

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ

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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Associate Pastor

Mr. Denny Daugherty, Adult Choir Director & Tech Director

Mr. Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

Ms. Donna Gross, Custodian

December 24, 2023

10:00 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas Eve is a joyous time for all who open their hearts and minds to our loving Creator. Let us allow the true meaning of Christmas to stir up love within us. During the service today, we will be serving communion. Please know that all are invited to participate in Holy Communion.

Thank you for worshiping with us today. If you are a guest we invite you to take a moment to complete a visitor's card located in the back of the pew in front of you and place it in the offering plate when it is passed. We also invite you to sign your name in our guest book located in the back entrance of the sanctuary.

We welcome infants and children and all their wiggles & voices in our worship! For your comfort, we also have a children's corner in the back of the sanctuary where your child can relax and play and you can still participate in the worship experience. We pray God's blessing upon you. For today's service, we will be using the red & black hymnals.

GATHERING MUSIC

*Christmas Piano Selections
Gesu Bambino*

played by Travis Pinci
sung by Debbie Butcher

CHRISTMAS GREETING

CALL TO WORSHIP¹

L: On this night of anticipation,

C: we come, for promises fulfilled, joining with Elizabeth and Zechariah.

L: On this most silent night,

C: we come, our hopes and dreams, joining those of Mary and Joseph.

L: On this holiest of nights

C: we come, joining the shepherds who are stunned by wonder.

L: On this night of carols and candlelight,

C: we come, our glad songs joining with the choirs of angels over us.

INVITATION TO THE STABLE²

*CAROL NO. 112 (red hymnal, see below)

O Come All Ye Faithful

O Come, All Ye Faithful (Traditional)

Tr. Frederick Oakley, 1841

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♩ = 80

Piano



1. O come all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri -
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul -
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py

5



- um - phant! O come ye O come ye to Beth - le -
- ta - tion, sing all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a -
mor - ning Je - sus to thee be all glo - ry

9



- hem! Come and be - hold Him, born the King of
- bove: "Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the
giv'n; Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap -

13



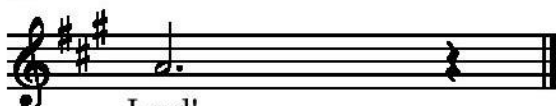
an - gels; O come let us a - dore Him, O come let us a -
high - est;
- pear - ing;

17



- dore Him, O come let us a - dore Him Christ the

21



Lord!

***PRAYERS OF CELEBRATION: IN THIS SMALL PLACE MADE GLORIOUS³**

L: God of unimaginable love, on the first Christmas You became one of us.

C: We celebrate Your love for every person in every place and time.

L: God of all humanity, You offered Your Peace to anyone who would be satisfied with Your presence.

C: We celebrate Your Peace in Your Church and accept Your commission to share it in all the world.

L: God of the shepherds, You announced Your arrival among us to the poorest, the most humble.

C: We celebrate Your Good News to each of us and to everyone, right here where we are.

L: God of the manger, You came to us through Your Son in a small and simple stable.

C: We celebrate Your presence with us this day in this small place made glorious by Your being in it.

L: God of deliverance, You came to be one of us in order to deliver all of us.

C: We celebrate Your protection and mercy toward all who are sick or in trouble.

L: God of birth, when You became as we are, You opened Yourself to each of us, no matter who or what we are.

C: We celebrate this day Your Kingdom and that we are welcome in it right now and always. Keep us close, now and in the life to come.

L: God of Christmas, bless us as we once again celebrate Your coming into Your creation. We trust that Your glory and goodness as proclaimed by the angels is still true for us this day. We celebrate your healing, love and grace.

C: Amen.

