

## Christ the King

Leadership Letter for the Week of November 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

To our Zion Family,

Deacon Patsy Glista delivered a wonderful sermon this past Sunday, using the famous opening lines from Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*—"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness,..." as a springboard into the message from the Old Testament reading from Daniel as well as Mark's gospel. The parallels were striking. It is easy to see "the worst of times" aspect of our world today; a seemingly never-ending pandemic, political polarization with little compromise on anyone's part, climate crises, racial unrest, too long of a stretch without a pastor—the list seems endless. And yet, in the midst of all that darkness, there are rays of light shining through in spite of all the challenges. I was reminded of this while viewing the documentary premiere of *Utica: The Last Refuge* at The Stanley this past Saturday evening. I witnessed the resilience of the refugee families, the kindness shown by so many members of the Utica community, and the opportunities for lives to be rebuilt in safety and hope. I was moved while watching the film, as I was in listening to Patsy deliver her sermon on Sunday. I would encourage you to read (or reread) Patsy's sermon. Let's not let the "worst of times" rule the day, but be sources of light and hope for our community and our world. God's work, our hands.

### Sunday Worship

This Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, Rev. Jen DeWeerth will lead our 10:00 AM Service, which will be offered in-person in the sanctuary, on Zoom, on Zion's YouTube, along with the Service of the Word found later in this letter.

**Log-in instructions for the Zoom service** this Sunday: use the following:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09>, Meeting ID: 843 5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#.

To join the service **by Livestream on our YouTube channel**, you can do so by visiting our page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbCe2z7bIPvxp621A>

Sunday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, the first Sunday in Advent- we will have a Service of the Word. There will be no communion at this service, as we do not have a supply pastor for this Sunday. Our service will be the annual Hanging of the Greens in which we recognize the Christmas traditions at Zion.

### Housing Needed for Incoming Refugees

The Refugee Center here in Utica will soon be welcoming a number of families and individuals evacuated from Afghanistan. These individuals risked their safety by assisting the United States in the war efforts. Had they remained in Afghanistan, their lives would certainly be in peril. With this influx of refugees in our area, there will soon be a serious housing shortage. If you or anyone you know have rental properties that could house these Afghani families, please contact Dzevak Racic, Director of Refugee Resettlement, at 315-801-5518. The Zion parsonage could potentially be used to house a refugee family, but we would need to have a volunteer to serve as our liaison/"landlord" to work with the refugee family and respond to any housing issues. If you are interested in serving in this capacity, please contact Mark or Laurel.

### Stewardship Campaign

You should have received a letter at home regarding our 2022 Stewardship Campaign. Please prayerfully consider how you will support Zion's mission for the year ahead with your time, talents, and financial contributions. We ask that you return your pledge cards by November 28<sup>th</sup>, either in the return envelopes provided or by placing them in the offering plates at the back of the sanctuary in the church. This will help us prepare an accurate 2022 budget.

## Christmas Season Giving Opportunities

In this season of giving, we have four opportunities to brighten the Christmas season for others by sharing the gifts we have been blessed with. They are:

**Lutheran Home Residents:** Although many of the usual holiday activities at Lutheran Care cannot be held because of COVID restrictions, we would still like to provide a few small gifts for the residents of the homes. Donations can be placed in the box in the Narthex. Suggestions are: hand creams and body lotions, small boxes of tissues, shampoo, body wash, or shower gel, and cologne for both men and women. You may donate lap robes, but no items of clothing, please. You may bring your unwrapped gifts anytime up to and including Sunday, December 5th. Thanks for helping to brighten the holidays for our friends at Lutheran Care.

