



Salem-Zion Mennonite Church

**Journey toward Joy
December 15, 2024
10:30am**

“The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen...” - Luke 2:20

GATHERING TO PRAISE

- Prelude Anne Waltner
- Call to Worship “Heavenly Host”
- Advent Candle Lighting – *Hope Is a Candle* (vv. 1,2,4) VT #211
- Welcome and Opening Prayer Tim Eisenbeis
- * Singing our Praise – *Angels We Have Heard on High* VT #249
- * Greeting each other
- Children’s Story Corby and Emma Sheila Epp
- Offering – Mennonite Church USA
MCC Infant Kits: 1 receiving blanket [lightweight fleece or flannel, minimum 75 cm x 75 cm (30 in x 30 in), larger sizes preferred]
Offertory

HEARING GOD’S WORD

- Hearing the Old Testament Isaiah 55:10-13
- Anthem – *Were We Dreaming?* (Cary Ratcliff) Ladies Choir
- * Hearing the Gospel Luke 2:15-20
- Sermon – “Joy to the World” Pastor Corey Miller

RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

- Guiding us to Joy
- Song – *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks* VT #253
- Sharing and Congregational Prayer

SENT OUT TO PROCLAIM GOOD NEWS

- * Song – *Joy to the World* VT #240
- * Benediction
- Postlude

Church Calendar

Deadline for bulletin submissions is 8:30 p.m. Wednesday; salemzion@gwtc.net

TODAY

Our Advent journey invites us to experience and know Joy! Once again, the shepherds lead us in this practice of joy as they come face to face with their Savior Jesus. This morning we are all invited to know, feel, and experience the joy of the Lord which is our strength. We are so glad that you are worshiping with us. Welcome!

The offering that we are celebrating today is for **Mennonite Church USA.**

9:30am – Sunday School for all ages

10:30am – Worship Service

After church – Kindergarten-High School: Sack lunch and Christmas cookie decorating

2:00pm – Fuente de Vida church service

THIS WEEK

Dec. 16 (Mon) – Deacons’ meeting at 7:45pm

Dec. 18 (Wed) – Children’s Choir, 6:00-6:30pm

Dec. 18 (Wed) – Adult choir rehearsals (chancel at **6:30pm**, men/ladies at 8pm)

Dec. 20 (Fri) – Fuente de Vida church service at 7:00pm

NEXT SUNDAY – Dec. 22

Next Sunday we continue the season of Advent with the theme: *Journey Toward Love*. The texts are Isaiah 11:1-9 and Luke 1:26-38, 46-55. Pastor Corey will be preaching and we will be receiving items for MCC infant kits. Items that will be received during our regular offering will be: 4 large, heavy-duty safety pins.

The offering will be for the Deacon Sharing Fund.

COMING EVENTS

Dec. 22 – Christmas Choir Service at 7:00pm at Salem-Zion Mennonite

Dec. 23 – Christmas Eve dress rehearsal TBA

Dec. 24 – Children’s Christmas Eve program at 7:00pm

Dec. 25 – Christmas Day worship service at Salem-Zion at 10:30am

Salem-Zion Prayer Requests & News

Happenings over the past week:

- Ella Waltner had surgery on her foot on Thursday morning. She was able to return home the same day.

Remember to praise God for:

- the joyous gift of Christ’s birth to save us and the world!

Remember to pray for:

- those who cannot be here today: Paul & Darlene Engbrecht.
- Ella Waltner as her foot heals. Pray for patience and grace in this journey toward healing.
- a greater awareness of Jesus’ joy spilling into our lives by God’s grace.
- people who feel discouraged, sad, and alone in this Advent season. May God open our eyes to see where we can offer love, grace, and acceptance to those around us in this season.
- those church leaders in Central Plains who are involved in a conference-led Leader's Table. May they find fellowship and wisdom around the table, and the courage to try new things.

The music committee is looking for **special music to enhance our worship on Christmas Day**. Vocalists, instrumentalists, soloists or groups of any size, students or family members who will be home for Christmas--all are welcome! Contact a committee member to volunteer (Kerwin, Sheila, Ken, LeRoy, or Sherilyn).

As you are doing holiday baking in the coming days, please consider sharing some treats with the students in the **Freeman Academy dorm**. Items can be dropped off in the Admin. Building during the school day, or taken to the dorm after 4pm until December 20. If you have questions, or would like to make additional arrangements, please call Freeman Academy. Thank you!

Advent Opportunities to Grow and Give! During this year’s Advent season, we invite you to join in the timeless story of Jesus’ birth. One way that you and your family can do this is by reading through the Gospel of Luke. If you read one chapter a day during the month of December, you’ll cover the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Let’s dwell in God’s Word together!

Also, with all the needs in the world, we are again receiving items for **infant kits** for Mennonite Central Committee. Each week during Advent through Epiphany, we are invited to bring items that will be received during the regular offering.

- Dec. 15 - 1 receiving blanket [lightweight fleece or flannel, minimum 75 cm x 75 cm (30 in x 30 in), larger sizes preferred]
- Dec. 22 - 4 large, heavy-duty safety pins
- Dec. 29 - 1 large bar mild soap (leave in wrapper)
- Jan. 5 - 1 pair of socks, 1 cap

Everyone is invited to sign the **Christmas cards** on the table in the narthex. They will be available through Wednesday, December 18.

A **thank-you card** from the Freeman School District has been posted in the narthex.

November Offerings and Gifts: AMBS - \$500.00; CPMC - \$2,801.00; Deacon Sharing Fund - \$2,050.00; Food Pantries - \$1,737.00; Household Treasury - \$28,113.00; MCC - \$1,040.00; MCUSA - \$1,616.00; MDS - \$957.00; MMN - \$650.00; Student Tuition Sharing Fund - \$13,000.00.

The Household Treasury **monthly report** is posted in the narthex.

Community Connections

The Mission and Service Team of South Church is sponsoring the holiday Senior Giving Tree for residents of Oakview Terrace and Assisted Living. Trees with gift tags and instructions will be located at Jamboree Foods, Norm’s Thrifty White. Gifts must be returned by December 19 to ensure Christmas delivery.

In need of a last-minute Christmas gift? How about giving someone you love the gift of purchasing bees, chickens or ducks from Mennonite Central Committee, for families in need around the world? These animals are an invaluable source of both food and income. Stop in to **Et Cetera Shoppe**, and for a \$15 donation, you can choose an animal and receive a small gift card telling your special someone which animal was purchased for them. When you participate in this Christmas Giving Project, we’ll place an animal ornament on our Christmas tree – hopefully, by Christmas, we’ll have a tree covered with ornaments, and 30 animals headed to families who need them!

Swan Lake Christian Camp is hosting **Winter Retreats** this winter. 8th-12th grade retreat will be held January 10-12 and 5th-8th grade retreat will be held January 17-19. Cost is \$100 and registration is necessary and needs to be in 2 weeks prior to the weekend. You can register online at myslcc.com. Additionally, there will be a **Piano Night fundraiser** at Swan Lake Christian Camp on January 26 at 6:00pm. Please see the poster in the narthex for details.

Peace in Advent: *“The season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before... .What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God’s [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running. For rushing. For worrying. For pushing. For now, stay. Wait. Something is on the horizon.”* - Jan L. Richardson, Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas

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