***ACT OF PRAISE** (see next page)

Angels We Have Heard on High

Angels We Have Heard on High

(Traditional)

♩ = 80

Piano 

1. An - gels we have heard on high, sweet - ly sing - ing
 2. Shep - herds why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous
 3. Come to Beth - le - hem and see Him whose birth the

4



o'er the plains, and the moun - tains in re - ply ech - o - ing their
 strains pro - long? What the glad - some tid - ings be which in - spire your
 an - gels sing; Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee, Christ the Lord, the

8



joy - ous strains Glo -
 heav'n - ly song?
 new - born

12



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o, Glo -

16



ri - a, in ex - cel - sis

20



De - o.

FIRST LESSON
WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

He Is Born

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)
by Armstrong

GOSPEL READING
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
POEM⁴

Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV)

First Coming

*HYMN NO. 128 NCH (black hymnal, see below)

In the Bleak Midwinter

In the Bleak Midwinter

Christina Rossetti

Gustav Holst

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$\text{♩} = 80$
Piano 

1. In the bleak mid - win - ter, frost - y wind made moan,
2. Our God tran - scends all heav - en, earth, and its do - main;
3. An - gels and arch - an - gels may have gath - ered there,
4. What can I of - fer, poor as I am?

6



earth stood hard as i - ron, wa - ter like a stone;
heaven and earth shall flee a - way when Christ comes to reign;
cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim thronged the mid - night air;
If I were a shep - herd, I would bring a lamb.

10



Snow had fall - en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid - win - ter a sta - ble place suf - ficed the
But his moth - er on - ly, in her maid - en bliss,
If I were a wise one, I would do my part; but

14



in the bleak mid - win - ter, long a - go.
sov - ereign God al - might - y, Je - sus Christ.
wor - shiped the be - lov - ed with a kiss.
what can I of - fer: all my heart.

O Come, All Ye Faithful (Traditional)

Tr. Frederick Oakley, 1841

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. O come all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri -
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul -
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py

5

- um - phant! O come ye O come ye to Beth - le -
- ta - tion, sing all ye cit - i - zens of heav'n a -
mor - ning Je - sus to thee be all glo - ry

9

- hem!
- bove:
giv'n; Come and be - hold Him, born the King of
"Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap -

13

an - gels; O come let us a - dore Him, O come let us a -
high - est;
- pear - ing;

17

- dore Him, O come let us a - dore Him Christ the

21

Lord!

OFFERING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

Still, Still, Still

Traditional

PRAYER OF DEDICATION⁵

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION⁶

The communion liturgy will be sung to the tune of "What Child is This." Please join in this liturgy as we prepare for the sacrament of Holy Communion.

L: Lift up your hearts unto the Lord. Sing unto God your praises. We gather on this holy night. We gather at this table.

ALL SING: Lift, lift your hearts up high! Sing praise to God, and glorify! Praise, praise, the Prince of Peace, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: God breathed in us the breath of life. God gave the gift of Eden. We turned away and sin was born; We sought for greener gardens.

ALL SING: Lift, lift your hearts up high! Sing praise to God, and glorify! Praise, praise, the Prince of Peace, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: God called to us from age to age through messengers and prophets. When we would not our hearts give way, the Word-made-flesh God sent us.

ALL SING: This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: O Holy God of power and might! Hosanna in excelsis! Blessed be the one who in your name comes! Hosanna in the highest!

ALL SING: This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; Haste, haste to bring him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: The Word-made-flesh, Emmanuel; God, come to live among us! He preached good news: the kingdom come! A light shone in the darkness.

ALL SING: Nails, spear shall pierce Him through! The Cross be borne for me for you. Hail! Hail, the Word made flesh; the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: And on the night he was betrayed, Christ took the bread and broke it.

Thanking God, he shared this gift. "Remember, when you eat it!"

ALL SING: Nails, spear shall pierce Him through! The Cross be borne for me for you. Hail! Hail, the Word made flesh; the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: He took the cup and raised it up. "My life I pour out for you. From sin, set free! Remember me! We covenant anew."

ALL SING: Nails, spear shall pierce Him through! The Cross be borne for me for you. Hail! Hail, the Word made flesh; the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: Pour out your Spirit, Holy God, upon these gifts, and bless them. Make them for us the Bread of Life, the Cup of our Salvation!

