CHRISTMAS IN THE LUTHERAN TRADITION:
A WORSHIP SERVICE OF MUSIC AND THE WORD

By
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A MASTER’S THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN MUSIC AND WORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Christmas in the Lutheran Tradition is a worship ministry project originally designed to fulfill the desire for a Christmas Cantata with a focus on the Lutheran love of music as part of worship service. The thesis includes discussions about the early origins of the Christmas celebration and Martin Luther’s incorporation of congregational singing as part of worship service. The thesis details the author’s original concept and the multiple alterations that became necessary as the community, state and nation continued to struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic in the year 2020. The thesis briefly discusses the North Dakota responses to the increasing number of cases of Covid-19 as well as a discussion about the difficulties experienced in the process of creating a faithful and fulfilling worship experience for the congregation of Zion Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota. A liturgical script based on a worship setting from the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymnal, music scores notated by the author and supportive correspondence and Zion Lutheran Staff minutes are included in the Appendix.
CHAPTER 1 – CHRISTMAS ORIGINS AND LUTHER’S UNDERSTANDING

“It is indeed right that we should celebrate so great grace of God with so glorious a festival … that the Child born at Bethlehem is born for us and is ours.”¹ These words by the protestant theologian Martin Luther formed his foundations on why we celebrate Christmas as a faith community. Luther recognized the need of the human heart to be filled with the joy of the Christ child come to the world to save it. “We keep this feast and preach on this Gospel, that all may learn it and be assured of it, that our work may not be in vain, but that it may bring to some comfort and joy.”²

Unlike Easter, Christmas was not a festival of the ancient church in the first century. In the years following the ascension of our Lord, the ancient church focused their year around the rememberance of Christ passion and resurrection. The Gospel of Mark, believed to have been the first written of the four canon Gospels, does not even mention the birth story of the Lord.

In the second century, as the church expanded into the European continent, the birth of Christ began to be a part of the church’s year. The church began celebrating the story of the nativity with a celebration on January 6th, associating this date with the baptism of the Lord. Most historians agree that the church eventually settled on December 25th as the day of Christ’s birth to counter the pagan rituals celebrating the ‘birth of the sun’; the church taking that time for the birth of the Son. While there is no historical foundation for this date, the church in Rome settled on December 25th in AD 336.³ With the usurpation of the pagan ‘Yule’ festivals in

² Ibid., 93.
Gothic, Germanic and Celtic cultures encountered by the Roman church through the early centuries after the Resurrection, the church adopted many of the symbols and customs related to those mid-winter festivals. The early church gave these cultural customs new meaning and purpose as part of the Nativity story. The familiar use of wreaths, ‘evergreen’ trees and candles were common customs among the pagan cultures that inhabited the continent and celebrated the winter solstice. These items brought understanding of new life, of light never quenched and hope of rebirth even in the long harsh winters. The “yule log”, common in Britanic culture was a central part of the ‘yule tide’ celebrations of the ancient Brithonic peoples that inhabited Wales, Cornwall and the North Umbrian regions of the British isles.

Today we take many of these traditions for granted, having become so accustomed to their presence that we have lost their origins as well as an understanding of how they point to the birth of the Savior. In that same way modern culture has lost the deeper meanings of the music that we associate with the Christmas season. Many of the carols and songs we sing today have theological origins, teaching biblical truths in verse and melody. One such example is “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”; an advent carol originally named ‘Veni Emmanuel’ that references much of the Isaiah prophecies as well as the nativity story in the Gospel of Matthew. Other songs began as cultural reflections of the world they were composed in. One such song of the latter category would be “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”, a carol believed to have been composed in the 16th century, yet often associated with Victorian age London and Charles Dicken’s story, “A Christmas Carol”.

From the earliest pages of the Bible, music is a part of worship while in God’s presence. In the book of Genesis, it is recorded that “…Adah bore Jabal … His brother’s name was Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and flute,” (Gen 4:20-21, NKJV). It is
noteworthy that descendants of Cain are named as the ‘fathers’ of basic human industry; Jabal as a farmer and Tubal-Cain as a maker of tools. Yet, counted amongst them is the first musician, Jubal.

In First Chronicles we learn of what could essentially be called the first ‘school’ of music and worship. We learn from Second Chronicles that “… he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with stringed instruments and with harps … for thus was the commandment of the Lord by His prophets” (2 Chronicles 29:25, NKJV) God ordained the tribe of Levi to attend to the Temple and lead worship. In their text, “Worship Through the Ages,” Towns and Whaley relate that ten percent of the Levites involved in Temple ministry were musicians during King David’s reign. 4000 of the Levite priest were appointed to serve as professional musicians and singers. Amongst them was the Levite, Asaph who led worship education, designed the curriculum and appointed instructors. Both the Old and New Testaments continue to relate the use of music as part of worship of God and the daily life of God’s people. Maybe it is telling of music’s importance that the first mention of music is to name the fathers of farming, tool making and music and the final mention in God’s Holy Word is about the final fall of Babylon, “… sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore,” (Rev. 18:22, NKJV).

In our modern world, music continues to be an important medium for imparting wisdom, knowledge and from the church’s perspective, the greatest story ever told. Martin Luther’s belief

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5 Ibid., 35.
that “next after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor”\textsuperscript{6} is still true today, bringing many to faith in Christ. But as music in church has once again evolved with the ‘Jesus Movement,’ many of the old carols have found new voice as contemporary artists find new ways to express those words. Likewise, other artist have brought us new songs that help to teach the story of the nativity of our Lord along side the old carols of the past several centuries.

Many churches today still hold the contemporary forms of music at a distance, unwilling to hear the old story told in fresh new ways. But that aspect is changing as many of these same churches have experimented with the concept of worship with guitars and drums in an attempt to engage the younger generation. Social media, technology and popular forms of melody in music have become tools the church has adopted to communicate with young adults.

The Lutheran church has not been the fastest to embrace the ‘praise and worship’ mindset of sharing faith in God’s house. Older congregants in the modern Lutheran traditions of North America are accustomed to grand pipe organs and medium to large robed choirs singing and shaking the rafters. Historically, though, the use of secular forms of music in the Lutheran church find their origins with the reformer, Martin Luther himself. “Luther used the music at hand but always transformed it into something new for use in worship.”\textsuperscript{7} While the concept of ‘popular music’ was considerably different in Luther’s time from our modern understanding, Luther was not against using music that was familiar to the people to bring Biblical truths in their native German language. While the tales of Luther using tavern tunes with theological lyrics are


vastly overstated, he did veer away from the Roman church’s traditions and encouraged congregational singing.

In the last three decades several Lutheran churches have begun to use guitars and drums as an acceptable form of worship music. The Lutheran churches that have experimented with ‘praise and worship’ have found a growing segment of youth and younger adults that are drawn to this style more than the pipe organ and choir format. Some Lutheran churches, such as *Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran* in Peachtree City, Georgia, have led the way in this concept.

A congregation of roughly four hundred, *Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran* in the mid 2000’s founded their own worship praise team, composing music that is liturgically Lutheran. The new ministry formed under the name *GraceFlock* was started as an experiment in the church’s music program. Founded on the idea that music is a part of worship, but should be supportive of the Biblical lessons and the pastor’s message, this experiment in worship lived by three simple rules; the music must be sing-able, approachable and theologically correct.⁸ The new Sunday morning worship opportunity quickly grew to fill the fellowship hall as members both young and old discovered a joy for worshiping in God’s Word without the pipe organ. The experiment in time gave birth to a second adult praise team and a high school praise team.

As an annual event, *Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran* worships in the Advent season with a Moravian Love Feast, based on the traditions of the old Moravian Church. Bringing together the rhythm section of the senior praise team, a thirty five piece orchestra, the adult choir and several extra musicians, the celebration of the birth of Christ through music is inspiring and lasting for those who attend annually. This event, presented twice over the third Advent weekend, has become a center piece of the Christmas season for both the church as well as the greater

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community the church ministers to. Weekly worship involving contemporary music and new arrangements of hymns are considered a normal part of the church’s life in Peachtree City, but Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran is an exception in the larger Lutheran church, not the norm.

Serving as the current Director of Music and Contemporary Worship Leader with Zion Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota, I want to see that kind of joy and enthusiasm for contemporary forms of worship as I experienced in my ‘formative’ years with GraceFlock. As I approach my first Christmas season in this role, I feel the need to bring many of these musical messages to the Zion Lutheran congregation as part of their own journey through Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. As a musician sharing in ministry for several of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran’s ‘Love Feast’ events, I long to bring the message in music to my current calling. I hope to see the joy of song fill our congregational family’s hearts and start a new tradition of music and the Word in joy for the birth of the Savior.

