffee and donuts immediately following!

Postlude: *Wake, Wake the Night is Flying*

by: Philipp Nicolai and Benton Price

John 1:6-8, 19-28
 Stewardship Moment from Pastor William



Stewardship in the Gospel
 John the Baptizer witnessed to Jesus being the true light of the world. John pointed to the love of God expressed in Jesus. John identified the light that filled the darkest corners of people's lives. John shared the abundant compassionate nature of God.

Stewardship in our Community
 Our community longs to see things clearly and to identify meaning and purpose. God's compassion for the world is for everyone in our community. It is for those who think there is no way they can be loved. It is for Jesus followers to shine into the darkness that tries to take over.

Stewardship in practice
 As followers of Jesus, it is our duty to shine the true light into the lives of all who feel overlooked, oppressed, uncared for, or dejected. This week, shine Christ's true light into the lives of people you encounter. Remember that Jesus loves them, and as a follower of Jesus, so do you. Radiate Jesus' love.



We pray this week for Kay and those affected by wars.
 Contact Jayne Schrader at prayer@zion-nc.com

John 1:6-8, 19-28
 Gospel Message from Pr. William




Photo by Miriams-Fotos at pixabay.com

John the Baptizer came to be a witness of Jesus to all people. And what was John's witness message? That everyone should believe Jesus came from God and was the true light of the world. A light that shines through the darkness of life. A light that warms the heart with compassion. A light that reveals that God loves the whole world. We too, are to be witnesses of Jesus to the whole world. Shine the true light into the darkest corners of your world.

Today's Worship Leaders

Assisting Minister: Cindy Bagocius
 Acolyte: Ben Keith
 Accompanist: Steve Moore
 Audio/Visual Technicians: Chris Thompson
 and Linda Weidenbach
 Chancel Guild: Jayne Schrader and Sally Bunyan
 Child Care Attendant: Amelia Milek
 Presiding Minister: Rev. William C. Weidenbach Jr.
 Reader: Renee Keith
 Trustees: John Long and Darlene Milavickas

*Flowers in honor of Judy & Jeffery Arter's
 46th Wedding Anniversary*

December 24, 2023 Worship Leaders

Assisting Minister: Linda Weidenbach
 Acolyte: Ava Medina
 Accompanist: Carol McKimm
 Audio/Visual Technicians: John Rhodes and
 Paul Bagocius
 Chancel Guild: Jayne Schrader and
 Sally Bunyan
 Child Care Attendant: Amelia Milek
 Presiding Minister: Rev. William C.
 Weidenbach Jr.
 Reader: Mark Denman
 Trustees: Randy Elsass and Darlene Milavickas

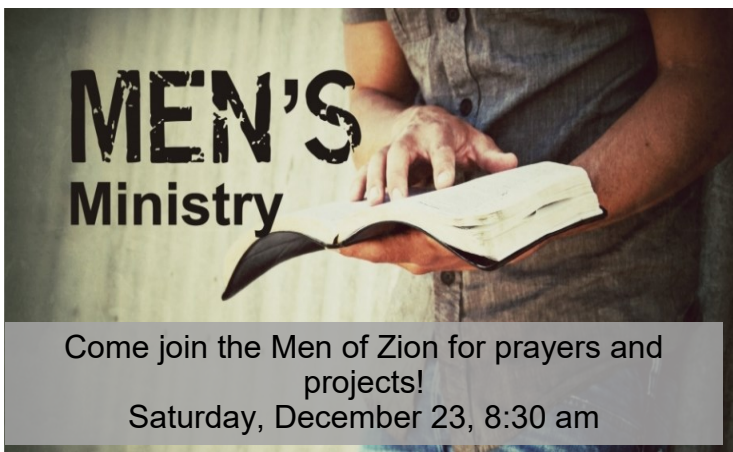
The Weekly News of Zion Lutheran Church



Courses for **lay people** who want to be more deeply rooted and grounded in love.

Intro to the Old Testament
Thursdays - 6:00-9:00pm / Dec. 14 - Jan. 25

The course runs for 5 weeks and the cost is **\$65/course**.
For more information visit:
<https://www.neos-elca.org/growing-in-faith.html>



Sunday, December 24
Forth Sunday of Advent
9am Worship Service

Christmas Eve—7pm Worship Service

Monday, December 25
A Service of Lessons and Carols
9am Worship Service

Volunteer Opportunities for Food Pantry & Shared Goods

Friday, December 29, 2023
9 - 11 am

Monday, January 15, 2024
9 - 11 am

Call the office for information or to sign up