**The Mitten Tree:** Your donations of hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves will be delivered to the Thea Bowman House to support their efforts in supporting the homeless. You will find a basket for your donations in the downstairs foyer. Donations will be accepted until December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**The Angel Tree:** We will be delivering gift cards to the families at the Thea Bowman House in lieu of toys or clothing. Gift cards make it easier for families and staff. Please make your financial contributions to Zion, indicating "Angel Tree" in the memo line. These donations are also requested prior to December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**ELCA World Hunger Advent Appeal:** This year ELCA's Upstate New York Synod World Hunger Committee has recommended a special Advent Appeal to specifically provide food and household necessities for families who are rebuilding and recovering from natural disasters. Each congregation in the Synod is challenged to donate \$300 toward this effort during the Advent season. To donate, please write "World Hunger Advent Appeal" in the note section of your check (*use the green envelopes if you have them*). You may mail your check to the Zion office or drop it off when you come to church on Sundays.

### **Holiday Food Baskets:**

If you or someone you know needs a holiday food basket for Thanksgiving or Christmas, please contact Sara. If you would like to sponsor a food basket, please let Sara know and then place your contribution for the food basket in an offering envelope.

## COVID Safety Protocols re: Masks

We are aware that some Zion congregants have expressed frustration that we still require face coverings in our church building, whether one is vaccinated or not. We continue to follow the CDC recommendation that infection rates for those tested need to be below 3% for a number of consecutive weeks before the face covering requirement is lifted. The infection % of those tested was 6.59% on November 11<sup>th</sup>, and has only fallen below 3% four times since October 13<sup>th</sup>, and never for two consecutive days in that time period. We ask for your continued patience. No one wants to wear a mask, but it's a small price to pay in order to keep our fellow congregants safe.

## Three Churches United

The initiative to have the congregations of Our Saviour, Trinity, Herkimer, and Zion come together for worship, fellowship, and sharing resources continues to move forward. This past Sunday, three Zion congregants attended the Trinity worship service. Afterward, they were joined by another half dozen members of our congregation, along with women from Trinity and Our Saviour, for lunch and a program presented by Patsy Glista and Fran Holzberger, *The Heart that Grew Three Sizes: Finding Faith in the Story of the Grinch*. Zion participants reported having a worthwhile time with women from our fellow Lutheran congregations.

The Thanksgiving holiday is coming up, my favorite holiday of the year. Acknowledging the difficulties that so many face, there is still much for which we can be thankful. I am grateful to belong to a caring community of faith. I am grateful for the chance to worship with you, to sing with you, for our fellowship and mutual support. So many good gifts.... Thank you!

All Good Gifts, from Godspell (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZBklIr1cOuM>)

*We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,  
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand.  
He sends us snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,  
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain...  
All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above  
So thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord for all his love...  
We thank thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good,  
The seedtime and the harvest, our life our health our food,  
No gifts have we to offer for all thy love imparts  
But that which thou desirest, our humble thankful hearts!  
All good gifts around us are sent from Heaven above..  
So thank the Lord, oh thank the Lord for all his love..  
I really wanna thank you Lord!*

Have a wonderful, safe, and healthy week ahead,  
Mark Thompson, church council co-president

*What is the last day of Advent? This and other questions were answered by the fourteen women from Trinity, Herkimer, Our Saviour, Utica, and Zion, New Hartford, who gathered at Trinity on November 14<sup>th</sup> for a brown bag lunch and an Advent program. Fran Holzberger and Patsy Glista led our Advent program, The Heart that Grew Three Sizes, which reflected on faith and the story of Christmas as told by Dr. Seuss in 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas.' A good time was had by all. Watch for more Women of Faith gatherings coming in 2022. -Patsy Glista*

Zion Lutheran Church  
New Hartford, NY  
Christ the King



November 21, 2021

WELCOME TO ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH'S AT HOME OR ONLINE SERVICE!

PRELUDE: *I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord*, by Aaron Williams -Kelli Watson

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Have mercy on us, O God.