Zion Lutheran is a congregation over 120 years old, first founded in 1897 in Minot, North Dakota. Serving a congregation of roughly 1000 members, Zion has grown and evolved in their more than a century of teaching the Word of God. Zion’s weekly ministry consist of traditional worship on Saturday evening and early Sunday morning. Music is provided by a rotating group of pianists and usually a ‘lead’ singer to assist the pastors in leading the congregation. Zion’s main worship service is a late morning Sunday contemporary worship service led by an eight person team including the worship leader providing contemporary selections and the contemporized’ traditional hymn. Faith formation each week includes Sunday morning Church School held between the two Sunday services, week day morning pre-school for congregational and community families, Wednesday night mid week worship featuring a ‘camp style’ music

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ministry as part of the confirmation program, and an active youth group program for teenage youth giving service in the community and an annual summer mission trip. Led by two ordained pastors, Zion Lutheran is served by an eight member staff, not including the weekday Lutheran Pre-School staff.

Christmas and Advent worship at Zion has consisted of Sunday morning worship service, a children’s Christmas pageant and a ‘Blue Christmas’ worship service for those who are suffering from loss and missing loved ones. A Saturday evening worship focused on the music of Christmas and a time to share in the joy of the season for the Zion family is something that has been missing from their calendar; an event the pastoral staff wishes to add as a part of their Christmas season traditions. While Zion Lutheran does not have the musical talent assets I have worked with in the past, any congregation with a heart for Christ will have musicians and singers that wish to share their gifts. My vision for this program is to create a worship event that brings the spirit and joy of the Christmas season to the congregation. I wish for this event to become something done annually as part of the church’s seasonal planning for Advent.

In her book “The Worship Architect”, Constance M. Cherry describes a worship progression that is more common to Lutheran liturgy than the Tabernacle progression. Ms. Cherry defines this as “the four rooms of worship” The current hymnal of the Lutheran Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Worship, features 10 separate settings for worship, all

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following Ms. Cherry’s four part process; the Gathering, the Word, the Meal and the Sending.\textsuperscript{13} Cherry explains that “… worship is a journey …”\textsuperscript{14} that brings us into God’s presence, let’s us hear His Word and respond to it in an intimate conversation with the Creator, followed by returning into the world to bring His presence and good news. Cherry’s concept is founded in Christ’s own ministry, as recorded in the gospel of Luke. After the resurrection, Christ himself provided the model for biblical worship in a new world with His encounter of two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35; NKJV). Christ approaches His followers, the first room that we call \textit{The Gathering}. He then engages them in scripture as they walk, our room of \textit{The Word}. At the meal, He is revealed to them and they are changed by His presence. In their transformation, they respond with joy at His resurrection; our room of \textit{The Table}. Luke then records that they then returned to the Twelve to share the news in a transformed world, our fourth room of \textit{The Sending}.

This Christmas event will follow this well established pattern. From bringing the worshipers together, \textit{The Gathering}, we will hear the prophecies of Isaiah, \textit{The Word}, that prepare us for the nativity of the Lord.

“Then he said, “Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel … For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 7:14-15; 9:6-7, NKJV)

\textsuperscript{13} Constance M. Cherry, \textit{The Worship Architect: A Blueprint for Designing Culturally Relevant and Biblically Faithful Services}, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010), 49.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 47.
Next, we will share in the wonder and joy of Christ presence in the new born child as we respond in songs of adoration at *The Table*, and for *The Sending* we will go from His presence singing joy to all as we tell of the wondrous birth.

**CHAPTER 2 – PLANNING, PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION**

The creation of a worship project is a daunting task in the most common of times. To create a worship service with music that is both spiritually fulfilling and theologically correct takes a strong understanding of the worship leader’s faith, denominational doctrines and a discernment of the Spirit’s call to worship. This task becomes considerably more difficult in a world suffering through a pandemic. In 2020, the world became infected with Covid-19, a virus that has so far taken many lives and caused an even larger disruption to the communities and the church.

The author’s original concept was an inspiration to create an ‘in-person’ worship experience that would be celebrated as part of the Advent season on the church calendar. This season of hope which proceeds the celebration of the birth of the Christ-child is a season that is often misunderstood in amongst the congregation. Many people see Advent as just a part of Christmas when in reality, the Advent season is a time of hope and anticipation of salvation coming into the world itself. It is marked by prophetic scripture and remembrances of what God has done leading up to this moment.

The location selected for this worship service was originally at Zion Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota. The location was selected due to the author’s position as Music Director, a direct relationship with the church and its music programs. In normal times, Zion offers three worship opportunities every weekend with a traditional worship service on Saturday evening featuring hymns from a pianist and a lead singer to assist the pastoral staff. On Sunday
mornings, the church offers an early service of traditional hymns and liturgy, and a later mid-morning worship service featuring Zion’s seven to eight-member praise team led by the Music Director. The church also has several members providing instrumental and vocal gifts that are added to the music offerings for different seasons and special services. Though Zion has a full and involved music program that includes a seasonal children’s choir event, the church does not currently have a choir program in place. There are no plans at this time to bring that ministry back at Zion.

The worship service planned by the author was designed around the ‘four room’ concept previously discussed in the first chapter. While presented with several options for the construction of this worship service, the author selected a worship architecture that could be easily reused annually by Zion Lutheran or could be offered to the greater church community in the Minot area as a worship service that many of the Lutheran churches in the area could incorporate into their own annual Advent and Christmas planning.

*The Gathering* is the first of the four movements of this worship design. The gathering provides a time for the congregation to be welcomed into God’s house, to find their places, to connect with church family and to prepare their hearts and spirits for time spent in the presence of the Lord. *The Gathering* begins with opening music that is intended to help the worshipers let go of the outside world, put away their cares and focus on the presence of God as they come before Him. For this purpose, a Christmas medley was arranged by the author to introduce the worshipers to the Advent season and remind them of who it is we come to worship. The medley

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is based on the “Emmanuel”\textsuperscript{16} suite first arranged and written by Michael W. Smith. Beginning with the traditional French carol, “Sing We Now of Christmas”, the author’s arrangement is written for two flutes. The medley then passes to a single piano playing the English carol, “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” before fading into a shortened version of Smith’s “Emmanuel”. The medley, with its varying parts, introduces the worshipper to the season of hope and anticipation, concluding with the many names of the Lord that are found throughout scripture, especially in the prophecies of Isaiah.

The liturgical concepts for this worship service are based on the Revised Common Lectionary\textsuperscript{17} and the Lutheran liturgies found in “Sunday’s and Seasons.”\textsuperscript{18} The worship service will begin with a traditional order of Confession and Forgiveness as found in the liturgies for the fourth Sunday of Advent in Year A. This particular wording was selected for it’s relation to the Isaiah scriptures that are part of the service. The service will continue with opening prayers based on the scriptural selections and a Gospel acclamation founded on the Gospel of Matthew. “Alleluia. The Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel. Alleluia.”\textsuperscript{19}

The second movement of the planned service, \textit{The Word}, begins with scriptural readings. The first reading comes from the prophecies of Isaiah, telling of the coming on the savior promised by God. The worship service is designed to have a musical offering after each


\textsuperscript{17} Revised Common Lectionary, Vanderbilt University, accessed Oct 21, 2020, https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu.


scriptural reading, those music offerings to be related to the scripture selected. With the close of the first scriptural readings, the traditional hymn “Veni, Veni Emmanuel” brings about the words of the prophet in anticipation of the coming birth. This particular hymn is considered to be unusual in that the common worshiper easily thinks of this hymn as a Christmas hymn when in reality it is the epitome of an Advent hymn. The song speaks of the long expected coming of the Lord but does not ever actual come into the events in the lyric. The worship service will feature “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” a variation on this song arranged based on the recording of Aaron Shust.

The next scriptural selection comes from the Gospel of Luke. The scriptures read are focused on the events leading up to the birth and the birth of the Christ child. The scriptures speak of Mary and Joseph and the shepherds who were called to the birth by angels. To support this lesson, the musical offering is the song “Joseph’s Lullaby” original written by Bart Millard and Brown Bannister and performed by the band MercyMe. The song provides a tender look at what Joseph may have felt as he looked upon the Christ child and realize that he was to be the ‘foster father’ of God.

The final scriptural reading for The Word comes from the Gospel of Matthew and relates the story of the three wise men who followed the star to find the prophesied Messiah. This scriptural reading rounds out the Nativity story as is known to so many Christians. In support of this final passage and the Magi coming to see the “King of Kings”, a song by the band DownHere is selected. The song, “How Many Kings” ask the important point to ponder, how


many kings would give up everything to reach a fallen humanity. The song features a moment to ponder the gifts of the Magi and their purpose in the life of the newborn child. The final part of *The Word* movement will be given by one of the Pastors of Zion Lutheran in an Advent homily focused on bringing all these scriptures into focus in the lives of the worshippers.

The third movement, *The Table* is commonly related to the prayers of the people and the time of communion with God in the form of the bread and wine. Originally, the author had planned on a full communion, but due to pandemic issues the third movement will not include a formal communion. Many of these issues will be discussed further in this paper. *The Table* is commonly a time of response from the worshippers to what God has done. It is that portion of the conversation where the worshipers are able to express themselves to God. In keeping with that concept, the third movement is designed to be a time of prayer and thanksgiving to God.

