

Worship Service on December 3, 2023

Pre-service Music ~ “400 Years” ~ Sara Sparks

Welcome and Announcements ~ John Hess

Thank you to Judy Koch and all who helped to decorate the church!

Monday ~ The Uplift Support Group will meet at church at 3 pm.

Tuesday ~ There is a Deacon Meeting at 4:30 pm at the church.

Wednesday ~ The Nominating Committee will meet at 7 pm.

Thursday ~ There is an Interfaith Council Annual Meeting at 11:45 am at the Zion Episcopal Church.

~ The Mission Committee will meet at church at 4:30 pm.

~ Those serving to create the new church budget will meet at 5 pm at the church.

~ We will have choir practice at 7 pm, and all are welcome.

Friday ~ Cookie decorating at the church from 1:30 – 3:30 pm

Please sign up to bring cookies on the sheet in the fellowship room.

Saturday ~ Cookie sale in the morning, with people needed between 8 am and 1:30 pm.

~ Christmas Coffeehouse in the evening at 7 pm.

Please come and join in the fun by sharing a memory, story, object, game, or song with your church family.

Looking ahead ~ If you would like to bring a poinsettia in loving memory of someone, please have them to church by December 17th and share the dedication information for the bulletin.

Food Cupboard ~ call Lindy at 802-379-1921 or email her at ljmylott@gmail.com if you can help serve. She still needs a couple of Thursday mornings covered.

Lighting the Candle of Hope



Choir Song ~ “One Small Flame”

Call to Worship ~ Isaiah 40:1-5 (NIV) read by John Hess.

Please join in reading the bold lines.

¹ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

² **Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,**

and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed,

that her sin has been paid for,

that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

³ **A voice of one calling:**

“In the wilderness prepare the way for the Lord;

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ **Every valley shall be raised up,**

every mountain and hill made low;

the rough ground shall become level,

the rugged places a plain.

⁵ **And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,**

and all people will see it together.

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

Song ~

“Come, O Long-Expected Jesus” (#125, blue)

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free

From our fears and sins release us; Christ, in whom our rest shall be

You, our strength and consolation, come salvation to impart

Dear desire of many a nation, joy of many a longing heart

Born, your people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king

Born to reign in us forever, born your gracious realm to bring

By your own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone

By your all-sufficient merit raise us to your glorious throne

Words ~ Charles Wesley, 1744; Music ~ Rowland H. Prichard, 1830

Praying Together ~

**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 debts as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil
For Thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory forever,
Amen**

Song ~ “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” (#119, blue hymnal)

*O come, O come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's deep shadows put to flight
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, thou Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in her ways to go
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind
Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease;
fill the whole world with heaven's peace
Rejoice, rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Words ~ Latin hymn from 12th century, Music ~ French melody, 15th century

Introducing the Sermon ~ Cara Davenport

Scripture Text ~ Luke 1:5-25 (NIV) read by John Hess

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah,
who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah;
his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.

⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God,
observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly.

⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive,
and they were both very old.

⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty
and he was serving as priest before God,

⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood,
to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came,
all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him,
standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

¹³ But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah;
your prayer has been heard.

Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,
and you are to call him John.

¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you,
and many will rejoice because of his birth,

¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

He is never to take wine or other fermented drink,
and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

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¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah,
to turn the hearts of the parents to their children
and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—
to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this?
I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God,
and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak
until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words,
which will come true at their appointed time.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah
and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.

²² When he came out, he could not speak to them.

They realized he had seen a vision in the temple,
for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant
and for five months remained in seclusion.

²⁵ “The Lord has done this for me,” she said.

“In these days he has shown his favor
and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

Sermon~ “Old Hope” ~ Cara Davenport

Song of Reflection ~ “It’s Hard to Wait” (Every Valley)
~ Rain for Roots

Communion ~ Everyone is welcome to receive the bread and grape juice
as we remember how Jesus came to be with us
and give his life for our salvation.

Communion Song ~ “Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)”

*What hope we hold this starlit night
A King is born in Bethlehem
Our journey long we seek the light
That leads to the hallowed manger ground
What fear we felt in the silent age
Four-hundred years can He be found
But broken by a baby's cry
Rejoice in the hallowed manger ground*

Chorus

***Emmanuel, Emmanuel. God incarnate here to dwell
Emmanuel, Emmanuel. Praise His name Emmanuel
(Praise His name Emmanuel)***

*The Son of God here born to bleed
A crown of thorns would pierce His brow
And we beheld this offering
Exalted now the King of kings
Praise God for the hallowed manger ground*

Chorus

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Benediction ~ Psalm 27:14 (ESV)

**“Wait for the Lord;
be strong,
and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!”**