

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

3:00 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 worshipping 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.

PRAISE TEAM OPENER

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

PRELUDE (played by Daniel McCracken)

Sing We Now of Christmas

Traditional French Carol/arr. Robert D. Vandal

INVITATION TO THE STABLE¹

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

He Is Born

by Armstrong

CALL TO WORSHIP²

L: Let us look to the stable, in heart and mind, to see what has come to pass.

Let us wait with Elizabeth, Zechariah, and baby John--

C: Let us watch for the way of joy and the power of love to be made clear.

L: Let us travel with Mary and Joseph:

C: Let us wait for blessings of hope and the renewal of peace.

L: Let us follow with the shepherds:

C: Let us go to find the Savior!

L: Let us seek with all who hear the Good News:

C: Let us go to find God's promise, born for us!

L: Let us go with all the world, with all the peoples of the nations to the stable.

Come, let us worship; come, let us adore him:

C: Christ the Lord!

***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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$\text{♩} = 80$

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!

***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 NO. 105** (red hymnal, 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

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)
Jesus What a Wonderful Child by Carney

GOSPEL READING
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE
POEM⁴

Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV)
First Coming

*HYMN NO. 154 NCH (black hymnal, see below)

Go Tell It on the Mountain

Go Tell It on the Mountain

African American Spiritual

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Piano $\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/2 time signature. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The lyrics are: 'Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hill and ev - ery - where. Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je-sus Christ is born! 1. While 2. The 3. Down shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night, Be - shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth rang and in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born, and - hold through-out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light. out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth. God sent us sal - va - tion that that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.'

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hill and ev - ery - where.

5
Go tell it on the moun - tain, that Je-sus Christ is born! 1. While
2. The
3. Down

9
shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night, Be -
shep-herds feared and trem-bled when lo! a - bove the earth rang and
in a low - ly man - ger the hum - ble Christ was born, and

13
- hold through-out the heav - ens there shone a ho - ly light.
out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
God sent us sal - va - tion that that bless - ed Christ-mas morn.

OFFERING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY *Away in a Manger with Brahm's Lullaby*

arr. Fetteke

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION⁵

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION⁴

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

L: Gathering around the table as we celebrate new life borning, we remember so many stories shared around tables; tables where bread is broken and cup is poured out, where families gather and generations share, where stories are remembered, refined, reshaped.

(The Congregation is invited to sing in response)

C: Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo! Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

L: Gathering around the table on this holy night, we remember the story of the sacred daring to share our life, the story of the holy donning human flesh and dwelling among us, a story that is at once both ethereal and earthly. The story of how this baby, Christ, Emmanuel grew and shared a meal—In the night in which he was betrayed our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: ‘Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.’ Again, after supper he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: ‘This cup is new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.’

C: Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo! Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

L: Gathering around the table on this Christmas night, we break the bread and remember the paradox that it is in our brokenness that we become whole; we fill this cup and remember the abundance discovered in each new sharing of our sacred stories.

C: Gloria, gloria, in excelsis deo! Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!

L: Together, around the table, we pray: Come, holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be opened, that we might recognize the Spirit rising in our midst indeed, in one another. Come, holy Spirit, come.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

(sung to the tune of Away in a Manger)

L: And just as we remember the story of the Christ child around the table—
we together remember and sing the prayer he gifted to us:

**ALL: Our Father in heaven, all praise to Your name! Your kingdom
among us, your will done the same By mortals and angels, Come,
Lord, reign alone; Oh hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day; As we forgive others,
our sins take away; In times of temptation, to lead us be near; From
evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom; o'er all things Your reign. And Yours is the
power; all things You maintain. To You be the glory, resounding
again from all of creation, forever! Amen.**

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

*At Mt. Zion all are welcome to share in Christ's meal. Today, Communion will be distributed
by our Welcome Team members and passed down the pews for distribution —first bread, then
the cup which is filled with grape juice. Gluten Free wafers are available as desired. We invite you
to hold your bread and cup until the community is invited to eat together by the Pastor. Please
dispose of your cup after worship.*

*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.*

*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)
Away in a Manger, #109 (red hymnal)
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, #107 (red hymnal)*

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

P: We give you thanks, O God, that in this bread and cup of Christ's very life, you give us food for our journey. As you led the shepherds to the stable, guide us on the way unfolding before us. Wherever we go, may our lives proclaim good news of great joy in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SOPRANO SOLO (sung by Debbie Butcher)

O Holy Night

by Adam

*PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

L: Here, in the stable, on this holy night, there is hope—

C: For God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.

L: In the stable, there is peace—

C: For all that separates us from God falls away.

L: In the stable, there is joy—

C: For God created music, and Christmas cookies, and laughter that is contagious and babies that love peek-a-boo; and if those things have God's fingerprints, then God surely exudes joy.

L: In the stable, there is love—

C: Because God is love, from start to finish, and that love exists for us all.

L: And in the center of our hope—in the center of our peace—in the center of our joy—in the center of our love—is Emmanuel- who came to this earth to dwell among us. Who invites each and every one of us to be at home with Him. Who brings God's home to us—in a stable in Bethlehem—and here and now.

C: So tonight we share God's light, for God's love just could not stay home. Amen.

Our Welcome Team members will distribute Christ's light to the ends of the aisle. When passing Christ's light, we ask that lit candles stand tall and steady while unlit candles tip to receive the light.

Silent Night

Franz Gruber, 1818

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$\text{♩} = 80$

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.

*** A CHRISTMAS BLESSING⁶**

L: It has been done! The News has been shared!

C: A young maiden will bear a child, and she will call him Jesus.

L: But that is the beginning of the story, a story that has not yet ended.

C: A story that includes us, a story of which we are a part.

L: So, we go out to live the story, to tell of the Hope that is being born among us this Christmas,

C: to share the Love of the season with the world, to be agents of Peace in times of trouble, to sing songs of deep and abiding Joy.

L: As you go, may God go with you, challenging you to respond to God's Call in ways that are new, unexpected and deeply needed. Go forth from the stable—and share the Good News. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN NO. 120** (red hymnal, see next page)

Joy to the World

***DISMISSAL**

L: Go in peace and joy. Share the Good News—Christ is born in the stable—God is with us here and now—and life will never be the same.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

Traditional

Merry Christmas to All!

Welcome Team & Communion Servers: The Dallam Family

Liturgist: Charlie Hull

Tech Team: Deb Herlocker, Jack Herlocker, & John Kollasch

Thank you to Danny McCracken, Debbie Butcher, the Praise Team & the Worship Choir for enhancing today's worship with their talents.

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 2023 giving statements.

Mt. Zion is Streaming! This service will be posted on the Mt. Zion website at: <http://www.mtzionucc.org/streaming.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.

¹The Christmas Eve Call to the Stable is written by Tom Schade, on the lively tradition blog.

²The Christmas Eve Call to Worship is adapted from "The Gift of Joy: Isaiah 12" posted on the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship website. <http://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/the-gift-of-joy-isaiah-12/>

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.

⁶A Christmas Blessing is adapted from the writings of Rev Gord on his blog, Worship Offerings. <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/>