**CHRISTMAS EVE- DECEMBER 24, 2023- ZION,PHILIPSBURG**

**WREATH LIGHTING LITANY**

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

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

Jesus Christ is the Light of the world!

**He is the Light no darkness can overcome.**

At darkest night we gather to celebrate the great light of our salvation.

**With the heavenly host we sing, “Glory to God in the highest heaven.”**

In Christ, God’s Word is made flesh and lives among us.

**With the shepherds, we will tell of the wonders we have seen and heard.**

**HYMN- O Come All Ye Faithful**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS-**

Welcome to worship on this holiest of all nights, as we come to worship and celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord. After 4 long years we are able to worship together!

The cash offering tonight will go to WFRC. Just a note this is our last service of the year, any donations for 2023 must be received tonight.

On Thursday morning the gift bags were delivered to the Erb Street Outdoor Shelter, the residents were delighted to see the gifts. Thanks to all who donated and assembled the bags. Zion continues to share God’s love…..

If you have a few minutes after the service please take a moment to check out the almost life size nativity scene in the basement. Thank you to Murray for lending it to us for the season.

January 2024 calendar is in your boxes.

Please keep Pastor Rick in your prayers, he was hospitalized this week for some health issues.

Any other announcements

**GREETING AND PRAYER**

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.**

Let us pray.*(A brief silence)*

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**FIRST READING**- Isaiah 9:2-7

2The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;  
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.  
 3You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.  
 4For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders,  
  the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.  
 5For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood  
  shall be burned as fuel for the fire.  
 6For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**HYMN- Once in David’s Royal City- 269**

**SECOND READING**- Titus 2:11-14

11The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, 12training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, 13while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

**HYMN: In The Bleak Midwinter- 294**

**THIRD READING**- Luke 2:1-7

1In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own towns to be registered. 4Joseph 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. 5He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7And 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.

**HYMN: The First Noel- 300**

**FOURTH READING**- Luke 2:8-20

8In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,  
 14“Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
  and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”  
 15When 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.” 16So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**HOMILY**

**HYMN- O Little Town of Bethlehem- 279**

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves. *A brief silence.*

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ’s holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for Mary’s loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, illness or injury *especially* Sarah, Chris, John, Vivian, Felix, Erin, Elizabeth, Zoli, Donna, Nick, Alea, Pastor Rick, our members in long term care Robert, Bea, Evelyn and Rob, and those we name either out loud or in the silence of our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints *especially Ruby Doering and those we name out loud or in the silence of our hearts* who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

**PEACE (ELW p. 189)**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**OFFERING-Choir sings Away in a Manger**

**OFFERING PRAYER**

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 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. **Amen.**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

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.**

**THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE: CHRISTMAS**

Holy God,

Creator of all and Source of life, at the birth of time your word brought light into the world. In the fullness of time, you sent your Word, born of Mary, to shine in our darkness and to make us your daughters and sons.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his birth and life among us, his death and resurrection,

we await his coming again when all things will be restored in him.

By your Spirit bless us and this bread and cup, that, held and nourished by you,

we may live as your children, shining with the light of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,

in your holy Church, both now and forever. **Amen**

**LORD’S PRAYER (ELW p. 191)**

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.**

**INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Glory to God in the highest! Come to the table of peace.

**COMMUNION HYMNS- 296, 288, 289**

**COMMUNION (ELW p. 191)**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 191)**

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.

**Amen.**

**THE GOSPEL OF THE INCARNATION**- **John 1:1-14**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

**HYMN OF LIGHT: SILENT NIGHT, HOLY NIGHT! (ELW 281)**

**BLESSING**

May the Lord God, who has called you out of darkness to be servants of light, grant you the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, and the peace of the Christ Child. In the name of Almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

**DEPARTURE HYMN: Go Tell it on the Mountain 290**

**DISMISSAL**

Christ the Savior is born! Go in peace. Proclaim this good news.

**Thanks be to God.**