ALL SING: Raise, raise the song on high! The Virgin sings her lullaby: Joy, joy for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

L: As we raise the song on high and rejoice in Christ birth, together let us share Christ's prayer:

ALL: 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS (all cups contain grape juice)

During the sharing of the elements, we will be singing various Christmas Carols. Words for the songs will be listed on the screens. The hymnal numbers are also listed below if you'd prefer to use a hymnal.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, #107 (red hymnal)

Away in a Manger, #109 (red hymnal)

O Little Town of Bethlehem, #102 (red hymnal)

The First Noel, #118 (red hymnal)

Hark the Herald Angels Sing, #108 (red hymnal)

What Child is This, #148 (black hymnal)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (to the tune of "What Child is This")

L: Thank God for Holy Mystery; Body of Christ; the gift of life! As we depart, let us take heart: God's light will lead us always!

ALL SING: Raise, raise the song on high! The Virgin sings her lullaby: Joy, joy, for Christ is born, the Babe, the Son of Mary!

L: As we raise the song on high and rejoice in Christ birth, together let us share Christ's prayer:

SOPRANO SOLO (sung by Debbie Butcher)

O Holy Night

by Adam

PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

A CHRISTMAS CONFESSION⁷

L: We were heavy with sorrow, but joy interrupted. We were deep in the night, but a star appeared. We were silent with sadness, but the heavens rang.

C: And the splendor shone around them when the time had fully come.

L: We were hardened by conflict, but love intervened. We were frightened by shadows, but light took them away. We were haunted by fears, but a child brought us hope.

C: And she laid him in a manger when the time had fully come.

L: We were dismal and defeated, but faith set us on fire. We were weary and complaining, but our hearts discovered praise. We were doubtful and confused, but a door to life was opened.

C: And the guiding star went before them when the time had fully come.

L: We were arrogant and angry, but his innocence disarmed us. We were cruel, crude, and clumsy, but his grace made all things new. We were selfish, narrow, greedy, but his joy we had to share.

C: And they offered him their treasured gifts when the time had fully come.

L: We were sheep who had lost their way, but the shepherd knew our names. We were strangers without a country, but our kingdom came to us. We were children far from home, but God sent his Son to guide.

C: And the Word was flesh among us when the time had fully come.

L: The time is now—Christ born in the stable brings us His light—and we share the light of His love. For the time has fully come.

CAROL (see next page)

Silent Night, Holy Night

***CLOSING LITANY: IN THE QUIET OF THE NIGHT**

L: In the quiet of the night; We have heard God's truth;

ALL: A personal word of life given for our redemption.

L: In the quiet of the night—In the quiet of this night—

ALL: We are called to act. We are called to care. We are called to share a personal story of Christmas, a personal story of salvation.

L: In the quiet of this night from a humble stable

ALL: God sends us to be living faith: A personal invitation, a personal voice of hope, a personal hand of service, in our day-to-day acts, in our day-to-day relationships. May God grant that it be so. Amen.

Individual lights are extinguished as light returns to the Sanctuary.

Silent Night

Franz Gruber, 1818

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Piano 

1. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, all is calm,
2. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, shep-herds quake,
3. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, Son of God,
4. Si - lent night, ho - ly night, won-drous star,

4



all is bright round yon vir - gin mo-ther and child.
at the sight; Glo - ries stream from hea-ven a - far,
love's pure light; ra - diant beams from thy ho - ly face
lend thy light, with the an - gels let us sing,

7



Ho - ly in - fant so ten-der and mild, sleep in heav - en-ly
heav - enly hosts sing, Al - le - lu - ia! Christ the Sav - ior is
with the dawn of re - dee - ming grace, Je - sus Lord at thy
Al - le - lu - ia to our King; Christ the Sav - ior is

10



peace, sleep in heav - en-ly peace.
born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.
birth, Je - sus Lord at thy birth.
born, Christ the Sav - ior is born.

