



THIRD SUNDAY OF
ADVENT

December 14, 2025

ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH

Stratford, Ontario

Church Office: 519-271-8527

Email: zionlc@golden.net

Cell: 519-274-1300

Website: www.zionstratford.com

People of Zion

Rev. Jeffrey Laustsen

Sister Jean Widmeyer

Laura Burton

Éric Charbonneau

Ministers

Pastor

Visitation Minister

Organist

Pianist

Advent 3

December 14, 2025

GATHERING

Prelude

Welcome, Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

Page 116

Hymn 263: “Saviour of the Nations, Come”

Greeting

Page 120

Prayer of the Day:

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

Psalm: 146:5-10

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

Gospel Acclamation

Page 124

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday School Christmas Lessons and Carols

Sermon: https://www.youtube.com/live/HkLwMtKPM4c?si=qCD11bgUkMv0Z_CD

Hymn 767: “Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me”

Nicene Creed

Page 126

Prayers of Intercession

Sharing the Peace

Page 128

MEAL

Offering Hymn 186: “Create in Me a Clean Heart”

Offering Prayer

Page 129

The Great Thanksgiving

Page 129

Communion Prayer

Page 132

The Lord’s Prayer

Page 134

Distribution of Holy Communion

Distribution Hymns: 773, 764

SENDING

Post-Communion Blessing

Page 136

Post-Communion Prayer

Blessing

Page 136

Hymn 774: “What a Fellowship, What a Joy Divine”

Dismissal

Page 137

Postlude

Zion Lutheran Church welcomes our **visitors and guests**. We are pleased that you have come to join us in the worship of our God of grace and love. May you be strengthened and uplifted in our time together. *Please sign our guest register and make yourself known to Pastor Jeff.* We hope that you will plan to be with us, again, at your earliest opportunity.

All people of faith and those who seek faith are welcome to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. This morning, we will be distributing the Lord’s Supper in a continuous fashion. Trays holding individual cups of wine are on stands at either side of Pastor Jeff for those wishing to receive wine. **We are making available a small number of individual glasses filled with non-alcoholic white wine. These are for those not wishing to partake in the red wine containing alcohol.** The ushers will invite the congregation to come forward down the center aisle.

Please note that masks are now “optional or personal preference”. Disposable masks remain at all entrances for those wishing to continue to wear one.



THIS WEEK WE PRAY:

>for our members and friends with special needs: Jim, Wayne, Doris, Matthew, Marjorie, Bill, Marie, Jamie, Marg, Marleen, Nancy, Gwen, Jim, Jack, Diane, Gloria, Kathleen, Tony, Paul, Wendy, Joan, Devon, Hollice, Joyce, Maria, Tom, Marian, Leanne, Isabelle, Al, Brian, Paul, Nya, and Cathy;
>for those who have no one to pray for them.

THIS WEEK AT ZION:

<u>Mon. December 15</u>	2:00 PM Prayer Shawl Ministry 3:00 PM CFUW in Boardroom 6:00-8:00 PM Girl Guides in Parlour 7:15 pm Choir in Chapel
<u>Tues. December 16</u>	9:30 AM Chair Yoga in Fellowship Hall 7:00 PM ACO in Boardroom
<u>Wed. December 17</u>	9:00 AM Quilters in Parlour
<u>Thurs. December 18</u>	12:00 Noon Bible Study in Parlour 2:15 PM Knollcrest Worship 4:30 PM Confirmation in Parlour 6:30-8:00 PM Girl Guides in Fellowship Hall
<u>Sun. December 21</u>	* ADVENT 4* 10:00 AM Worship 10:00 AM Sunday School Christmas Concert 12:30 – 6:00 PM Teutonia Choir Christmas in Fellowship Hall

SERVING NEXT SUNDAY, December 21st AS WE WORSHIP

Greeters: Gerald & Isabel Cook
Usher Captain: Darrell Renecker
Altar: Shirley Whittaker

Reader: Fritz Steigmeier
Counting Captain: Jan Bennewitz
House of Blessing: Jan Bennewitz



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:

The children and staff of the Sunday School invite you to join them in the Fellowship Hall after today's service to enjoy some refreshments and treats.

Sunday School will be taking a break after today.
Sunday School will resume on Sunday, January 11th, 2026.

FLOWERS FOR CHRISTMAS:



Donations are now being accepted until the middle of December so the Women of Faith can purchase flowers to decorate the church for our Christmas celebrations. If you wish to donate, please put **“Christmas Flowers” and your name on a separate envelope** and place it on an offering plate located at the back of the Sanctuary or at the ramp entrance; drop it off in the locked mailbox, or bring it to the church office. Thank you for your gift!

CHRISTMAS OFFERING: As in the past, the “Christmas” offering envelopes for this year will be apportioned one-half to the Kiwanis Christmas Basket Fund and one-half to the Current Fund.

“Christmas” offering envelopes are available on the tables at all entrances to the Sanctuary.

