

Zion Lutheran Church Mission Statement:

“Bonded in Christ’s love, we teach, preach, and equip God’s people for discipleship here and throughout the world.”

2025 Lenten Midweek Series

Worship through the Senses



WEEK THREE: SMELL

7 pm Wednesday, March 26, 2025

For those who are hearing challenged, Zion has digital listening devices for your use during worship. Please ask an usher or council member for one and they will show you how to use it.

Prelude & Announcements

This service is a five-part liturgy designed to center on our five senses as a way of exploring the significance of Christ’s incarnation throughout our Lenten journey.

We are all made in the image of God, who chose to share our humanity by joining in our embodied experience.

The sense of smell plays a profound role in our lives, acting as a powerful trigger for memories, emotions, and even social interactions, with the ability to influence our perception of the world around us far beyond simply identifying scents.

When we follow the Holy Spirit no matter where we are lead, the Holy Spirit will give us fresh power to witness and through us diffuse “the fragrance of his knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.” -2nd Corinthians 2:14

Gathering Litany

P- For these forty days, we journey with Jesus down the Lenten path. As we gather, we experience the ways Christ’s embodied life demonstrates God’s love for us.

C- We come with hearts open to learn.

P- We listen to stories of Jesus’ life with God’s people, because they teach us how God calls us to live in in the world.

C- We come to learn from the stories of God’s ancient people, Christ’s life, and the church.

P- We will engage through our senses with the power and mystery of the world God made, because this exploration calls us to wonder.

C- We come to learn through the gifts of our senses.

P- We will light candles to remind each other of the fullness of Christ’s presence with us in our worship and in our world.

C- We come to learn how to better see and reflect the light of Christ.

P- We will pray as Jesus taught us and send each other back into daily life with a deeper connection to the life and love of Jesus.

C- We come to learn how to live more fully in the embodied image of God.

Gathering/Offering Hymn

There is a Balm in Gilead

ELW 614

Refrain:

There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole;
there is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Sometimes I feel discouraged
and think my work's in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again. [Refrain]

2 If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus
and say, "He died for all." [Refrain]

3 Don't ever be discouraged,
for Jesus is your friend;
and if you lack for knowledge,
he'll not refuse to lend. [Refrain]

Opening Prayer

P- God incarnate,

C- you have given us a sense of smell to breathe in awareness of the world around us and to connect with our memories. Open our minds and our hearts to receive the gifts you have for us, and teach us to share these gifts with the world. Amen

“Smell is a potent wizard that transports you across thousands of miles
and all the years you have lived.”

Helen Keller

Thanksgiving for an Embodied God

P- God has created and blessed us. In Jesus, God has joined us in the experience of embodied life as an expression of God’s own love and joy. Through exploration of our own physical senses we are invited to know God in new ways.

C- In thanksgiving for the gift of incarnation, we light the altar candles.

Pause to light the altar candles.

P- Through the beauty of the candle’s light,

C- we see the brightness of God’s love shining in every darkness.

P- Though the warmth of the candle’s heat,

C- we feel the strength of God’s love burning through all obstacles.

P- In the scent of the candle’s oil,

C- we remember the promise of our prayers rise up to you.

P- In the flavor of the candle’s smoke,

C- we taste the persistence of God’s love, surviving in the flames and taking new form.

P- In the sound of the candle’s flame crackling,

C- we hear the dance of God’s love, which we are invited to join.

P- May the light, warmth, scent, flavor and sound of our candles lead us deeper into the love of God today and always.

C- Amen

Christmas in Bethlehem. The ancient dream: a cold, clear night made brilliant by a glorious star, the smell of incense, shepherds and wise men falling on their knees in adoration of the sweet baby, the incarnation of pure love.

~Lucinda Franks

John 12:1-8

P- As we listen to the story of a gift of love and preparation, notice the description of how the scent of perfume fills the room. Consider how this sensory description underlays and amplifies the heavy emotions at play in this scene.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

"Smell is primordial sense, more powerful, more primitive, more intimately tied to memories and emotions than any other. A scent can trigger spiritually, emotional and physical peace and stimulate healing and wellness."

~**Donna Karan**

Reflection

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.**

Sending Hymn

In the Cross of Christ I Glory

ELW 324

1 In the cross of Christ I glory,
tow'ring o'er the wrecks of time.
All the light of sacred story
gathers round its head sublime.

2 When the woes of life o'ertake me,
hopes deceive, and fears annoy,
never shall the cross forsake me;
lo, it glows with peace and joy.

3 When the sun of bliss is beaming
light and love upon my way,
from the cross the radiance streaming
adds more luster to the day.

4 Bane and blessing, pain and pleasure,
by the cross are sanctified;
peace is there that knows no measure,
joys that through all time abide.

LENT
2025