The movement begins with the Pastor leading the worshipers in the Apostle’s Creed, stating firmly the faith of the church. The Creed is followed by the Prayers of Intercession, the time for the prayers of the church and the people to be spoken and heard. The Prayers of Intercession then finalize with the Pastor leading the congregation in the Lord’s Prayer. The medley “It’s Christmas” originally recorded by Chris Tomlin will be the final part of the third movement as we musically give thanks for God’s bountiful grace. The song features verses from the traditional carol “Away in the Manger” which speaks of the birth of the Christ child, and a bridge of the hymn “Go Tell It On The Mountain,” an appropriate response to the joy of knowing God has come to be amongst man.

The final movement of the four-room service traditionally embraced in Lutheran worship is *The Sending*. This important piece, while easily the smallest portion of the worship service, is

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still the most important part. Here, after the worshipers have had time to hear God’s Word, to share in the scripture, feel God’s love and share in responding to His grace, it is time for the purpose that God ordained for His children. To go and tell the good news and share the love of God. In *The Sending*, the worshipers are given a final blessing, and a charge to go and tell of God’s love. This is a time of joy and celebration in what has been revealed to the worshipers so the music to send the congregation back into the world must be uplifting and inspiring. The hymn “*Angels We Have Heard On High*”\(^\text{24}\) is a powerful traditional hymn that speaks of repeating what the heavenly angels first proclaimed. In his powerful rock version of this hymn, Chris Tomlin provides that powerful message in a very modern form causing the traditional words to be firmly placed in the hearts of the worshipers.

The planning for this worship service began in early August of 2020. The author and the pastoral staff of Zion Lutheran originally discussed planning this worship service for Saturday evening, December 12\(^\text{th}\). The planning was originally for only an in-person worship service on that date. Due to stipulations placed on the author in relation to the scholastic calendar, the author and the pastoral staff added a mid-November recording of the service to their calendar to provide the artifact needed by the author. The concept of a live in-person worship service and a recorded service with all participants present was at the time based on the current issues and government mandates in place due to the ongoing pandemic. In September of 2020, the Governor of North Dakota put in place guidelines for the number of persons to be present as well as stipulations on distancing and masks worn due to the growing number of infections in North Dakota. Zion Lutheran adopted the local school and state’s color code guidelines that reduced the number of persons allowed in the sanctuary. At that time, the author and the pastoral staff

\(^{24}\) “Angels We Have Heard on High,” track 2 from *Glory in the Highest: Christmas Songs of Worship*, recorded at Ocean Way Recording, Nashville, Tn, produced by Ed Cash, sixsteps Records, released October 2009, CD.
altered their plans to maintain safe distances. The plan was altered to have the musicians and singers provide their portions of the worship service on a different date from the pastoral staff and the readers. Specialized ‘singers’ masks’ and four extra lavalier microphones for the sanctuary sound system were purchased by the church on a grant. With the new lavaliers, at the author’s direction, the church purchased several extra mic headsets so that each vocalist that regularly lead in worship could be assigned a personal headset mic that would not be shared with anyone. Acrylic shielding was ordered to separate the positions of the different praise team members and the custodial staff assisted the author in measuring and marking team locations to maintain the minimum 6-foot distancing while still providing worship music.

In October of 2020, the conditions of the pandemic drastically worsened in North Dakota with several counties being moved to a condition Orange setting. While the city of Minot and Ward County were not moved beyond Yellow, the pastoral staff, faith formation staff and music director came to an agreement that to continue to provide full praise team worship at this time could be detrimental to the community. The author, as Music Director was directed to move all worship music offerings to a combination of pre-recorded (from home) worship sets by small ensembles and the assignment of small two person ensembles featuring one instrumentalist and one singer.

With these new conditions in place, and reasonable expectation that conditions would worsen over the next several months, the initial plan for a live in-person service was canceled and the planned worship service became an entirely virtual project. Further, plans to bring the musicians together in the sanctuary were also canceled and the author began to plan for a ‘virtual choir’ concept using video recorded by each instrumentalist and singer and forwarded to the
author by electronic means. This concept is still a manageable option since the author has skill and the needed software and hardware resources to edit and process video and audio recordings.

The author began working on music selection and arranging in August of 2020 when the project was first proposed. The music was selected with a thought toward both the appropriateness of the particular songs as well as creating arrangements that would be easy for the worship team to prepare. The music was originally planned to be arranged in keys that would keep the music singable for both the worship singers as well as for the congregation. The changes in key from the recorded offerings by the original artist was not a concern in the original planning due to the expected opportunity for both individual as well as group rehearsal of the music. Dates were originally scheduled in the church calendar for extra practices of the praise team as well as several guest musicians from the congregation to properly prepare the music. Plans for those rehearsals were altered as events changed the situation, eventually causing the author to reconsider altering the key of the different tunes away from the original recorded key.

The author normally follows a three rule concept when selecting music and arrangements for worship service. The first rule is that the music must be approachable, that what the congregation is asked to sing is understandable to them. There should be no confusion or lack of understanding of what the worshiper is saying to God. The second rule is that the music must be singable. The melody being sung, the key that the melody is in and the form of the song is easy for the common person to be able to sing. The final rule is that the music must be theologically correct and appropriate. With the changing situation as this worship service is planned, the concern for the congregation being able to sing in range became less of a stipulation. The need to provide the musicians and the singers recordings that they could use to rehearse individually became an important factor in the selection and arranging of the music.
Recruitment for musicians and singers for this worship service began in September with a focus on using the established praise team as the core of the musicians and singers that would be involved in the worship project. The team currently is structured around a lead vocalist that sings from the drum kit, a bassist (the author), and a keyboardist using either a baby grand piano or a Clavinova as the music selection requires. The team also has two acoustic guitarists, one of whom alternates with the drummer on some songs for the lead vocal. There are two female backing vocalists who are just singers. For this project, the author has recruited extra instrumentalists from the congregation to fill in different roles and in some cases replace ‘regulars’ so that no one person has too many charts to learn in a short time. Amongst these musicians are two more acoustic guitarists, one being the senior Pastor; two flutists, one being a second keyboardist for the regular praise team, a third pianist, a female lead vocalist, a second drummer, a trumpet player and a saxophonist. The author has also spoken with a couple in the congregation that are ‘retired’ from the praise team, to handle the song “Joseph’s Lullaby.” They both are skilled lead vocalist with the husband being a drummer, the wife is a pianist.

Music preparation was completed on October 20th of 2020 and charts were forwarded to each person asked to be a part of this project. The charts were sent electronically along with links to professional recordings of the selected music for the instrumentalist and singers to use for personal rehearsal purposes. The possibility of group rehearsals is no longer an option due to the pandemic situation and the current guidelines the church is operating under. For this reason, the author has provided the different instrumentalists and singers the opportunities to consult online with the author as they rehearse their parts at home. These consultations are planned for an online video platform, Zoom, and are at the instrumentalist or singer’s discretion and need. Several of the people who have asked to be involved are very skilled and most likely will not
need the help, but the opportunity has been put in place. A timeline has been set that instrumentalists and singers should record in the week of November 1\textsuperscript{st} through November 6\textsuperscript{th} with all recordings being sent electronically to the author no later than midnight of the sixth. At that time, the author will begin the review, editing and compiling of the different tracks to insert into the recorded liturgical parts. The liturgical portion of the worship service will be recorded by the church’s Tech Manager in the sanctuary with the two ordained pastors providing the liturgy, the readings and the homily. That portion is to be recorded on November 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd}.

CHAPTER 3 – REFLECTIONS ON THE COMPLETED WORSHIP PROJECT

This worship project began formally in August of 2020, but the ideas behind the project have been considered and formulated over the last several years. The original idea comes from my own experiences as a worship musician and bassist with the contemporary praise team, \textit{GraceFlock}. A member of Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church in Peachtree City, Georgia, I learned my first lessons as a worship musician in this church with a rich tradition of music and ministry. The center piece of the Christmas season at Christ Our Shepherd was the annual Moravian Love Feast, an hour and half worship service featuring the works of Michael W. Smith’s \textit{Agnus Dei} suite.\textsuperscript{25} Performed with a thirty-piece orchestra, a four-person rhythm section from the praise team and a combined choir of twenty or more singers, my experiences with the Moravian Love Feast provided my first concepts of what I wanted for this project.

