

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH



3rd Sunday in Advent
December 14th, 2014



ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Chuck & Debbie LaJeunesse in Thankfulness for their grandsons Samuel & Gabriel and Megan Richards in Memory of her mother Luella Rilius. **ETERNAL LIGHT** is given by Judith Dames in Memory of Raymond, Paula, Andy & Gregory.

FREE COFFEE FRIDAY! We're looking for designs for our coffee mugs for Free Coffee Friday and we can use your help. Our goal is to remind people of the love of God for them in Jesus as they drive to work. (And, hopefully, throughout the day.) We'll have more information for you in the November Newsletter, but start thinking about what you'd like to see on the Free Coffee Friday coffee cups!

BACK TO THE BASICS. Three years ago we studied the Gospel of John together on Sunday morning here in worship. Two years ago we read through the Bible in a year. Last year we focused on memory passages. This year we added a service of prayer (and preaching). And now we are excited to announce that next year we are going to go **BACK TO THE BASICS**. We'll spend the year together in worship learning (and re-learning) the basics of the Christian faith. Look for more information in the December newsletter and right here in the Announcements!

NEW MEMBER LUNCHEON is coming soon! If you've joined our church in the last year or so (or if you've been visiting with us for a good bit of time), look for an invitation to come to a free lunch on January 11th, where you can get to know the church leadership. **USHERS NEEDED!** Please consider volunteering to be an usher for early or late service for 2015. The sign-up sheet is in the narthex. Contact Larry Zreliak with any questions!

CHURCH CHRISTMAS DINNER & SUNDAY SCHOOL PAGEANT will be this evening, December 14th. See Insert for more information and reservation form. It is not too late to sign up!!

CH² (Children's Church) will begin on Sunday December 28th for children ages 2 to Kindergarten. **CH²** will take place during the Sermon Hymn until the offering.

SUNDAY SCHOOL REMINDERS: The Sunday school meeting has been cancelled for December. There will be no Sunday school classes on December 28th.

ADVENT. Join us this coming Wednesday for midweek Advent service at 7:00pm. We'll have dinners before the service, starting at 6:00. Our theme this Advent will be on the Advent Names of Jesus.

OFFERING ENVELOPES for next year are now available. You can be picked them up in the back of the church.

NEED PRAYER? Stephen Ministers and Elders will be available to pray with or for you following the Service in the chancel area.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY will begin in January. We'll both be studying the same thing: Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Men will continue to meet on Saturday Jan. 10th at 8:00am; women on Tuesday Jan. 13th at 7:30. The study will last for six weeks; fun for the whole family! Sign-up sheets are hanging in the narthex.

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING AND SERMON will be posted to the ZLCB.org website later today. For an archive of older sermons, visit www.zlcb.org/sermons

Welcome to worship!

Backsliding. We don't use the word very often, but ask almost any other Protestant about backsliding and you'll get a lengthy response touching on issues like "eternal security," complete sanctification and God's sovereignty. Backsliding. For those not familiar with the term, it has nothing at all to do with a downward sloped water-based amusement park ride. Understood correctly, backsliding is when you apply your faith in Christ less and less to your daily life.

What does Jesus think about Christians who backslide?

Our Gospel Lesson this morning is the story about the greatest example of backsliding in the history of the church. John the Baptist—Elijah, the "voice of one calling" about whom Isaiah prophesied, and (in Jesus' own words) the greatest man ever born of woman—backslides. The one who kicked Jesus' public ministry off with baptism in the Jordan now wonders if he got it right; is Jesus the Christ, the one who is to come?

Our text this morning examines how Jesus treats the backsliding Baptist. Does he rebuke the once faithful prophet, or does he brush off his doubts as no big deal? Does he beg John to continue in faith, or does he kick the proverbial dust off his shoes and go looking for another cheerleader?

How Jesus handles backsliding is very important for us, especially in this season of Advent. As we remember Christ's first coming and look forward to his second coming, we come to the uncomfortable realization that we have not always been as zealous or faithful as we have been called to be. We have all backslidden at one time or another; how Christ treats us in these times powerfully shows just what kind of Lord he is. I think you'll like what we discover together this morning!

-Pastor Duncan

Rev. Duncan McLellan, Pastor
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The Divine Service

(Please take a moment to fill out the Attendance books. If you are visiting us this morning and would like to be contacted by the church, please indicate so in the Attendance Book. We are glad you chose to worship at Zion this morning!)

