

Zion Lutheran Church, 15 S 4<sup>th</sup> St., Harrisburg, PA 17101

**Tuesday Advent 4 Bible Study: December 21, 2021**

**Wait Upon the Lord with Gratitude**

**Series Theme Verse: *They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.***

***Isaiah 40:31***

**Week 4 Theme Verse: I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds. – Psalm 9:1**

**Opening Prayer**

O Lord, rend the heavens and come down. Be our strength every morning and our salvation in the night of despair. Show forth your power and might, just as you did in the days of Zechariah the priest; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit—God forever. Amen.

**Isaiah 51:2-4**

Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, that I might bless him and multiply him. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD comforts Zion; he comforts all her waste places and makes her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, **thanksgiving** and the voice of song. <sup>4</sup> “Give attention to me, my people, and give ear to me, my nation; for a law will go out from me, and I will set my justice for a light to the peoples.

**1 Thessalonians 5:13b – 28**

Be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all. <sup>15</sup> See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. <sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> **give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** <sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup> but test everything; hold fast what is good. <sup>22</sup> Abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup> Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

<sup>25</sup> Brothers, pray for us. <sup>26</sup> Greet all the brothers with a holy kiss. <sup>27</sup> I put you under oath before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers. <sup>28</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**Luke 1:67-79**

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, <sup>68</sup> “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people <sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn

of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, <sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, <sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; <sup>72</sup> to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, <sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us <sup>74</sup> that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. <sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, <sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, <sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high <sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

## **Reflection**

*Luke 1:67-79*

Zechariah’s own story, of nine months’ silence suddenly broken at the naming of the child, is a smaller scale of what was going on in the Israel of his day. Prophecy, many believed, had been silent for a long time. Now it was going to burst out again, to lead many back to true allegiance to their God. What had begun as a kind of punishment for Zechariah’s lack of faith now turns into a new sort of sign, a sign that God is doing a new thing.

*Luke for Everyone; Tom Wright, Westminster John Knox Press*

*1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

There is always something for which to give thanks. Even on the darkest day there are blessings to count. We must always remember that if we face the sun the shadows will fall behind us, but if we turn our backs on the sun all the shadows will be in front.

*The Daily Bible Study Series: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians; William Barclay, Westminster Press*

**How often do you “count your blessings”?**

**How does “counting your blessings” impact you?**

**What could waiting upon the Lord with gratitude look like for you?**

**For what are you thankful right now?**

**Closing Prayer based on Hymn *The First Noel (last verse)***

Then let us all with one accord Sing praises to our heavenly Lord, That hath made heaven and earth of naught, And with His Blood mankind hath bought. Noel. Born is the King of Israel. Amen.