This project, \textit{Christmas in the Lutheran Tradition} began forming at the beginning of the Fall Semester 2020. The project was proposed as a Saturday night worship service of music and word to the pastoral staff of Zion Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota where the author

serves as Director of Music and Contemporary Worship Leader. The project was planned to provide an alternative worship for the regular Saturday night worship during the season of Advent. The initial planning involved using Setting Eight from the hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* as a structural foundation to guide the worship plan through the four phases of a biblical worship. The original proposed project also featured eight song or hymn selections as the music for the worship, with an understanding that the pastoral staff may trim some of the music. The proposal was originally planned with an expectation that the current pandemic of Covid-19 would be fading from the region. I had intended for my musicians to meet together several times for rehearsal and that we would be live and in the sanctuary for the worship service even with a limited congregational size due to current conditions. In August of 2020, Covid cases in Ward County were at a low and manageable rate. Due to this, the staff of Zion Lutheran planned for returning to limited in person worship in the sanctuary in September of 2020.

The core of the music ministry team at Zion Lutheran Church consist of a seven-person praise team that normally provides music ministry for the weekly 10am worship service. The team, consisting of two guitarist, pianist, the author as bassist, a percussionist and several backing vocalist. The percussionist and one of the guitarist share duties as the lead vocal. This team is often augmented with other members of the congregation who are musicians or vocalist. These secondary members include trumpet, flute, alto saxophone, substitute guitarist and percussionist, and a few vocalist. The church also has a very talented couple that provide special musical offerings of piano and vocals. Music at the worship services on Saturday night and the 8:30a Sunday morning is provided by several pianist with traditional hymns from the Lutheran hymnal. Zion Lutheran church does not have a formal choir.

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The project was discussed with the music worship team in stages in the last week of August. With plans in place for reduced congregational size in worship, the music ministry team was divided into two smaller groups to offer music on alternating weeks. The Christmas project was presented to each of these groups in person with a discussion of the musical selections the author was reviewing for the worship service. The volunteer members of the worship team are mostly employed full time in agriculturally based occupations, including several farmers who were beginning harvest season as this project was forming. Due to these facts, the decision was made to tailor the music to selections that could be learned quickly with minimal rehearsals prior to the worship service.

The author began planning the details of the service in September of 2020 based on the previously mentioned worship setting found in the Lutheran hymnal. With the concept of choosing scriptural readings that would begin with the prophecies of the coming Messiah leading into the nativity story, the author selected passages from the prophecies of Isaiah to begin the time of The Word. The second reading, which would normally be an apostolic epistle, was instead taken from the nativity story in the Gospel of Luke. The final reading, the assigned Gospel for the service and the foundation of the pastoral staff’s planning for the sermon message, was selected from the Gospel of Matthew. These selections of readings guided the final selections of music for the worship service.

With the scriptures selected, the author began reviewing available resources for liturgy fashioned around these different readings, including the order of confession used to open the worship service. The planned service begins with an order of confession to prepare the worshiper to come into the presence of the Living God who calls us. We as worshippers do not invite God to be in our presence, rather, God calls us to be in his presence. But we cannot be in
His holy presence without confession of our sins. After confession, the plan was for the worship team to give a musical offering for the Gathering, the phase of worship where we are called into His presence. Including prayers and time to greet each other in the name of Jesus, the gathering provides the welcoming time to put away our daily lives and our daily cares and turn our focus to our Creator.

Planning continued to the second phase of the worship service, The Word. With the scriptures selected, the author considered the musical offerings to be included as part of this phase of the worship service including the selection of the Hymn of the Day. The author continued by planning the next phase, the response portion of the worship service to give the worshipers expression to respond to God’s Word. The planned response, commonly called The Table, would include the congregation being led in their statement of faith using the Apostle’s Creed, sharing in the Lord’s Prayer and a set of intercessory prayers for the people led by the pastoral staff. The final phase of the four-phase program, the Sending, centers around a powerful upbeat musical offering to send the congregation out into the world again singing the praises of our newborn Savior. Final prayers and a three-fold benediction complete this last portion of the worship service.

The author decided to begin the worship music with a medley founded on ideas from the Emmanuel medley first performed by Michael W. Smith. The artist created a medley of the French carol “Sing We Now of Christmas” followed by the Advent carol “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” before moving into his composition, “Emmanuel.” The author rearranged the medley, using the English carol “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” moving away from a treatment of a song the author wished to use as part of the first lesson. The author arranged the

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medley initially in the key of F Major, modulating to Bb Major for the opening of “Emmanuel,” which modulates up to the key of C Major to close. The medley features the opening tune played by flutes with accompanying piano in staccato. The piano continues into the second tune, fading into the growing rhythm section as the song “Emmanuel” begins. The original plan was to coordinate with Zion Lutheran Church’s Faith and Family Director to have a small choir of children singing the opening tune, but due to changing local conditions and guidelines from the pastoral staff and the Church Council, it was decided to use the two flutist to carry this melody and harmony.

The second music selection was picked for its traditional Advent placement in the hymnal. “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” also known as “Veni, Emmanuel,” is a traditional hymn that preaches anticipation of the coming Messiah prophesied in the Book of Isaiah. The song, commonly believed to have come from an 8th Century Latin antiphon possibly used by the Gregorian monks during the last week before Christmas. The song is placed in the service to following the Isaiah text as a response to the prophecies. The author arranged the song for the musicians based on the rendition recorded by Aaron Shust. The song features a college age church member opening with the original Latin for the first verse and refrain.

For the second reading, the song “Joseph’s Lullaby” was selected for its tender moment of earthly father and heavenly son meeting in the manger. The song, written by Bart Millard and Brown Banister was first recorded by the contemporary Christian band, MercyMe. The final


song during the Word portion of the worship service, selected as the Hymn of the Day, is “How Many Kings”\(^{31}\), originally written by Marc Martel and Jason Germain, the song was recorded originally by the band Downhere. The song speaks to the gifts of the Magi found in the Gospel of Matthew, but also foreshadows the coming crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

The final two musical selections were selected because of their traditional Christmas lyrics. Christian artist Chris Tomlin created a medley of the hymns “Away in the Manger” and “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” in his song “It’s Christmas.”\(^{32}\) A second Chris Tomlin selection was picked for the Sending song due to its fast upbeat and well known lyric. While the author originally wanted to “send” the congregation with Chris Tomlin’s “Joy, Unspeakable Joy”\(^{33}\), the author selected Chris Tomlin’s arrangement of “Angels We Have Heard On High.”\(^{34}\) This was at the request of music ministry team members request for a tune they already knew. The author created arrangements for the worship musicians of all these songs except the final two. Arrangements for the final two selections were purchased through PraiseCharts\(^{35}\) on the church’s account.

In a normal year, this worship project would have been planned as a live service streamed online with a full compliment of musicians, singers, pastors and lay leaders in a full sanctuary.

In August of 2020, when planning began for this service, it was still hoped that the service would


\(^{34}\) Chris Tomlin, “Angels We Have Heard on High,” track 2 on *Glory In The Highest: Songs of Worship*, produced by Ed Cash, recorded at Ocean Way Recording for sixsteps Records, 2009. CD.

be done semi-live with worship musicians and pastoral staff still able to lead worship to be streamed to the community and the congregation. In October of 2020, the pandemic condition in the state of North Dakota, and especially in Ward County, the community Zion Lutheran Church ministers to, was growing progressively worse with large jumps in the number of positive cases. These numbers in the month of October included the author and in November the senior Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church. In consultation with the author’s Project Advisor, it was decided in October to change the project from a live in-person worship service that would be recorded to an entirely recorded worship service with only the pastoral staff present. With this concept in mind, the pastoral staff and the author discussed options for the worship musicians to provide music. Due to concerns related to the pandemic, it was decided to forgo the musician’s being present in the sanctuary en masse. The author was tasked with producing accompaniment tracks for the musicians and vocalist to record against. Assigning different musician ensembles to different songs, the author emailed the needed sheet music, accompanying tracks and internet links to recordings of the songs selected to the cadre of musicians with for recording and returning video of their work to be combined, edited and mixed in the author’s recording studio. The author stressed a need for the musician team to provide a ‘clean’ audio track in their video by using a secondary device for playback of the accompanying music. A date of November 6th was selected as the deadline to return finished recordings to give the author time to edit, mix and combine the recordings into final products to be inserted in a recording of the liturgical portion of the service.

During the month of October, several members of the worship music team selected to provide the music videos were infected with Covid-19. This limited what was provided to the author for creating the music videos as part of the worship service. Technical difficulties became an unexpected challenge in producing the music videos due to a lack of technological aptitude on
the part of many of the worship musicians. This led to some musicians only able to provide audio tracks without video. Further, due to the timing of this project in the midst of the annual harvest in this agricultural community, several musicians had to excuse themselves from the project all together leaving little time to acquire any replacements. Many of the video product provided to the author arrived after the original planned date, delaying the work to finalize the music videos themselves.

On November 17th, the pastoral staff presented concerns to the Church Council, leading to a decision to suspend all in-person worship service for the remainder of the month of November and the entirety of the month of December. With this suspension also came the cancelation of all Saturday night services, all Christmas Eve in-person services and all worship services on Sunday reduced to one ‘virtual’ service streamed from the sanctuary of Zion Lutheran Church with pre-recorded music videos produced by the Music Director, the author. The pastoral staff requested the worship service, which had changed in structure to resemble a normal Lutheran worship, to be created for the purpose of broadcasting on Sunday, December 27th. With this in mind, some liturgical concerns were altered to their final form to prepare the worship service to be acceptable to the pastoral staff for its new purpose.