**We confess that we have sinned against you and against our neighbor. We have built walls instead of tables and have turned away the stranger. We have sought glory for ourselves and have treasured that which does not satisfy. Help us to love as you love, to welcome those you send, and to treasure mercy and justice. Turn us from our ways to your ways, and free us to serve those in need. Amen.**

God, who makes all things new, forgives your sins for Jesus' sake and remembers them no more. Lift up your heads and your hearts. Yours is the kingdom of God. **Amen.**

**Opening Hymn** *Come, Thou Almighty King, vs. 1&4* Hymn#408 -Kelli Watson

**Vs. 1** Come, thou almighty King, help us thy name to sing; help us to praise; Father all glorious, o'er all victorious, come and reign over us, Ancient of Days.

**Vs. 4** To thee, great One in Three, eternal praises be hence evermore! Thy sov'reign majesty may we in glory see, and to eternity love and adore.

**Prayer of the Day**

Almighty and ever-living God, you anointed your beloved Son to be priest and sovereign forever. Grant that all the people of the earth, now divided by the power of sin, may be united by the glorious and gentle rule of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**First Reading:** Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14, Pg. 1384

**Second Reading:** Revelation 1:4b-8, Pg. 1913

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah



**Gospel:** John 18:33-37, Pg. 1683

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon:** -Rev. Jennifer DeWeerth

Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come. Amen.

It has become common, at least in my denomination, the UCC, but also in many churches, to change the name of this Sunday from the old hierarchical and decidedly male “Christ the King” Sunday to “Reign of Christ” Sunday. I see the rationale and generally agree with it, but for ease and focus today, I am going to use the language of kingship. Not to highlight that Jesus is male or royal, but because the Gospel text today uses the language of king and kingdom. That text is part of John’s account of Jesus’ trial, the trial that resulted in his execution. And the very nature of Jesus’ kingship and kingdom is the subject matter of the text, and what I want to talk about.

Kings and kingdoms are kind of old-fashioned words. I think of my son, Zach, when he was little and totally fascinated by knights and castles. It was all about the battles and the glory, and the victories, a misty and mysterious world of the past, maybe never quite as glorious as we imagine it. But, in another way, a kingdom is not so different from our lives now. One definition of a kingdom is “a realm that is uniquely our own, where our choice determines what happens”-in other words, where we are the masters of our domain. It is “our sphere of influence,” meaning we all oversee some kingdoms of our own. A teenager may say, “this is my room, stay out!” My husband, Steve, jokingly refers to our entire yard as his “kingdom,” because he has spent a lot of time there, more than 17 years, turning 1.3 acres into a place of trees, meadow, garden plots, and even a small soccer field, and he is rightly proud of his efforts. For some of us, our sphere of influence is over the traditions of the family. Bosses or the self-employed may have this sense of dominion regarding their work. In our realm of influence, our unique kingdom, our choice determines what happens.

We know that we are not “kings of the universe,” but we are, to some extent, in control of at least some aspects of our lives. And we like this self-determination and autonomy. So when we pray the words in The Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come,” we are saying something pretty surprising-that we allow our sphere of influence to be God’s sphere of influence. We are talking about giving ourselves over to Christ’s reign.

In comparison, Pilate, when he confronts Jesus, is focused on a plot on earth-on turf. He wants to know if Jesus is king of the Jews, meaning: “are you the leader of one of the pesky, minor competing tribes of this countryside I rule over on behalf of Caesar?” He wants to be able to categorize Jesus. Then he can know what to do with him. Perhaps he can be bought, or co-opted, or if not, then he can be disposed of publicly in such a way perhaps to maximize Pilate’s influence over some of Jesus’ enemies.

So, Pilate asks Jesus if he is a king, and Jesus answers by saying that this royal authority is not from this world. We need to clear our minds of the idea that Jesus is talking about a different place-heaven, say as opposed to earth. He is not talking about places here. He’s talking about something else. He’s definitely making a claim that God backs up his royal authority. That’s in the first few lines of the Gospel. He is from God. But, in itself, this claim is not so unusual, for kings have always claimed divine sovereignty, that God backs up their royal authority.

