**Worship Plan for Sunday, December 17, 2023** -Third Sunday of Advent

**REFLECTIVE SERVICE- ZION LUTHERAN, PHILIPSBURG**

**ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING AND LITANY**

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.

**Bring peace to our weary world. Amen.**

**announcements-**

Welcome to worship on this 3rd Sunday of Advent, December 17, 2023. We had some lovely weather this week….farmer’s are busy finishing their harvest.

Our worship service today is a little different, it is a reflective service of poems and carols. At this busy time of year it is good to sit and worship together in this space.

Thanks to the worship committee for their role in this service.

Tonight there is a Christmas service at St. John’s Hessen Strasse at 7:00. All are welcome to attend.

Our worship theme today is “Sharing Peace.” Our ornament and take home ornament is a dove and inside the bulletin you will find some ways to share peace.

No morning service next Sunday. Our Christmas Eve service will take place at 7:00, there will be candlelight, communion and carols.

**meditation- Susan Mills**

**Gathering Song*Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* (ELW 270)**

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!"  
  
Refrain  
Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn king!"  
  
2 Christ, by highest heav'n adored,  
Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!  
Hail, incarnate deity!  
Pleased as man with us to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel! Refrain  
  
3 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. Refrain

**Greeting (ELW p. 213)**

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

**Prayer of the Day (ELW p. 215)**

Let us pray. *A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

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.**

**POEM- In the Bleak Midwinter- By Christina Rossetti- Brenda**

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.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him, nor Earth sustain;

Heaven and Earth shall flee away when He comes to reign.

In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed

The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,

Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,

The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,

Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;

But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,

Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

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 I give Him: give my heart.

**Hymn- *Away In A Manger*- (elw 277)**

1 Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,

the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;

the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,

the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

2 The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,

but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.

I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky

and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

3 Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay

close by me forever and love me, I pray.

Bless all the dear children in your tender care

and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.

**POEM***-* **Christmas Bells***-*[Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](https://poets.org/poet/henry-wadsworth-longfellow) 1807 –1882

I heard the bells on Christmas Day, Their old, familiar carols play,  
    And wild and sweet, The words repeat, Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come, The belfries of all Christendom  
    Had rolled along, the unbroken song Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way, The world revolved from night to day,  
    A voice, a chime, A chant sublime, Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth, The cannon thundered in the South,  
    And with the sound, The carols drowned, Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent, The hearth-stones of a continent,  
    And made forlorn, The households born, Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head; "There is no peace on earth," I said;  
    "For hate is strong, And mocks the song, Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
    The Wrong shall fail, The Right prevail, With peace on earth, good-will to men."

**HOMILY-**

**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.  
  
5 Christ, to thee, with God the Father,  
and, O Holy Ghost, to thee,  
hymn and chant and high thanksgiving  
and unwearied praises be:  
honor, glory, and dominion,  
and eternal victory  
evermore and evermore! Amen.

**PRAYER-**

*Let us pray,* Holy God, We dream your dream, of a world at peace, where enemies are reconciled, and children play in safety and where the poor and powerless find justice. We remember your promise of a Ruler of Peace, filled with the Spirit of God, of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, and of justice and faithfulness. We pray this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**PEACE (ELW p. 217)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Offering**

**OFFERTORY-*Wait for the Lord* (ELW 262)**

**POEM- The Peace of Wild Things- Wendell Berry**

When despair for the world grows in me

and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things

who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief.

I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light.

For a time I rest in the grace of the world and am free.

**POEM- Let Peace Prevail in this World- Ravi Sathasivam**

When you look for peace  
then the peace lies within you.

When you search for peace  
then it is not hard to find.

When you want to keep peace alive  
then you allow white doves to fly over you.

When you make peace with others  
then the whole world live in your heart.

When you let peace be in the world  
then you live in wonderful world.

When you allow peace flow around the world  
then your hateness will go and love will flow.

When you open the door for peace  
then peace welcome to your lives.  
Let the peace prevail in our wonderful world

**HYMN- *Lo How A Rose ‘Er Blooming*- (elw 272)**

1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming  
from tender stem hath sprung!  
Of Jesse's lineage coming  
as seers of old have sung,  
it came, a flow'r so bright,  
amid the cold of winter,  
when half-spent was the night.  
  
2 Isaiah had foretold it,  
the rose I have in mind;  
with Mary we behold it,  
the virgin mother kind.  
To show God's love aright,  
she bore to us a Savior,  
when half-spent was the night.  
  
3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender  
with sweetness fills the air,  
dispels with glorious splendor  
the darkness everywhere.  
True man, yet very God,  
from sin and death he saves us  
and lightens ev'ry load.  
  
4 O Savior, child of Mary,  
who felt our human woe;  
O Savior, king of glory,  
who dost our weakness know:  
bring us at length, we pray,  
to the bright courts of heaven  
and into endless day.***.***

**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.**

**SUSAN MILLS- MEDITATION**

**BLESSING- 1 Thessalonians**

16Rejoice always, 17pray without ceasing, 18give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not despise the words of prophets, 21but test everything; hold fast to what is good; 22abstain from every form of evil.  
 23May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. **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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