“Thank you” for your continued support!

YEAR-END OFFERING DEADLINE: Please note that all 2025 offerings need to be received by December 31st in order to be included on your 2025 tax receipt.

“Thank you” for everyone’s continued financial support.

2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available for pickup on the table at the back of the church. If you wish to pick up your envelopes from the office, you can pick them up just inside the doors off the side parking lot. The office is open Mondays from 8:30 am to 11:30 am and Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 8:00 am to 1:00 p.m.

Please DO NOT use your 2026 envelopes until January, 2026. Please call Jane in the office 519-271-8527 if you cannot find your offering envelopes or if you wish to start receiving them for weekly offerings. You may also contact the office if you wish to switch to PAR, the pre-authorized offering program. Thank you!

ETERNITY FOR TODAY: It’s that time of year to renew your Eternity For Today subscription. If you are interested in renewing or if you want to register to receive this daily reflection book, please contact Jane in the office at 519-271-8527.

GIFTS FROM THE HEART: Gifts from the Heart 2025 Christmas Catalogues are here and have been placed at each of the entrances. Give Gifts from the Heart this Christmas! Canadian Lutheran World Relief's new Gifts from the Heart catalogue has something to inspire and delight anyone on your list this year. It's full of meaningful, tangible gifts that will touch your loved ones and share God's love with the world. The "Tiny Hearts" section is a good way to introduce children to helping others less fortunate. You can shop from the catalogue or online at clwr.org/GFTH.

STRATFORD SYMPHONY YOUTH CHOIR WINTER (SSYO) RECITAL & HOLIDAY SING-ALONG:

Now in their fifth season, come support SSYO local young talent by joining the Stratford Symphony Youth Orchestra for their winter recital.

This year they welcome special guests *Festival Sounds Chorus* to perform accapella carols for everyone, before inviting us to sing-along our favourite holiday carols.

Conductor: Éric Charbonneau

Special Guests: *Festival Sounds Chorus & Breathless Saxophone Ensemble*

Monday, December 15, 2025

7:30 PM

Avondale United Church

194 Avondale Ave., Stratford

Tickets:

Admission is Pay-What-You-Wish from \$0-\$25

All proceeds support youth orchestra programming

LONGEST NIGHT: A reflective and spacious worship service on the longest night of the year for you to come and find your place in the love, compassion and presence of God.

In a season filled with expectation, anticipation and tradition, it can be hard to live it all when weariness, grief or anxiety feels all too close. To honour it and make space for the shadow side of this time, you are invited to take this opportunity to come together. If you wish, bring a friend along. Sunday, December 21st at 7:00 PM at Avondale United Church, 194 Avondale Ave., Stratford.

Stay as long as you wish and leave in thoughtful silence when you are ready.

FREE COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS EVE DINNER: Avon Church is hosting a **free community Christmas Eve Dinner at The Local (612 Erie Street) on December 24th from 4:30 – 6:00 PM.** Everyone is welcome to attend!

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Wednesday, December 24	4:00 PM	Christmas Eve
Wednesday, December 24	7:00 PM	Christmas Eve
Thursday, December 25	10:00 AM	Christmas Day



CHRISTMAS TOY PROGRAM: NOVEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 17

The Christmas season is almost here, and we're getting ready for one of our favourite events of the year: our **Christmas Toy Program!**

We're looking for **compassionate, friendly, and festive volunteers** to help families choose toys for their children. Shifts are **2 hours each during the day**, and every pair of helping hands makes a big difference.

This program brings so much joy to our community, and volunteers truly help make the holiday spirit come alive. If you can spare a couple of hours, we'd love to have you join us!

Please **contact Joanne at volunteer@shob.org or 519-273-3433 ext. 204** to learn more about available shift times or to sign up.

Thank you for helping us make Christmas brighter for so many local families. 🎄

We have received a "most-needed items list" from the House of Blessing. To help them with their significant increase in the number of people using their services, as you are able, if you could bring **hot and cold cereal or rice** and place them in the basket at the entrance of the church. Thank you for sharing your blessings with those in need.

STRATFORD CONNECTION CENTRE: The "urgent needs" list includes razors, toothbrushes, basic t-shirts (medium), ground coffee, packaged grab & go snacks and deodorant. Whatever help you can provide is greatly appreciated!

Please Note: Due to limited space, Stratford Connection Centre is not able to accept donations of clothing. If you have clothing to donate, please take it to Goodwill as this is where Stratford Connection takes their homeless for clothing.

HOWEVER, donations of socks, underwear, hats, scarves and mittens (preferably water proof mittens) are needed and accepted at Stratford Connection. Thank you!

Please drop off donations in the bins at the back of the Sanctuary or inside the office entrance door.

The sandwich makers for the Connection Centre would greatly appreciate donations of food gift cards from Walmart or Food Basics. Any support you are able to provide is most welcome.

Thank You!