Jesus is actually saying something more, something that even Pilate, steeped in the ways of kingdoms and kings, empires and caesars, can’t understand. He’s saying that his kingdom is ‘not of this sort,’ the sort where people fight to defend it. In other words, the kingship he exercises is a kind of power that cannot (not *should not*, *cannot*) be defended by force, by violence.

Pilate must be puzzled-he has no categories to fit Jesus into. Who is this guy? He seems to be claiming to be a king. So you are not from here, he must think, so what? Even if you are a king not from here, a king is a king is a king. A king claims power over his subjects. A king reigns over a plot of land and his people defend its borders. A king is, by definition, a ruler whose reign is preserved and enforced by power, and defended by force, when necessary. What sort of king is there whose subjects, whose people, whose “base,” don’t fight for him?

Pilate is bewildered. He can’t figure out what Jesus is talking about, even though Jesus tells him: “To testify to the truth-for this I came into the world. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.” Jesus, who reigns beginning and end, alpha and omega, has only just the truth-the truth that God is love, love alone. The truth may appeal to you or not, but, because he is the love of God for this world, Jesus can’t coerce you to accept it or protect it from harm, any more than his followers can fight to keep him from harm. He is born only to testify to it and witness to it. Imagine a king who can do nothing to protect his kingdom but proclaim it and walk around acting and speaking as if it were real, even though there are no knights, no horses, no castle walls, no borders or boundaries at all. Would anyone bow down before his throne?

Rev. Drs. William Barber and Liz Theorharis, the co-leaders of the Poor People’s Campaign, wear liturgical stoles that say “Jesus was a poor man.” That pretty much sums it up. He was a poor man, and also, we believe, the Truth of God. He was a nobody from a minority peasant religion of the empire, who, when arrested, tried, and convicted of crimes, does not even

defend himself in court or allow his friends to fight to save his life. Everything about his values, his priorities, and, especially, his relationships with others, refuses to fit into the worlds and categories that we know.

In other words, we have a king who is nothing like a king. His reign is opposite in every way from the reign of earthly kings: kings who collect taxes from the poor to keep the kingdom flush, kings who need crowns and scepters and tall castles, or media conglomerates and big donors and bank accounts to make clear their position. No, Jesus is something we can hardly comprehend because what kind of king walks among his people, giving the keys to the poor, refusing the sword, and ruling not by power or force or fear, but love?

The world says that we should fight to defend ourselves and our God, and that we are right to try by almost any means necessary to get our way, but that is not what Jesus says to his disciples. He says to them when they strike out or argue, “no more of this,” and “it shall not be so among you.” The world says, “take care of your lives” Jesus says, “whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.” The world says: “Follow the wisest course and be a success.” Jesus says, “Follow me and you too could be on trial.” The world says, “Get,” and Jesus says “Give. “The world says, “Law and order,” and Jesus says, “Love.”

We were, most of us, born into this world with every comfort: a sturdy warm house, a loving family, clean water, food, excellent schools, and the strongest military industrial complex in the world to defend our right to keep those things against all comers. Life was looking good for us.

And then we were baptized. When we were baptized, we were given the keys of the kingdom, and then we were told, “Don’t keep them; lose them.” Don’t defend or protect them, give them freely to anyone who asks. When we allow Jesus to rule over our lives, if and insofar as he becomes Lord of our lives and his kingdom indeed comes, then we will have no power to appeal to but the Truth, no authority but Love.

You have a king, people of Zion, but his kingdom is not from here. There is no home on earth for a king like this. He reigns only in hearts, and through love, and who on earth can understand that? Only those who hear Jesus testify to it, and then follow him. Amen.

## Welcoming A New Member to Our Congregation

P: Pastor

C: Congregation

WA: Worship Assistant

WA: With the whole church, let us confess our faith as we say “The Apostles’ Creed”.

