**advent 4- reflective servcie and carol sing- dec. 18, 2022**

**zion, philipsburg**

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that we gather on the traditional territory of the Anishinabewaki, Mississauga’s, and Neutral peoples. We give thanks and honour to all the generations of Indigenous people who have taken care of this land. We recognize our need for stewardship and partnerships in renewing this great resource for generations to come.

**CALL TO WORSHIP- [[1]](#footnote-1)Father Henri JM Nouwen**

 Lord Jesus, Master of both the light and the darkness,

**send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.**

We who have so much to do

**Help us seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.**

We who are anxious over many things

**look forward to your coming among us.**

We who are blessed in so many ways

**long for the complete joy of your kingdom.**

We whose hearts are heavy

**seek the joy of your presence.**

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

**To you we say, “Come Lord Jesus!”**

**ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones.

As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you.

Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles,

and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257) (verses 1,2,6-8)**

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Refrain
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. Refrain

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. Refrain

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. Refrain

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. Refrain

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Welcome to worship on this 4th Sunday of Advent, December 11, 2022. Our service today is a little different, we are not following any sort of liturgy or format. It is a service of poems and carols during these last busy days of Advent. The poems have been chosen by the worship committee, and they will participate in the service today. We will remain seated for our hymns except for the sending hymn.

Christmas Eve service at 7:00- service of communion, carols, and candlelight. Please invite your family and friends to join us. All loose offering will be donated to WFRC. If you wish to make a donation through your envelopes please write WFRC in the special line.

Wendy Wagler will be joining Trevor to play for us on Christmas Eve. We give thanks for their gift of music on this wondrous night.

**GREETING**

The light of our Lord Jesus Christ, the warmth of God, and the hope of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O God, to prepare a pathway for your Christ. By his coming speak peace to your people and turn our hearts toward you, that your saving grace and splendid glory may dwell in all the earth; through Jesus Christ, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**Reading 1- Susan Mills- Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening- Robert Frost[[2]](#footnote-2)**

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here, to watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer, to stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake, the darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake, to ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound’s the sweep, of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep.

**Hymn-*****'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime* (ELW 284)**

1 'Twas in the moon of wintertime
when all the birds had fled,
that \*God the Lord of all the earth
sent angel choirs instead;
before their light the stars grew dim,
and wond'ring hunters heard the hymn:

Refrain
Jesus your king is born! Jesus is born,
in excelsis gloria!

2 Within a lodge of broken bark
the tender babe was found;
a ragged robe of rabbit skin
enwrapped his beauty round;
but as the hunter braves drew nigh,
the angel song rang loud and high: Refrain

3 The earliest moon of wintertime
is not so round and fair
as was the ring of glory on
the helpless infant there.
The chiefs from far before him knelt
with gifts of fox and beaver pelt. Refrain

4 O children of the forest free,
the angel-song is true;
the holy child of earth and heav'n
is born today for you.
Come, kneel before the radiant boy,
who brings you beauty, peace, and joy. Refrain

\*original: "mighty Gitchi Manitou"

**Reading 2- Chris Ehrat**- **CHRISTMAS STAR**

A diamond shines no brighter than that lovely Christmas star.

It shines in all its brilliance; it’s seen from near or far.

A symbol of the Christ child as He lay upon the hay.

It tells all the waiting world a King was born that day.

O Bethlehem Star, keep shining – give us faith and hope and love.

Keep our thoughts forever turning to the Savior up above.

Give us strength and hope, and courage to do our best by far.

And never falter in our faith as we watch that Christmas star...

**HYMN Once in Royal David's City (ELW 269)**

1 Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on
to the place where he is gone.

4 Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round,
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

**Reading 3- Brenda- AMAZING PEACE:  A Christmas Poem by Maya Angelou[[3]](#footnote-3)**

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes, and lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche, over unprotected villages.
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves. What have we done to so affront nature?
We worry God. Are you there? Are you there really?
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters, streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope, and singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air. The world is encouraged to come away from rancor, come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season. Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the corner. Flood waters recede into memory. Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us, as we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children, it rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets. Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things, even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper. At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.
We listen carefully as it gathers strength. We hear a sweetness.
The word is Peace. It is loud now. It is louder. Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence. It is what we have hungered for. Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace. A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies. Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas. We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.

We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come. Peace.
Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.

We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian, Implore you, to stay a while with us. So we may learn by your shimmering light
How to look beyond complexion and see community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.

On this platform of peace, we can create a language To translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.

At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ Into the great religions of the world. We jubilate the precious advent of trust. We shout with glorious tongues at the coming of hope. All the earth’s tribes loosen their voices, to celebrate the promise of Peace.

We, Angels and Mortals, Believers and Non-Believers, look heavenward and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud.
Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves, and we say without shyness or apology or hesitation.

Peace, My Brother. Peace, My Sister. Peace, My Soul.

**hymn*Of the Father's Love Begotten* (ELW 295)**

1 Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

2 Oh, that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.

3 This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord
evermore and evermore.

4 Let the heights of heav'n adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
pow'rs, dominions, bow before him
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
ev'ry voice in concert ring
evermore and evermore.