Prelude – Carol of the Bells

Laura Berkebile, Violin

Introduction to Worship and Announcements

Opening Hymn: My Lord, What a Morning

Insert

The Invocation

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Confession of Sins

Pastor: This morning our focus on being Advent People continues. Our Gospel Lesson teaches us that backsliding and having doubts is a necessarily evil component of our lives this side of the new heavens and the new earth. Therefore, let us confess our sins, trusting in our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

People: **Lord Jesus Christ, your word teaches that even great men like John the Baptist have times of despair and doubt. We confess to you this morning that we have not lived the faith-filled lives you have called us to. Our doubts in you as Savior and Lord have manifested themselves in selfish, godless living. Forgive us of these and all our sins. Strengthen our faith in you by the power of the Holy Spirit and use us for your kingdom work. Amen.**

Absolution Spoken by the Pastor

People: Amen.

Refrain:

This is the feast of victory of our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.

[REFRAIN]

Power, riches, wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing and glory are His.

[REFRAIN]

*Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing, honor, glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.*

[REFRAIN]

For the Lamb who was slain has begun His reign. Alleluia.

[REFRAIN]

The Prayer of the Church

Pastor: ... Lord, in your mercy.

People: Hear our prayer.

(Please be seated)

The Service of the Word

The Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass

withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The New Testament Reading: 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.

Pastor: In honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, we rise for the reading of the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 11th chapter.

People: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-19

Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" And Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’

Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

“But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Please be seated)

Children’s Message (10:30)

Sermon Hymn: Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come

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Sermon

(Please stand)

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.
 He descended into hell.
 The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
 From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting. Amen.

(Please be seated)

The Collection of the Offering

Choir Offertory 10:30 - Mary Did You Know

If you are visiting with us this morning, know that your presence here means far more to us than any gift of money you could make; please do not hesitate to let the plate pass you by.

(Please stand)

The Service of the Sacrament

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: 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.

The Words of Institution

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.

The Sharing of the Peace

The Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)

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Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

(Please be seated until it is your time to commune.)

The Distribution

We welcome to the Lord's Table all who have been baptized in the name of the Triune God, can examine themselves spiritually and believe they receive the true body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and as a profession of their faith. If you hold a profession of faith that differs from that of our congregation, please speak to the Pastor before the start of the service before communing.

- We believe the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the bread and wine.
- We believe Christ offers the forgiveness of sins in the Lord's Supper, but that the Lord's Supper is not necessary for salvation.
- We believe the Lord's Supper remembers the death of Christ and proclaims his death until he returns.
- We believe the Lord's Supper is a statement of unity in the body of Christ; we do not believe it creates that unity.

During the distribution, you are encouraged to sing the Distribution Hymns, pray, or meditate on the words "this is my body... this is my blood, given for you."

The cups at the center of the Individual Communion tray contain diluted wine for those with alcohol sensitivities.

Distribution Hymns

What Child Is This – Laura Berkebile (Violin), Shelley Killinger (Piano) 331

Savior of the Nations, Come 332

God Moves in a Mysterious Way 765

(Please stand)

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Pastor: We give thanks to You, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son,

our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.

People: Amen.

Benediction

People: Amen

The Recessional: Comfort, Comfort Ye My People

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† *Service Participants* †

Pastor:	The Rev. Duncan McLellan
Music Director:	Mark Killinger
The Organist:	Sandra Quinlan
Violinist:	Laura Berkebile
Pianist:	Shelley Killinger
The Elders:	John Gielarowski and Frank Vallelunga
The Acolyte:	Josiah Ackerman (8:00) Lara Luedeman (10:30)
The Greeters:	Wayne & Barb Oechslein (8:00) John & Kari Gresh & Family (10:30)
The Ushers:	Carl Bauer, Gene Koop, Ron Meier and Jack Oelschlager (8:00) Josh Gielarowski, Chuck LaJeunesse,

Last Week in Worship

Sunday Worship Attendance (12/7) – 209

Midweek Advent Attendance (12/10) – 62

Thanksgiving Offering (11/26) - \$1,249.00

Offering (11/30) - \$3,783.50

Advent Offering (12/3) - \$ 814.00

Week of Dec. 14 – 21

SUNDAY 12/14	8:00 AM – Worship w/Communion 9:15 AM – Bible Study/Sunday School 10:30 AM – Worship w/Communion 11:45 AM – Children’s Choir Practice 5:30 PM – Christmas Dinner 7:00 PM – Christmas Play Food Bank Collection
MONDAY 12/15	8:00 PM – Mon. Night Football & Fellowship @ Pizzaz
TUESDAY 12/16	
WEDNESDAY 12/17	6:00 PM – Advent Dinner 7:00 PM – Advent Service
THURSDAY 12/18	10:00 AM – Bible Study 7:00 PM – Choir Practice
FRIDAY 12/19	6:30 PM – Bowling League @ AMF Mt. Lebanon
SATURDAY 12/20	
SUNDAY 12/21	8:00 AM – Worship w/ Communion 9:15 AM – Bible Study/ Sunday School 10:30 AM – Worship w/ Communion 11:45 PM – Children’s Choir Practice