WA/C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s 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 to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## ADDRESS AND QUESTIONS

P: In baptism, we are welcomed into the body of Christ and sent to share in the mission of God. We are called to live among God's faithful people, to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Sister in Christ,

do you intend to continue in the covenant of your baptism among God's people in this place?

**New Member: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.**

P: People of God,

do you promise to support and pray for *Jan* in her life in Christ?

**C: We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.**

## WELCOME

P: Let us welcome *Jan* in Christ to this community of faith.

**C: We rejoice with you in the life of baptism. Together we will give thanks and praise to God and proclaim the good news to all the world.**

*ANTHEM: Holy, Holy Holy! Lord God Almighty, by John Bacchus Dykes, arr. by Silver Piano -Kelli Watson*

## Prayers of Intercession

Eternal God, you hold firm amid the changes of this world. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

God, you sent your Son Jesus to testify to the truth. We pray for preachers, missionaries, evangelists, and teachers who carry your forgiveness and love to the world. Fill their words and actions with compassion and kindness so that your truth will shine. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you sent your Son Jesus to make us into your own people, set free to serve you. We pray for people who serve the well-being of others, especially ministries in our community, like Your Neighbors, and The Warming Center. Renew them in their work. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

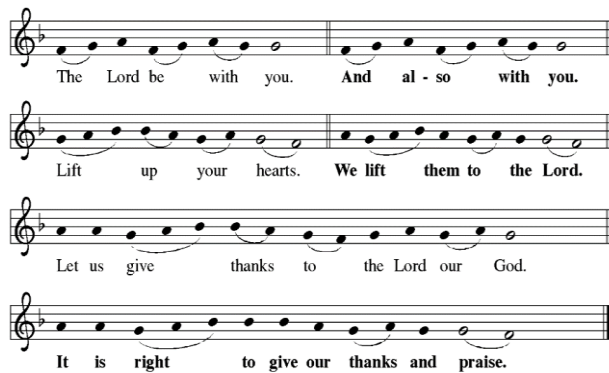
God, you sent your Son Jesus to rule in all times and places. We pray for the friends of our congregation who are unable to join our worship in person and for all who are sick and suffering. Join their prayers with ours and unite them with us in the body of Christ. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Claudia, Pr. Roger, Patsy, Wesley Williams, Ed and family, and Theresa, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear friends, we give thanks for the gift of baptism and for Jan Corn, one with us in the body of Christ, whom we welcome as a new member into the life and ministry of Zion Lutheran Church.

God our hope and strength, we entrust to you all for whom we pray. Remain with us always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

## PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.... and join in their unending hymn.

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -  
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who  
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

## Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all. 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 death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, now and forever. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

**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,

A feast of love is offered here for you and for all the saints.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Blessed Jesus, at this table, you have been for us both host and meal. Now send us forth to extend our tables and to share your gifts until that day when all feast together at your heavenly banquet. **Amen.**



### **Blessing**

God, the beginning and the end, who has written your name in the book of life, bless and keep you in grace and peace from this time forth and forevermore. **Amen.**

**Sending Song:** *Jesus Shall Reign, vs. 1 & 5 Hymn #434* -Kelli Watson

**Vs. 1** Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun does its successive journeys run; his kingdom stretch from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more.

**Vs. 5** Let ev'ry creature rise and bring peculiar honors to our king; angels descend with songs again, and earth repeat the loud amen.

### **Dismissal**

Led on by the saints before us, go in peace to serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude:** *All Glory to Jesus, by John W, Peterson* -Kelli Watson

*Welcome New Member, Jan Corn!!!*

*We are so glad you're here.*

*"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."*

*Matthew 18:20*

Jan Corn was a teacher in Remsen for 40 years. She now serves as president of the New York State United Teachers Retiree Council 8 representing the interests of retired teachers from Oneida, Madison, and Oswego Counties. She also fills her time with lots of volunteer work, gardening, and enjoying her two granddaughters. She lives in Barneveld with her brother, a dog, and a cat.

*Wishing you a safe & Happy Thanksgiving!!*