Running Wolf Music is the name of the company owned by the author for the purpose of composing, orchestration and production of both music and video products. The company was formed as a sole proprietorship in the summer of 2017 and has been the author’s own label since completing a Bachelors degree in music at Berklee College of Music. In November the author began compiling the returned video and audio products from the worship musicians to create the music videos to be inserted in a pre-recorded liturgical video. The author began this process by
using ProTools\textsuperscript{36} to recover the audio portions from the videos. The audio portions were combined with the audio-only tracks submitted in individual sessions. Due to the loss of some expected musicians and instrumentation, the author used Finale\textsuperscript{37} to program several MIDI tracks for different songs. These MIDI tracks were then imported as needed into the ProTools session they were related to. The MIDI tracks were sequenced using EastWest Instruments\textsuperscript{38} and mixed with the provided audio tracks. Editing of the audio included extensive use of elastic audio to adjust timing issues between different recordings from the recruited worship musicians. The final step for the audio tracks was mastering the exported mixed tracks using Ozone 9.\textsuperscript{39}

With audio mixed and mastered, the author then turned to Final Cut Pro X\textsuperscript{40} to create the individual music videos including video submitted by several worship musicians from Zion Lutheran. The video were created with layering technics to provide a multi-frame video showing different members of the team singing or playing to the reattached audio track mixed from ProTools. Time compression was used to adjust the speed of all the video to roughly synchronize the videos to the audio track being used. It should be noted that some raw video were submitted at 29 frames per second and other portions of video were submitted at 30 frames per second, causing some further difficulties matching the video. Five of the videos required editing in the studio; the video for “Joseph’s Lullaby” was rematched with its mastered audio


and presented as is. The videos were exported in ‘mp4’ format as individual videos for the use of Zion Lutheran Church as well as to then be imported into the liturgical video to complete the worship service. The final steps in Final Cut Pro X included creating the opening and closing credits, adding the title captioning and the music credits with CCLI notations for licensing purposes. The final product consist of one full worship service and six individual music videos.

This project has led to many lessons learned about creating seasonal special worship services. It has also led to a realization of some things I would change if I had it to do all over again. My first lesson is accepting this project in a year filled with chaos in a pandemic. In the middle of a life altering pandemic, the congregation needs to hear the Word of God, needs to celebrate the birth of the Christ child in the lowly manger, come to save us all. The author had always intended to have a worship project that featured more music in a live setting, based on the author’s own experiences as a worship musician at Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church. In a more rural community suffering through a worldwide pandemic, the abundance of musical resources and the time available to individually prepare is curtailed requiring the amount of music requested of the worship team to also need to be reduced. The author also came to realize that as the Music Director, my own focus on time to study and rehearse music is not always the amount of time available to my volunteer musicians who offer their gifts as part of their own worship to God.

Another lesson learned is the amount of time needed to prepare a largescale worship project. In hindsight, the author would consider beginning the planning and music selection stages in June for a December worship service. With several months added to the work calendar for the project, the musical arrangements would have been available to the worship musicians in early September instead of the first week of October, allowing the worship team more time to
individually rehearse. This became important when the planned worship rehearsals in October to prepare for recording the service were canceled due to occupancy guidelines put in place by the Church Council. Without time to rehearse and learn the music together, and without the opportunity to record each musical track as a team, the timing issues and the loss of some participants affected the timeline and quality of the music offered as a whole to the project. The author can attest that the worth of worship musicians being able to hear and ‘feed’ off each other in the performance of the individual songs is invaluable.

The timing issues and rehearsal issues previously mentioned also contributed to the reduced number of musical offerings shared as part of the worship service. With volunteer musicians learning the music individually, unable to meet together, the volume of music that could be requested had to be controlled and tailored to the needs of the service without overloading the worship musicians. One option that might of relieved the issues caused by the pandemic is moving this worship service to an outside setting. In areas of a more temperate climate, this option would have allowed for the worship musicians to share live the music for the worship service. In North Dakota in November and December, this is a less than ideal option. Temperatures often are below freezing not including the winds that often reach 30 miles per hour sustained. A worship project in late Spring or the Summer would have been less affected by the pandemic with an outdoor concept.

This project has taught me considerable lessons about my worship team as well as the task of managing a large project in a changing health crisis environment. I want to thank the vocalist and instrumentalist that make up ZLC Praise, Reverend Natasha Kolles, Reverend John Streccius and my colleagues, the staff of Zion Lutheran Church in Minot, North Dakota for making this project happen in a very dynamic moving environment.


Gathering

Confession & Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, the parent who rouses us from slumber, the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain, the deliverer who sets us free.

Amen.

Let us come before the living God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection.

As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation,

We open our hearts to you, O God.
Search us and know us.
Reveal all that we keep inside.
To you, O God, we confess our sins, known and unknown.
Forgive us, renew us,
and lead us in your ways of justice and peace.
Make us reflections of the radiant love of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Beloved children of the Most High, you are gathered before the righteous judge who has mercy on all.
Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism, where sin is washed away in the river of life.
Dwell peacefully in the loving arms of the one who nurtures all creation.
Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven in the name of the one who is coming and is already here, ✞ Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Christmas Medley\textsuperscript{41} – ZLC Praise

Arranged by Brian MacGregor White
“Sing We Now of Christmas” – French Traditional
“God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen” – English Traditional
“Emmanuel,” words and music by Michael W. Smith

\textit{Prayer of the Day}

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

\textit{Greeting}

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

\textit{And also with you.}

\textit{The Word}

\textit{First Lesson}

The first lesson comes from the prophecies of Isaiah. (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, 53:1-5, NKJV)

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;

\textsuperscript{41} Michael W. Smith, “Emmanuel,” from Christmastime recorded by Michael W. Smith, © 1983 Meadowgreen Music Company (administered by Capitol CMG Publishing). CCLI Song # 81468, CCLI License # 11050017, CCLI Streaming License # CSPL 168493.
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.
He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel – ZLC Praise
Traditional; words: public domain, music by Aaron Shust
and John Mason Neale42

Second lesson


And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Joseph’s Lullaby – Devin & Kayla Cole
Words and music by Bart Millard and Brown Bannister

**Gospel Acclamation**

*Alleluia.* The virgin shall conceive and *bear a son,* and they shall name *him* Emmanuel. *Alleluia.* *(Matt. 1:23)*

**Gospel**

The Holy Gospel, as written in Matthew, 1:1 – 2:12, NKJV

**Glory to You, O Lord**

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man,* and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.”

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”

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Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also.”

When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

The Gospel of the Lord,

Praise to You, O Christ

The Message – Pastor ________________________.

How Many Kings – ZLC Praise

Words and music by Jason Germain and Marc Martel.44

The Table

Apostle’s Creed

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 into hell.
On the third day He rose again; He ascended into heaven,
He is seated on 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.

*Prayers of Intercession*

_The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate._

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

_A brief silence._

Hear your church, O God, as we pray for all who belong to Jesus Christ. Where the church is scorned, preserve it; where the church is privileged, grant it humility. Lord, in your mercy, 

**hear our prayer.**

Hear your earth, O God, as we pray for its healing and care. Protect the grapevine and the mighty cedar, the mountains and seas and all that is in them. Give life, that all life may call on your name. Lord, in your mercy, 

**hear our prayer.**

Hear the nations, O God, as we pray for those who hold power and authority over people and lands. Help those who create and uphold good laws and those working to reform what is unjust, that the world might better reflect your grace. Lord, in your mercy, 

**hear our prayer.**

Hear those in need, O God, as we pray for all who face uncertainty: refugees and immigrants, those who are imprisoned, and those without work, housing, food, or health care. Bring good news to all in need of hope. Lord, in your mercy, 

**hear our prayer.**

Hear this community of faith, O God, as we pray for families and friends who gather in this season, for travelers and hosts, and for those who will work or serve others this
Christmas. Let the peace of Emmanuel, God-with-us, shine in every heart. Lord, in your mercy, 
**hear our prayer.**

_Here other intercessions may be offered._

Hear all who mourn, O God, as we remember the lives of our beloved dead. Encourage the living to learn from our ancestors in faith as we follow your call. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus’ name. 
_Amen._

**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.

**It’s Christmas (medley)**[^45] – ZLC Praise

Arranged by Ed Cash and Chris Tomlin  
Away in the Manger – Traditional – Public domain  
Go Tell It On the Mountain – Traditional – public Domain

It’s Christmas (chorus) – words and music by James R. Murray and John Wesley Work Jr.

The Sending

Blessing & Benediction

May God, who gathers us in love,
lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice.
May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves,
lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom.
May God, who fills us with good things,
lead you in pathways of equity and abundance.
The blessing of the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
be upon you and remain with you forever.
Amen.

