

Zion Lutheran Church

Fredericksburg, Texas

First Sunday of Christmas

January 1, 2023

P=Presider R=Responses

BELLS

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS *(Please register your attendance in the books at the end of the row where you are seated, and fill out a prayer request card and place it in the offering basket as you desire.)*

(Please prepare your heart and mind for worship)

PRE-WORSHIP MUSIC *“The Birthday of a King”* by William Harold Neidlinger

(Please stand, kneel or remain seated)

GATHERING

GATHERING HYMN *“Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty”* **HYMN NO. 533**

**Open now thy gates of beauty, Zion, let me enter there,
where my soul in joyful duty waits for God who answers prayer.
Oh, how blessed is this place, filled with solace, light, and grace!**

**Gracious God, I come before thee; come thou also unto me;
where we find thee and adore thee,
there a heav'n on earth must be.**

To my heart, oh, enter thou, let it be thy temple now!

**Here thy praise is gladly chanted, here thy seed is duly sown;
let my soul, where it is planted, bring forth precious sheaves alone,
so that all I hear may be fruitful unto life in me.**

**Thou my faith increase and quicken, let me keep thy gift divine;
howsoe'er temptations thicken, may thy word still o'er me shine
as my guiding star through life, as my comfort in all strife.**

**Speak, O God, and I will hear thee, let thy will be done indeed;
may I undisturbed draw near thee while thou dost thy people feed.
Here of life the fountain flows; here is balm for all our woes.**

Text: Benjamin Schmolck, 1672-1737; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt.

(Please be seated)

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

All are welcome to share the body and blood of Jesus that are present in the bread and wine of communion. If you do not wish to participate, you may still come forward for a blessing. As you come forward, please have your hands open to receive a wafer (the body of Christ). If you desire a gluten free wafer and/or white grape juice, please hold up two fingers to the server.

SOLO

“Ring the Bells” by Harry Bollback

Rhonda Behrends

“O Sanctissima” ~Traditional Italian Carol

“Once in Royal David's City” by Henry J. Gauntlett & Cecil Frances Alexander

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

R Amen

READING

Philippians 4:1, 4-9, 23

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me – put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

P Let us pray. The day of joy returns, Father in heaven, and crowns another year with peace and good will...forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

R Amen

(Please stand as you are able)

HOLY COMMUNION

P Let us confess our sins together:

R We confess those things in our life that remain dark, detached, and distant. We confess those things which keep us from doing the good that we know we should do, that you want us to do. We confess those things that we do that contribute to the chaos and corruption in the world. We confess those things which contribute to the violence in the world.

P We are eternally grateful that during this holy season, the Light of Christ has come into our midst. We are eternally grateful that the Light of Christ not only enlightens our own darkness, but God chooses to work through vulnerable, ordinary people like ourselves in proclaiming God's gift of grace, acceptance, forgiveness, and peace. We are eternally grateful that we can know the peace of God that passes all understanding.

R Amen

P In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

R 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

OPENING PRAYER

P Let us pray. At the start of this new year, help us to recognize you above all else. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts that we might see you, and notice how you are at work through our lives. Give us wisdom to make the best choices this year. Fill us with a desire to seek after you more and more each day. Let your Spirit and power breathe in us, through us, again, fresh and new. Thank you that you are greater than anything we may face. Thank you that your presence goes with us and that your joy is never dependent on our circumstances. Remind us that you are our true and lasting strength, no matter what comes our way. We ask that your peace lead us, that it would guard our hearts and minds in you. We ask for your grace to cover our lives this year. We pray in the name of Jesus.

R Amen

(Please be seated)

READING

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace. What do workers gain from their toil? I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil – this is the gift of God. I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

HYMN

“How Small Our Span of Life”

HYMN NO. 636

**How small our span of life, O God, our years from birth till death:
A single beat within the heart, the catching of a breath,
A drop within the ocean's deep, a grain upon the shore,
A flash of light before we sleep to see the sun no more.**

**And yet our speck of life is spanned by your infinity;
Our tick of time on earth is caught in your eternity.
While suns and stars spin endlessly through depths of cosmic
space,
While aeons roll and ages pass, you hold us in your grace.**

**O Christ, you left eternity to plunge in time's swift stream,
To share the shortness of our span, our mortal lives redeem.
You filled your cross-closed years with love; you loved us to the end
And touch us with your risen life that ours may time transcend.**

**We thank you, God, for kindling faith that lights our transient years,
Illumining our pilgrimage through mists of doubt and fears;
For hope that sees a life beyond the swiftly passing days;
For love, both human and divine, that lifts our hearts to praise.**

Text: Herman G. Stuempfle Jr., b. 1923' Text © 1993 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638

READING (*Read responsively*) **Psalm 8**

P O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

R Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

P When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;

R what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

P Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor.

R You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet,

P all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

R the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

P O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

P Loving Jesus, you were born in a stable but worshiped by the angels. Be with all who are lonely, and with all who feel distant from celebrations. Be for us a living hope that lightens their hearts. Lord, in your mercy,

R Hear our prayer.