**Reading 4-Jane Thomas - The Christmas Light – John C. Bonser[[4]](#footnote-4)**

I love the sight of Christmas lights this season of the year,

the merry sounds that now abound in the melodies of cheer.

I love the words that can be heard in carols that are sung,

the happy cries and sparkling eyes among the very young.

I love the scenes of evergreens and wreaths hung everywhere,

soft-falling snow and candle glow and people bowed in prayer.

I love the bells whose glad notes swell in tones of purest gold,

how goodness still our lives will fill as God’s great plan unfolds.

I love the light, that special night, the shepherds saw afar,

and ran to find, for humankind, His bright and morning star!

**HYMN- *O Come, All Ye Faithful* (ELW 283)**

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

2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! Refrain

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

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

**Reading 5-** **DIVINE LOVE INCARNATE IN US- JOYCE RUPP[[5]](#footnote-5)**

*When divine love becomes incarnate in us, Christ is born anew*

* Ilia Delio

for several weeks I meditated on the photos in Margaret Woodson Nea’s precious book, *Children, Eyes of the Soul*. Each page contains a photo of a child from a distant country. Their fresh eyes hold calm expectation and profound trust. These young ones are the epitome of soul seeing. Each child’s photo expresses inner clarity, reminding me to shake loose the clutter from my heart, from my life, so love can reign supreme. They speak to me of Jesus who also came as a young one, who brought and kept his fresh soul’s vision of how to create a world of loving kindness.

In these final days of Advent can we make a personal commitment to look more intentionally and clearly, to engage in “soul seeing:. Welcome the great one more full into your life and extend that Love to others. Here are some ways that we can do this.

Look into the eyes of children. See the reflection of the hidden possibilities in your own being for uncluttered joy, clarity of outlook and unconditional love.

Look beneath the difference and disagreements separating you from others. See the One Great Love dwelling inside those you prefer to ignore or rebuff.

Look beyond impatience and discouragement when tasks remain undone. See loving presence as more vital than achievement or the completing of goals.

Look closely at those who gather for church and social events. See how each person carries burdens that can be erased by gesture of welcome ad a word of kindness.

Look at the Christmas cards and variety of gifts received. See the attention and care that accompanied the sending and giving.

Look with eyes of wonder at the daily turning of nights darkness into daylight. See a similar pattern within yourself- the Christ- light turning the darkness of your unliving into expressions of light-filled care and kind heartedness.

Look at nativity scenes. See the story of love, the birth of Jesus whose gift of presence and teaching continue to offer inspiration and hope.

Let us pray, Child of Bethlehem, open the eyes of our hearts. Reveal your love in these advent days as we prepare to celebrate your birth into the world. Child of peace, open the tightly closed shades of our minds. Dispel our skepticism and doubt regarding the possibility of world peace. Child of Wonder, uncover us from the blankets of busyness that lay heavily upon our days. Lift our gaze to rest upon the beauty that is ready for us to behold in the most simple and the elegant of faces and places. May we look we the free gaze of a child newly born. Let us see as you see. Amen.

**HYMN-*In the Bleak Midwinter* (ELW 294)**

1 In the bleak midwinter,

frosty wind made moan,

earth stood hard as iron,

water like a stone;

snow had fallen, snow on snow,

snow on snow,

in the bleak midwinter,

long ago.

2 Heaven cannot hold him,

nor earth sustain;

heav'n and earth shall flee away

when he comes to reign;

in the bleak midwinter

a stable place sufficed

the Lord God almighty,

Jesus Christ.

3 What can I give him,

poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd

I would bring a lamb;

if I were a wise man

I would do my part;

yet what I can give him--

give my heart.

**PEACE (ELW p. 217)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 221)**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**BLESSING-**

The peace of God, accompany your waiting, the light of ☩ Christ warm your hearts,

and the joy of the Spirit fill you with hope. **Amen.**

**SENDING SONG*****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**

Go in peace. Christ is near.

**Thanks be to God.**

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**O Come, O Come Emmanuel**, Text © 1997 Augsburg Fortress

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**Announce hymn**

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where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.

2 He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.

3 And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on
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4 Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round,
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

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he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

2 Oh, that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
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**Reading 5- Jane Thomas**

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(Source: ideals CHRISTMAS – 75TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

**Announce hymn 283- O Come, All Ye Faithful**

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joyful and triumphant!
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come and behold him,
born the king of angels:

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

2 The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! Refrain

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

4 Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
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Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
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1. written by Fr. Henri J. M. Nouwen.  Posted on **Patheos.**<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/yimcatholic/2012/12/an-advent-prayer.html>

 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Written by Robert Frost, “Stopping By the Woods on a Snowy Evening” in *poets.org, accessed Dec 14, 2022,* <https://poets.org/poem/stopping-woods-snowy-evening> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Maya Angelou, Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem, accessed Dec 14, 2022, <https://www.oprah.com/oprahshow/maya-angelous-amazing-peace> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. John C Bonser, The Christmas Light, ideals CHRISTMAS – 75TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Taken from *Prayer Seeds: A Gathering of Blessings, Reflections, and Poems for Spiritual Growth* copyright 2017 by Joyce Rupp. Used by permission of Ava Maria Press, Inc. All rights reserved. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)