Angels We Have Heard on High\(^4^6\) – ZLC Praise

Words – Traditional – public domain
Music by James Chadwick and Chris Tomlin

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God.

Christmas Worship Project 2020
https://youtu.be/jPjvb3u2AAE

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Appendix B

Music Scores

Christmas Medley

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Joseph’s Lullaby

How Many Kings

It’s Christmas (Horn Section)

Angels We Have Heard On High
Christmas Medley - ZLC Praise

Sing We Now of Christmas
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Emmanuel (Michael W. Smith)

Arranged by
Brian MacGregor White

Flute 1&2
Sing We Now of Christmas (Public Domain)

Flute 1&2
Emmanuel - CCLI Song #1468
©1983 Meadowgreen Music Company (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)
Sing We Now of Christmas - Public Domain, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen - Public Domain
CCLI License #11059017
Christmas Medley - ZLC Praise

Lead

Piano

Ac.Gtr.

E.B.

Lord of all, He is the Prince of Peace, Mighty God, Holy One.

Em... C/E Dm/F Am/E Bb C/Bb Am... F Gm
Christmas Medley - ZLC Praise

Lead

Piano

Ac.Cit.

E.B.

Very Slowly \( \frac{4}{4} \) - 76

Em - man - u - el.

Em - man - u - el.
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Lead Vocal

Piano

Flute

CCLI Song # 5916857
Words are public domain
White Spot Publishing (Admin by Brentwood-Benson Publishing, Inc.)
CCLI License # 11050017
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Lead

Piano

E.B.

Ac. Gtr.

E.B.
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Lead

Piano

Ac.Gtr

E.B

Lead

Piano

Ac.Gtr

E.B
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Lead vocal only

O come, O come Emmanuel

and ransom captive is ra-
Joseph's Lullaby

Bart Millard and
Brown Bannister

Gentle \( \frac{74}{4} \) Cm Bb D Eb F E G Ab Cm Bb D Eb F E G

Piano

\( \frac{4}{4} \) A\( ^{b} \) Cm Bb D Eb F E G A\( ^{maj7} \) Cm Bb D Eb F E G

Piano

\( \frac{4}{4} \) A\( ^{b} \) A\( ^{b} \) Bb A\( ^{b} \) A\( ^{b} \)

Piano

\( \frac{4}{4} \) Eb Fm\( ^{7} \) Eb E G Cm Gm Bb A\( ^{b} \) A\( ^{b} \)

Lead

Go to sleep, my son. Go and chase your dreams. This

Piano

Go to sleep, my son. Go and chase your bed. You

CCLI Song # 4630337
© 2005 Simpleville Music, Banistucy Music
(Admin by Essential Music Publishing LLC, Music Services, Inc.)
Joseph's Lullaby

Lead

Ab          Bb            Eb          Gm          Ab          Bb          Eb          Bb
         D          D          D          D          D          D
have a long road before You, rest Your little head.

world can wait for one more moment Go, and sleep in peace.

Piano

Cm          Ab            Gm          Gm          Ab          Bb
         C          Bb

Lead

Cm          Ab            Gm          Gm          Ab          Bb
         C          Bb
Can You feel the weight of Your glory? Do You understand the price?
I believe the glory of Heaven is lying in my arms tonight.

Piano

Piano

Eh         Bb            Ab          Bb          Eb          Bb          Eb
         Bb          D          D          D          D          D
Or does the Father guard Your heart for now so
Lord, I ask that He for just this moment
Joseph's Lullaby

You can sleep tonight?
Simply be my child.

Go to sleep, my son, and baby close your
Joseph's Lullaby

Lead

Piano

Lead

Piano

Lead

Piano

Lead

Piano

Lead

Piano

Lead

Piano
How Many Kings

_We've projected, a Child in a manger?

Lowly and small, the weakest of all, unlikeliest hero

Wrapped in His mother's shawl, Just a Child, is this who we've waited
How Many Kings

Vocal

for? 'Cause how many kings stepped

down from their thrones? How many lords have abandoned their homes?

How many greats have become the least for me?

Piano
How Many Kings

B  Bmaj7  B  Gm²  Gm

Vocal

how many gods have poured out their hearts to romance a world that has

Piano

Gm²  Gm  C₉sus  C₈m  C₇m²  C₈m

Vocal

torn all a-part? How many fathers gave up their sons for me?

Piano

F₉sus  F♯  B

Vocal

Bring our gifts to the
new-born Savior; all that we have, whether costly or meek, because we believe.

cause we believe, Gold for His honor, and frankincense for His pleasure, and myrrh for the cross He'll suffer.
How Many Kings

C#m7

Do you believe? Is this who we've waited

F#m

for?

D.S. al Coda

Coda

How many fathers gave up their sons for me?
How Many Kings

32
Vocal

32

Piano

On-ly One did that for me.

55
Vocal

55

Oh, all for me.

58
Vocal

58

Oh, oh.
How Many Kings

Vocal:

Piano:

Vocal:

Piano:

Vocal:

Piano:
How Many Kings

Vocal

79
How man-y kings stepped down from their thrones?

82
How man-y lords have a-ban-doned their homes? How man-y greats have

85
be-come the least? How man-y gods have poured out their hearts to

Piano

Vocal

81
G#m2 G#m G#m C#m C#sus C#m

84
C#m2 C#m B Bmaj7 B
How Many Kings

Vocal

88

G₃m²
G₃m
G₃m²
G₃m
C₃sus
C₃m

romance a world that has torn all a-part? How many fathers

Piano

88

Vocal

91

C₃m²
C₃m
F₃sus
F♯
F₃sus
F♯
gave up their sons for me? Only One did that

Piano

91

Vocal

94

B
G₃m

for me.

On.

Piano

94
How Many Kings

Vocal

Piano

Vocal

Piano
How Many Kings
Recorded by Downhere

Intro
| B     |          |          |       Bsus | B       |       Bsus    |

Verse 1
B
Follow the star to a place unexpected
G#m
Would you believe after all we've projected,
C#m7
a Child in a manger?
B
Lowly and small, the weakest of all;
G#m
C#m7
Un-likeliest hero wrapped in His mother's shawl.
F#sus                      F#
Just a Child. Is this who we've waited for?

Chorus
B     B Maj7     B 'Cause how many kings stepped down from their thrones?
G#m2    G#m    G#m2    G#m How many lords have abandoned their homes?
C#sus    C#m    C#m2    C#m    F#sus     F# How many greats have become the least for me?
B     B Maj7     B And how many gods have poured out their hearts
G#m2    G#m    G#m2    G#m to romance a world that has torn all apart?
C#sus    C#m    C#m2    C#m    F#sus     F# How many fathers gave up their sons for me?
(Bridge after 2nd time)

Verse 2
B
Bringing our gifts to the new born Savior;
G#m
all that we have, whether costly or meek,
C#m7    F#7sus/E because we believe.
B                    G#m
Gold for His honor, and frankincense for His pleasure,
and myrrh for the cross He'll suffer.

C#m7 \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

Do you believe? Is this who we've waited for?

*(Chorus)*

*Bridge*

F#sus \hspace{1cm} F# \hspace{1cm} A \hspace{1cm} E/G#

Only One did that for me.

C#m \hspace{1cm} A

Oh, all for me.

N.C. \hspace{1cm} C#m \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

Oh, oh, oh.

C#m \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

All for me, all for you.

C#m \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

All for me, all for you.

C#m \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

All for me, all for you.

C#m \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

All for me, all for you.

*(Chorus 2)*

B \hspace{2cm} B Maj7 \hspace{2cm} B

How many kings stepped down from their thrones?

G#m2 \hspace{1cm} G#m \hspace{1cm} G#m2 \hspace{1cm} G#m

How many lords have abandoned their homes?

C#sus \hspace{1cm} C#m \hspace{1cm} C#m2 \hspace{1cm} C#m

How many greats have become the least?

B \hspace{2cm} B Maj7 \hspace{2cm} B

And how many gods have poured out their hearts

G#m2 \hspace{1cm} G#m \hspace{1cm} G#m2 \hspace{1cm} G#m

to romance a world that has torn all apart?

C#sus \hspace{1cm} C#m \hspace{1cm} C#m2 \hspace{1cm} C#m \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F#

How many fathers gave up their sons for me?

F#sus \hspace{1cm} F# \hspace{1cm} B

Only One did that for me.

B \hspace{1cm} G#m

Oh,

\textit{rit.} \hspace{1cm} \textit{coda}

C#m7 \hspace{1cm} F# \hspace{1cm} F#sus \hspace{1cm} F# \hspace{1cm} B

All for me, all for you.
Capo 4:

Intro
| G         |          |          | Gsus | G        | Gsus | |

Verse 1
G
Follow the star to a place unexpected
Em
Would you believe after all we've projected,
Am7
a Child in a manger?
G
Lowly and small, the weakest of all;
Em Am7
Un-likeliest hero wrapped in His mother's shawl.
Dsus D
Just a Child. Is this who we've waited for?