P Jesus, as you healed the sick, bring healing to those in our families who are ill today. Lord, in your mercy.

R Hear our prayer.

P Christ born for us, Son of God given for us, help us to know you, to worship you, and to serve you. Lord, in your mercy,

R Hear our prayer.

P The kings, Lord, brought myrrh, frankincense, and gold. Lord, we have nothing of our own to bring; we bring you what you have given: our lives for your life. Lord, in your mercy,

R Hear our prayer.

P May God, who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light, bless us and fill us with peace.

R Amen

PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

R And also with you.

(Please be seated)

OFFERING

"We Three Kings" by John Henry Hopkins; arr. Melody Bober/S. Robinson

OFFERING PRAYER

P Let us pray. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of your love. May we be shining examples of that love to others.

R Amen

(Please stand as you are able)

CHRISTMAS CREED

P We confess our faith together:

R **I believe in God, the Father almighty, who flung the stars in their courses and set the world spinning.**

I believe in Jesus Christ and the beauty of the gospel that began in Bethlehem. I believe in Him whom the kings of the earth ignored and the proud can never understand ... whose path was among the common people whose welcome came from a hungry heart. I believe in Him who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible, whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who by his love and sacrifice on the cross brought sinners back and lifted human weakness to meet the strength of God.

I confess my everlasting need of God ... the need for forgiveness for my greed and selfishness, the need of life for an empty soul, the need of warmth for a heart grown cold.

I acknowledge the glory of all that is like Christ ... the steadfastness of friends, the blessedness of home, the beauty of compassion, the courage of those who dare to resist all bitterness and hatred.

I believe in the power of the Holy Spirit within us. Amen

CHRISTMAS PRAYERS

P Let us pray. Holy Jesus, by being born one of us you show how much God loves the world. Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts, until we reach our home in heaven. Lord, in your mercy,

R **Hear our prayer.**

P Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth. Accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Savior and our eternal God. Lord, in your mercy,

R **Hear our prayer.**

HYMN

"Jesus Shall Reign"

HYMN NO. 434

**Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.**

**To him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.**

**People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on his love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name.**

**Blessings abound where'er he reigns:
The pris'ners leap to lose their chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all who suffer want are blest.**

**Let ev'ry creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our king;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen.**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.

READING

Galatians 4:4-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

HYMN*“O Savior, Precious Savior”***HYMN NO. 820**

**O Savior, precious Savior, whom yet unseen we love;
 O name of might and favor, all other names above;
 We worship thee; we bless thee; to thee alone we sing;
 We praise thee and confess thee, our holy Lord and King.**

**O bringer of salvation, who wondrously hast wrought,
 Thyself the revelation of love beyond our thought;
 We worship thee; we bless thee; to thee alone we sing;
 We praise thee and confess thee, our gracious Lord and King.**

**In thee all fullness dwelleth, all grace and pow’r divine;
 The glory that excelleth, O Son of God, is thine.
 We worship thee; we bless thee; to thee alone we sing;
 We praise thee and confess thee, our glorious Lord and King.**

**Oh, grant the consummation of this our song above,
 In endless adoration and everlasting love;
 Then shall we praise and bless thee where perfect praises ring,
 And evermore confess thee, our Savior and our King!**

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879

READING**Philippians 2:5-11**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

MESSAGE*Pastor Kay Johnson***READING Revelation 21:1-6a**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

HYMN*“My Faith Looks Up to Thee”***HYMN NO. 820**

**My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
 Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,
 Oh, let me from this day be wholly thine!**

**May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart,
 my zeal inspire;
 As thou hast died for me, oh, may my love to thee
 Pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!**

**While life’s dark maze I tread and griefs around me spread,
 be thou my guide;
 Bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow’s tears away,
 Nor let me ever stray from thee aside.**

**When ends life’s transient dream, when death’s cold, sullen
 stream shall o’er me roll;
 Blest Savior, then, in love fear and distrust remove;
 Oh, bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!**

(Please stand as you are able)

HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

HYMN NO. 283

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

**The highest, most holy, light of light eternal,
Born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God in the highest:
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

**Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, O come let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!**

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

BENEDICTION

P Wherever you go, may God go with you: may he go before you to show you the way ... behind you to encourage you ... beside you to befriend you ... above you to watch over ... and within you to give you peace. In the name of our Creator, Redeemer, and Friend.

R Amen

POSTLUDE

“Cold December Flies Away” ~Catalonian Carol
Page 11



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

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First Sunday of Christmas – January 1, 2023

Broadcast on KNAF (910AM) at 9:00AM

Video on Zion's YouTube Channel at 9:00AM

(go to www.zion-lutheran.com/youtube)

Broadcast on KNAF (910AM) at 10:30AM

Podcast available www.zion-lutheran.com under sermons tab

Transitional Pastor – Rev. Kay Johnson

Pianist – Sheri Robinson; Choir Director – Rhonda Behrends

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