



Salem-Zion Mennonite Church

December 6, 2020
“On the road to repentance”

GATHERING TO WORSHIP

Prelude – *In the Bleak Mid-Winter* (arr. Haan) Ruby Waltner
Sing We Now of Christmas (arr. Held)

Welcome and Call to Worship David Janssen

L: Listen! A voice cries out in the wilderness:

P: Prepare the way of the Lord!

L: Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill made low.

P: Prepare the way of the Lord!

L: Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together.

ALL: Prepare the way of the Lord!

Lighting of the Advent Candle – *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Inviting God’s Spirit

Opening Hymn – *Bless’d be the God of Israel* (HWB #174)
Chorister: LeRoy Epp

Celebrating God’s Mission – Household Treasury

Children’s Story Malynnda Penner

HEARING GOD’S WORD

Hearing the Scriptures Isaiah 40:1-11, Mark 1:1-8

Sermon – “Preparations of Hope” Stacey Waltner

RESPONDING TO GOD’S CALL

Confession

Silence

Song – *Comfort, comfort, O my people* (HWB #176)

Sharing and Congregational Prayer

Sending Song – *Joy to the world* (HWB #318)

Benediction

Postlude – *From Heaven Above to Earth I Come* (arr. Manz)

Church Calendar

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

TODAY

When the heart is moving in readiness, there is an openness to the “new” – perhaps the fresh thing God wants to do. To embrace the new requires a letting go of the past. Repentance means we are letting go and making space for God’s new work in us. Welcome to this worship time. We are so glad you are here with us.

This week's offering is designated for the **Household Treasury**. The Household Treasury is the fund that pays the salaries and bills of our local ministry. Thanks for supporting this ministry through the gifts you offer.

Today – Catechism will be held virtually at 4:00pm. Pastor Corey will send out the link to the students.

NEXT SUNDAY – December 13

Next Sunday we will continue our Advent theme: “**On the Road.**” The theme of the morning will be “*On the road to restoration*” and the texts will be Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11, I Thess. 5:16-24, Luke 1:46b-55, John 1:6-8, 19-28. Pastor Corey will be preaching.

Offering next Sunday will be for **Central Plains Mennonite Conference**.

COMING EVENTS

Dec. 21 – Longest Night Worship Service at 7:00pm. Live-streaming.

Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Worship Service at 7:00pm. Live-streaming.

Salem-Zion Prayer Requests & News

Happenings over the past week:

- Even though Mark Miller continues to be a patient at Sanford Hospital, he is gaining strength and his oxygen levels are improving. We thank God that he seems to be on the road to recovery.

Remember to pray for:

- those who cannot be here today: Cody Schrag.
- those who are most vulnerable in our communities in this strange time, as in all times. May God open our eyes to the possibilities for love and for protection of the least of these among us--and may we be willing to heed God's call.

Remember to thank God for:

- the Advent season that invites us to prepare the way for God’s saving activity in our time.

An update on the discernment to support the Ross Richer ministry in Ecuador: We have received a little over half the responses necessary (50) to create a binding vote to accept this commitment. The really great news is that we have had several offers to fill the liaison positions and to provide financial backing should we reach our response threshold. Please take just a few moments to complete the form if you haven't already done so: <https://forms.gle/4N3eiuG2zuc4Zt1d8>

Candy refreshments after the Christmas Choirs program? Yes!! The Music Committee and the Sunday Evening Fellowship Committee (who traditionally has hosted the refreshment time after the Christmas Choirs Program) have been envisioning how to safely celebrate this 2020 Christmas season while maintaining some traditions. Although we are not planning to fill the sanctuary or meet around tables in the Fellowship Hall, we can connect with each other while in our respective homes through a candy and cookie exchange! This exchange will happen over a few days beginning on December 16th when donations of homemade candy or cookies can be delivered to the church kitchen. The following day a small group of masked and gloved individuals will divvy up goodies which will then be available for pick-up on December 18th at your convenience. If you have Covid, are a close contact, or have similar symptoms please refrain from donating. Anyone is able to sign-up for a package of goodies. How to sign-up?...Please email charityjb@gmail.com if you would like a package of goodies or plan to donate. Fruit will not be included this year, but servings of peanuts will be available for pick-up. These treats can be enjoyed during the youtube streaming of the Choirs Program; date to be determined.

Long Cold Winter: a series of warm webinars for a cold season. Each month, the Christian Formation Committee from CPMC is putting together a series of webinars to help us connect, learn, play and pray together. This month, you are invited to pray the Anabaptist Prayerbook with others from around Central Plains. Next month, you are invited to "Remember your story" in a series of guided activities that will help you put together your spiritual autobiography. For more information and the zoom links for each of these webinars, visit our website, centralplainsmc.org.

November Offerings and Gifts: Household Treasury - \$27,473.13; Student Tuition Sharing Fund - \$720.00; Deacon Sharing Fund - \$3,425.00; Project Fund - \$675.00; Bearcat Avenue - \$150.00; Endowment - \$4,000.00; Mennonite Mission Network - \$1,700.00; Freeman Academy - \$400.00; Mennonite Church USA - \$1,705.00; Central Plains Mennonite Conference - \$1,456.00; AMBS - \$20.00; Mennonite Central Committee - \$135.00; Swan Lake Christian Camp - \$45.00.

November Household Treasury Report – Income: \$27,473.71; Expenses: \$16,277.20; Balance: \$14,710.63.

The **December newsletter** was sent as an attachment with this week's e-mailed bulletin. Hard copies are available in the narthex for anyone who would like one.

Community Connections

Rural Revival will meet at 8:00 p.m. on December 7 in the Salem-Zion Mennonite Church Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Church Family, God has been very good to us at **Swan Lake Christian Camp** this past year. We were able to hold our summer camps in the midst of the virus with zero reported incidents. Our camper attendance was not like the previous year, but still decent. The message of God's truth, His grace, and His plan for our salvation continues to be taught. After senior high camp, two campers asked to be baptized which we did after consulting both their parents and their pastors. Many of our adult groups did cancel their reservations, but again, God has sustained us. Our fall and winter groups, who are able to spread out a bit more, are holding their retreats. Work continues on a new bathhouse connected to the chapel. Through all of this, we as camp staff and board members are extremely grateful to God and to all of you who pray for us often and hold SLCC dear to your hearts. We would ask you to continue to keep us in your prayers and to consider us in your year-end giving.

Freeman Academy Open House: Parents of future Kindergarten through grade 11 students are invited to an open house at Freeman Academy on Dec. 11 from 2:00-4:00pm. Families have two flexible visit options. Either drop in, visit with Enrollment Director Lynnelle Allison, and get grade-specific information OR contact Lynnelle (lallison@FreemanAcademy.org) before Dec. 11 to arrange a personal tour and schedule visits with specific teachers. Masks are worn on campus. For more information call 605-925-4237.

Free resource from MCC: Learning about generosity! Help children learn about generosity with MCC printable worksheets including activities, a story, a craft to make and Christmas gift ideas that benefit global neighbors with colorable greeting cards, find it all at mcc.org/generosity. Explore the full list of Christmas giving options from MCC at mcc.org/christmas.

Advent Hope: "A prison cell, in which one waits, hopes - and is completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom has to be opened from the outside, is not a bad picture of Advent" - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, God is in the Manger