Chorus
G G Maj7 G
'Cause how many kings stepped down from their thrones?
Em2 Em Em2 Em
How many lords have abandoned their homes?
Asus Am Am2 Am Dsus D
How many greats have become the least for me?
G G Maj7 G
And how many gods have poured out their hearts
Em2 Em Em2 Em
to romance a world that has torn all apart?
Asus Am Am2 Am Dsus D
How many fathers gave up their sons for me?
(Bridge after 2nd time)

Verse 2
G
Bringing our gifts to the new born Savior;
Em
all that we have, whether costly or meek,
Am7 D7sus/C
because we believe.
G Em
Gold for His honor, and frankincense for His pleasure,
and myrrh for the cross He'll suffer.

_Am7_  _Dsus_

Do you believe? Is this who we've waited for?

*(Chorus)*

**Bridge**

_Dsus_  _D_  _F_  _C/E_

Only One did that for me.

_Am_  _F_

Oh, all for me.

N.C.  _Am_  _Dsus_  _D_

Oh, oh, oh.

_Am_  _Dsus_  _D_

All for me, all for you.

_Am_  _Dsus_  _D_

All for me, all for you.

_Am_  _Dsus_  _D_

All for me, all for you.

_Am_  _Dsus_  _D_

All for me, all for you.

**Chorus 2**

_G_  _G Maj7_  _G_

How many kings stepped down from their thrones?

_Em2_  _Em_  _Em2_  _Em_

How many lords have abandoned their homes?

_Asus_  _Am_  _Am2_  _Am_

How many greats have become the least?

_G_  _G Maj7_  _G_

How many gods have poured out their hearts
to romance a world that has torn all apart?

_Asus_  _Am_  _Am2_  _Am_  _Dsus_  _D_

How many fathers gave up their sons for me?

_Dsus_  _D_  _G_

Only One did that for me.

_G_  _Em_

Oh, _rit._

_Am7_  _D_  _Dsus_  _D_  _G_

All for me, all for you.
It's Christmas recorded with music purchased by Zion Lutheran Church through PraiseCharts.com. Horns notated by Brian MacGregor White, Running Wolf Music.
Angels We Have Heard on High recorded with music purchased by Zion Lutheran Church through PraiseCharts.com.
Appendix C

Notes and Correspondence

The following emails are a selection related to the distribution of music and submission of videos. The Project was previously discussed in person with those involved. The final email defines the date the final video/audio was uploaded to the author for mixing.

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**Christmas Project 2020**

4 messages

Brian White <runningwolfstudio@gmail.com>

To: Jared, Candace, Joshua, Tara, Leah, Andrew, Jason, Kristin, Julie

Cc: Pastor Natasha

Thu, Oct 15, 2020 at 3:00 PM

Good afternoon, y'all,

So, as previously mentioned, I'm working on a Christmas project that will fulfill the final requirements for my graduate degree. I'm finishing a Master of Arts: Music & Worship. To complete my degree, I had to pick from one of four options; the one I chose was a worship ministry project related to a church 'high festival'; in this case - Christmas.

In my time with GraceFlock in Atlanta, the team provided a rhythm section for the annual Moravian Love Feast that was always held on the third Sunday of Advent. The Love Feast featured several different wind ensembles as prelude to the full worship service that included the GraceFlock rhythm section, a 35 piece orchestra and a combined choir of roughly four singers. We also featured a Harpist and a Bagpiper along with a full percussion section. It was (and still is) quite the production. It was from these experiences that my original idea formed. While I know we can't pull off such a large production, I also know we have ample talent to create something very special for our congregation at Zion.

When I started to plan this project, I looked forward to a live in person worship service with our full band and several guest musicians to create a beautiful celebration. Due to scheduling with my school and their deadlines of when projects have to be turned in, that plan was altered to doing a recorded service about mid-November and hopefully later actually doing the live service. With recent developments in the pandemic situation and discussions with Pastor Natasha, I have once again made changes. The project will be done entirely virtual and I'm counting on each of you to record your parts and send them to me. I know this sounds like a cumbersome task, but I have thoughts on how to make this work.

Because of the current pandemic situation, the rehearsals I'd hoped to have are just not going to be feasible. But, I will provide each of you with recorded tracks so you can get a feel for the music (including any notation on changes in key from the recorded track). I also have a plan for providing backing music to singers and guitars; I'm sorry pianist and drums - I'm really counting on you to help me build that foundation. The idea is to coordinate recordings from each musician and then I will edit and create the virtual choir videos for each song to then be added into the larger project which will include the instrumental parts put together with Pastor John and Pastor Natasha.

The music selections are:

- Christmas Medley (my arrangement based on a Michael W. Smith concept)
- O Come, O Come Emmanuel - Aaron Shust
- Joseph's Lullaby - Bart Millard of MercyMe (Piano and vocal)
- Angels We Have Heard On High - Chris Tomlin
- How Many Kings - Down Here
- Joy, Unspeakable Joy - Chris Tomlin
- It's Christmas - Chris Tomlin

Most of this music I have ready to go and will be sending out by the end of the week. What I need is singers, keyboards, guitars, drums and flutes. I need y'all! I'm asking that everyone who says yes to helping with this project please carve out some time over the next couple of weeks to rehearse the music and get comfortable with it. If you find a part doesn't make sense, then we can sort that out. I know these songs very well from having done them several times over, but I'm open to your thoughts.

Depending on who is able to help, I might be able to spread the work out over the group, especially the drums and guitars. Please say yes; it'll be a huge help to me and something that Zion can present as a virtual celebration of Christ birth as we come into the Advent season.

---

Brian E. MacGregor White

Running Wolf Music

Jared -> Thu, Oct 15, 2020 at 3:20 PM

---
Christmas 2020 - music request
3 messages

Brian White <runningwolfstudio@gmail.com> Thu, Oct 22, 2020 at 12:00 PM
Cc: Pastor Natasha >

Good morning, y'all,

I want to thank those who have reached out to me over the last two days about the project. And apologize to the group for not having more clarity in the large mass of emails on Tuesday. I know that was a lot to digest and I didn’t indicate where I wanted everyone to plug in. My only excuse is that I had a lot of stuff hitting fast on Tuesday and I dropped the ball some.

I’m enclosing a chart that defines each song and where I'm asking you each to be involved. I don't think I have any person (besides myself) involved in every song. Please review this list and let me know what you think. If there is a chart that you just feel you can’t handle the part I’m asking you to do, please let me know. I'm really counting on everyone's help, but I want to adjust as need be so we can get the best result.

Singers - both lead and backing: the vocal chart I sent for O Come O Come Emmanuel printed to PDF wrong. I’ll send a vocal chart that will be easier to follow. I will spend some time the next couple of days marking vocal charts so that those I’m asking for backing vocals see where I need you to come in. For the most part, singing backing in unison with the lead or in octave will be fine. I don’t want to complicate things with a lot of harmony work when you won’t have the piano to guide while recording. Lead vocals - let me know if there’s a range issue. For How Many Kings, we’re going to do the male lead in tenor, down an octave from where the recording is; that should fix range issues on that song. Kristin S - I am happy to have a phone call or zoom call to help you with the pronunciation of the Latin; it’s really not difficult and very singable. I think your voice is PERFECT for this 'fair'. (I hope to send updated vocal charts by this weekend).

Again ... THANK YOU!

Brian E. MacGregor White
Running Wolf Music

Music Assignments.pdf 27K

Candace .com> Sat, Oct 24, 2020 at 10:40 AM
To: Brian White <runningwolfstudio@gmail.com>

Would it work to send you recordings of a couple of pages at a time? I have a lot of page turns and so thought maybe you could just edit them to flow together? This is page 1 and 2 of how many Kings
Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 22, 2020, at 12:00 PM, Brian White <runningwolfstudio@gmail.com> wrote:
You will find attached the music for the project I am asking everyone to help with. (At this time, I'm holding back the music for "It's Christmas", I have some tweaking to finish with the horn section. I'll get that out just as soon as I can.) I have made some notes on my thoughts of who I want to do certain things please let me know if there are any issues in this for you.

Please start looking at this music as soon as possible. I'm asking everyone to turn in your video recordings (by email is fine) by midnight of Saturday, Nov. 7th. My thought is to work on the actual recordings during the week preceding (Nov 1 - 6) with the drums and piano recorded early to provide some foundation for everyone. This timeline should give me time to handle any edits as well as compiling the entire virtual service in time for the submission to my school (this is my Masters project). We will NOT be meeting to rehearse nor will we meet to record in person due to the current pandemic conditions, so I'm really counting on everyone to get a feel for the songs and give me their best. (Thank you in advance!)

If you are not able to help, please let me know as soon as possible so I can make what changes I may need to make.