Joy to the World

Isaac Watts

George Handel

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Piano 

1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come; Let
2. Joy to the earth! The Sa - vior reigns; Let
3. He rules the world with truth and grace, and

5



earth re - ceive her King; Let ev - ry
men their songs em - ploy! While fie - lds and
makes the na - tions prove the glo - ries

9



heart pre - pare Him room and heav'n and na - ture
floods, rocks, hills and plains re - peat the sound - ing
of his right - eous ness and won - ders of His

13



sing, and heav'n and na - ture sing, and hea - v'n and
joy, re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat re -
love, and won - ders of His love, and won - ders and

17



hea - v'n and na - ture sing.
- peat the sound - ing joy.
won - ders of His love.

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace and joy.

Share the Good News

Christ is born in the stable

God is with us

and life will never be the same!

C: Thanks be to God. We will and share the news!

POSTLUDE

Carol of the Bells

Traditional

References

¹The Christmas Eve Call to Worship is adapted from the writings of Rev. Thom Shuman, Lectionary Liturgies. Posted on LiturgyLink. <http://www.liturgylink.net/>

²The Invitation to the Stable is adapted from the writing of Lisa Frenz and shared for use on Lisa's Liturgies, 2006. <https://sites.google.com/site/lisasliturgies/home/christmas/christmas-eve-2006>

³The Prayers of Celebration is written by Brad Offutt for the 2008 Christmas services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Port Townsend, Washington. Posted on In the Courtyard. www.inthecourtyard.com

⁴First Coming is written by Madeleine L'Engle, in *Cry Like a Bell*, 57. Posted on Growing in Grace. <http://carolinemccain.wordpress.com/> and accessed 12/14/23 for use.

⁵The Offertory Prayer is written by the Discipleship Ministries of the United Methodist Church and accessed at <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/come-home-for-christmas/christmas-eve-year-c-lectionary-planning-notes/christmas-eve-year-c-offertory-prayers> on 12/12/23.

⁶Text: Beth Quick, 2013. Refrain text, vs. 3-9: William C. Dix, 1865.

⁷A Christmas Confession is written by Kenneth I. Morse, from "In Straw and Story," p.80, Brethren Press, copyright 1977. Posted on the Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren website. <http://rockhay.tripod.com/>

⁸In the Quiet of the Night is written by written by Lisa Frenz, in *An Order of Worship for Christmas Eve*, and posted on the Mount Carmel Lutheran Church website. Copyright Lisa Frenz. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission.

Merry Christmas to All!

Welcome Team & Communion Servers: Tori Everhart, Nancy Kinard

Liturgist: Deb Herlocker

Communion Assistant: Rev. Jason Northridge

Tech Team: Jack Herlocker

Thank you to Debbie Butcher for enhancing today's worship with their talents. Thank you to the vocal quartet for their meaningful musical contribution to this evening. The quartet is made up of: Debbie Butcher, Brenda Beyer, Denny Daugherty, & Braden Bicher.

Thank you to Patsy & Lee Brown, of Brown's Tree Farm, for donating our Christmas tree and wreaths.

Thank you to Jim Beyer for creating the beautiful art for our bulletin cover!

If you commune, please complete a communion card found in the pew racks and place it in the offering plate.

During the candle lighting ceremony, please hold lighted candles vertical, and **tip the unlighted** candle to the lighted one.

Please pick up your 2024 offering envelopes if you haven't already done so. They are on the table in the west narthex. All contributions must be received at the church on or before December 24th, 2023 in order to get credited to your 2022 giving statements.

Mt. Zion is Streaming! This service will be posted on the Mt. Zion website at: <http://www.mtzionucc.org/services-online.html>, with both a live feed (during the actual service) and a version you can watch later. We offer a hearing assistance system called *Listen Technologies*. If you would like to use a receiver, please check with the volunteers at the sound booth at the rear of the sanctuary.