Thank you everyone!

Brian E. MacGregor White
Running Wolf Music

15 attachments
- Music Selections.pdf 20K
- Christmas Medley Flute 1 & 2.pdf 206K
- Christmas Medley Guitar.pdf 261K
- Christmas Medley Vocals.pdf 265K
- Christmas Medley Piano.pdf 467K
- Veni Veni Flute.pdf 173K
- Veni Veni Guitar.pdf 227K
- Veni Emmanuel Vocal.pdf 464K
- Veni Veni Clavinova.pdf 313K
- Joseph's Lullaby Score.pdf
Specific vocal charts
2 messages

Brian White <runningwolfstudio@gmail.com> Thu, Oct 22, 2020 at 6:34 PM
To: Jared
Copy: Ian, Leah, Kristin

Brian E. MacGregor White
Running Wolf Music

5 attachments

- Angels We Have Heard Vocal Oct 22.pdf 105K
- Veni Veni Vocals Oct 22.pdf 158K
- It's Christmas Vocals Oct 22.pdf 233K
- Emmanuel Vocals Oct 22.pdf 302K

Jared Thu, Oct 22, 2020 at 8:16 PM
To: Brian White <runningwolfstudio@gmail.com>

Thanks my friend!!! 😊

[Quoted text hidden]
Christmas Medley - Flute 1

Tara Troxel
The following are Staff minutes that provide insight to the changing situation with Covid-19 in the Minot community and the effects on worship at Zion Lutheran Church.

Zion Staff Meeting – 10/20/20 @ 10:30am

Present by Zoom: John, Natasha, Chris, Kortni, Karen, Eric & Brian

Absent: Melody

Check-in Question: What is a movie or TV show you have been getting into the last couple of weeks?

Karen:
  - Attendance from Saturday 18
  - Changes to calendar
    - Leaving Ignite on calendar for now – Natasha & Chris will help Kortni brainstorm some ideas of how to do Youth Group virtually
    - No interest in LYO Gathering – will remove
    - Brian will be adjusting musician schedules
    - Chris will take a vacation day this Friday
    - Record Church School lesson this week to 1pm on Thursday
    - Karen will be out of office 10:45-12:15 on Wednesday – phones will be covered
    - Following week CS Preparation will be moved from 3:30 today to 1:00
  - Follow-up from last meeting:
    - Thanksgiving Eve service & pie social project 11/25 @ 6pm – discussed ways to do the pie project – will be discussed & decided in Programmatic meeting – No report – pie social – Chris will write up instructions – we will provide supplies for congregational members – Kortni will work with Karen on the sign-up
    - ERG Grant: under review – watching for emails
  - Weekend assistants –
    - Saturday: Ushers: ___________ Reader: ___________ 
    - Sunday: Ushers: ___________ Reader: ___________
  - Boundaries Workshop – 11/12 online event – Karen will sign up the staff (8)
  - Bread in Freezer – give to Lord’s Cupboard – Kortni will call – reverse Trick-or-Can is in the planning stages for November
  - Katie with North Central (__________) – wondering if we are interested in hosting an Angel Tree again this year (last year we helped 24 families) - John will check with Sisterhood to see if they would take on this project (Karen talked to Glenda this afternoon and she said Sisterhood would take care of the Angel Tree)
  - Communion – changes to be made? Gordon suggested to make more 1s & 2s as they are throwing more 4s away – John will make up a sheet for in the kitchen for Altar Guild
  - From Melody:
    - As of Sunday, music was not picked out for November yet. I would like at least the first week done so I can start right away on the services. Brian states he will have this done by the end of this weekend.
May be looking at taking Tuesday afternoons as my work from home time. I feel like Mondays is a good time to catch up with you guys and what we have going on before the Pastor's get there and before staff when I usually get most of the week's information.

Chris:
- 5th Sunday of November is the 1st Sunday in Advent – are we going to stay with Narrative Lectionary for Advent or are we doing something else – John/Natasha/Chris will meet regarding Advent on 10/22 @ 11am
- She will be in and out of the office getting November CS bags ready

Kortni:
- Kortni has confirmation pictures ready – in DropBox in November folder
- Kortni & Natasha wants to try to a different way to do Zoom for grades 7 & 8 – will do some testing with staff on break-out rooms, move to different networks
- Eric suggests trying to using a network cable for each of the computers
- Will need to have a brainstorming session for virtual youth groups

Brian:
- Figuring out different options for musicians and need to add to the video/audio library

Eric:
- He is working on the last two of the confirmation clips and editing some of the recorded music
- Eric will contact SRT regarding internet issues we have been having with streaming
- Will come in to disinfect between baptism & worship on Saturday

Natasha:
- Wanted to share with staff a post from Lutheran Leader Moms group – when the heating systems starts up heat dries the air - makes them lighter – easier to transport – be aware of airflow

John:
- Looking ahead – what will Christmas services look like – what would the Christmas ornament look like this year
Zion Staff Meeting – 11/10/20 @ 10:30am

Present by Zoom: John, Natasha, Chris, Kortni, Karen, Melody, Eric & Brian

Absent: none

Check-in Question: If you could go anywhere in the world without the fear of Covid where would you go and who would you take?

Karen:
- Calendar
  - Reschedule next week’s staff meeting due to LCM Soup Day – Natasha will check with Anna
  - Newsletter deadline – Thursday 11/19 – month of December only
  - Issues with Staff calendar – think we have it all resolved
- Worship assistants –
  - Wednesday – no sign ups
  - Altar Guild: ___ & ___
  - Saturday: Ushers: ___ Reader: ___
  - Sunday: Ushers: ___ Reader: ___
- Stewardship/Statement of Intent Cards – Assign to Gwen
- Suggestion for communion – a couple of groups think it would be better to switch to the disposable “lunchables” – they feel there is a lot of waste doing communion the way we are – attendance is dropping and Covid numbers are going up – some may have teams that won’t may not want to come in – we will look into this option
- New Member Orientation – how will that look?
  - Sent out on Wednesday – no responses back yet
  - Send them a packet like we have in the past?
  - Brownie Jar will not work this year – something to replace it – skip it
- Baptism this Saturday – John will check with family – Natasha would rather do it at 3pm
- Boundaries workshop – John will check with Sherrie about zoom link for meeting

Melody:
- Thanksgiving Week – Melody will need to have everything done by Thanksgiving
  - Cancel worship service for that night
  - Encourage people to do the service project if they are able
  - Chris will have the kits available on a table by the end of the week

Chris:
- Moving CS recording to Wed @ 1pm

Kortni:
- J-Walkers last week – 13 kids,
- Miller’s will not able to help with food drive as parents have Covid
- Lord’s Cupboard will only be open from 2-3 – will be contacting guides with the change of plan

Brian:
- Trying to make sure we have music for worship – it is very limited
• Still working on Christmas
• [Redacted] family is doing better

Eric:
• Ready to do anything that is needed – if we go virtual he can will work until his fingers are numb 😊

Natasha:
• Avanell [Redacted] is in Covid unit, Tammy [Redacted] – gifts pastor from Bred of Life
• Working with Erin [Redacted] on a night of lights on Nov. 27

John:
• John will check in with Sherry [Redacted], [Redacted], and anyone else that we think should be checked on

Discussion about how the staff is feeling overwhelmed – scheduled a zoom staff meeting for Friday @ 1pm – staff are to review what duties/items they have to do and bring list to the meeting to go over where others could help or ways we can change or let go of some of the things going on – staff is concerned with the increasing covid cases and are aware of the strain the hospitals and nursing homes are experiencing – John will talk to Kristi B. about how the staff feels
The following is the congregational notification by newsletter of Zion Lutheran Church’s return to virtual worship services due to Covid-19.

Zion Update on Covid 19
Congregational Guidelines

November 18, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of Zion Lutheran Church,

Your council leaders met last evening to discuss and update the guidelines for gathering in this pandemic. Pastor Natasha and I deeply appreciate their strong and balanced leadership.

Taking into consideration the governor’s new mandates, the high rate of Covid infection and reports of increased hospitalization, the decision was made to discontinue all in person worship until the January council meeting. Sadly, this means there were be no in person worship services on Christmas Eve. Funerals will continue to be held with a maximum attendance of 30. Small groups of 10 or less are allowed to meet. Staff will continue to be in the building during regular office hours. Please call to have one of us let you in. Of course masks and appropriate physical distancing will continue to be necessary. Please know that your pastors and staff will continue to connect and support, serve and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every way possible during these difficult times.

Pastor John Streccius

Updates to Hours & Services

Weekly Worship Services
Sundays @ 10:00 am
Wednesdays @ 6:00 pm

All services will be livestreamed on Zion’s YouTube channel.
Subscribe now!

Office Hours
Monday—Friday
8:00 am—4:00 pm

Doors will be locked. Please call the office (701-852-1872) and we will meet you at the door.

*Watch for updates for these services
Saturday worship is postponed until further notice.