

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Associate Pastor
Mr. Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator
Mrs. Amy Peck, Choir Director

December 24, 2024

3:00 PM

CHRISTMAS EVE: The Not So Silent Night

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.

INSTRUMENTAL OPENING

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

PRELUDE (played by Daniel McCracken)

Ukrainian Bell Carol

CALL TO WORSHIP¹

P: Augustus and Quirinius—ancient names that seem odd to today's ears...

C: characters in an ancient story that we long to hear.

L: Nazareth and Bethlehem—distant towns we know little about...

C: places our hearts long for, because of the One who traveled there.

P: God is telling a story in our lives. It's quite a story—full of the promises God makes and our struggles to trust; full of mystery and angels with surprising news; full of hard endings and unexpected new beginnings.

L: Come, hear the story pay attention to the angels' message in your heart in this place and time.

P: Then join the glorias of all creation in worshipping the God who tells it full of grace and truth; who comes in Jesus, the Word made flesh, and makes our story holy.

***CANDLELIGHTING²**

L: As we gather to praise our God, we welcome the lights of hope that have guided us to this moment.

L: Emmanuel, God-with-us, interrupt the silence and open our eyes to the wonder of this night, that we might catch a glimpse of your glory in the simplicity of these moments.

C: Jesus may your light shine!

(First advent candle is lit.)

L: Emmanuel, God-with-us, Interrupt this holy moment and soften our hearts to the message of this hour, that we might turn toward you, and have the way prepared in us for your coming.

C: Jesus may your light shine!

(Second advent candle is lit.)

L: Emmanuel, God-with-us, Interrupt our calm, and open our minds to truly listen to all who speak and sing this evening, that we might hear your voice cry out from many lips.

C: Jesus may your light shine!

(Third advent candle is lit.)

L: Emmanuel, God-with-us, Interrupt the brightness of this moment and fill our spirits with the courage to admit when we are lost and the insight to recognize that we have been found.

C: Jesus may your light shine!

(Fourth advent candle is lit.)

L: Emmanuel, God-with-us, With eyes open, hearts softened, minds listening, and spirits full, we rejoice that you interrupt our expectations of this silent night to bring into being something more than we dare imagine.

C: Jesus may your light shine!

(Christ candle is lit.)

L: Jesus' interrupts our expectations and greets us with God's light! I invite you to stand as comfortable as we all come and adore him!

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!

***TIME OF CONFESSION**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION³

ALL: Lord of Light and Hope, our minutes and hours have been swallowed up in preparation for this night and for the coming day. We have been so caught up in the preparations for gatherings and gifting that we have pushed aside the wonder of what you have done for all Creation.

Forgive us when we so easily get entangled in our own plans and forget to pay attention to the true event. Help us to relax and listen, instead of rush and shout.

But also, stir us to proclamation and celebration. May the songs of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and the joy of the Holy Family become part of our preparations and our lives. Open our ears, our eyes, our hearts and our spirits to again hear the old, old story, spoken by new voices in new ways and forgive us when we sit silent instead of sharing your Good News. Remind us again of your never-changing love for us. Prepare us to serve you by serving others. This day we offer this prayer of our hearts to you, gracious God. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

P: Family of faith- even when we fail to trust God's love, and even when we fail to love others as we should, God still loves us. That door never closes. So hear and believe this good news- God invites us into a life of faith. God forgives us when we lose our way. We are loved, invited, claimed, celebrated and forgiven.

C: Let us shout the Good News! Thanks be to God!

***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

Isaiah 9:2-7 (NRSV)

GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:1-20 (NRSV)

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

Go Tell It On the Mountain

Traditional

OFFERING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

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

arr. Fettke

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION³

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION⁴

TELLING THE STORY

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

L: Together, around the table, we pray:

C: 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 ears might be opened to hear you, so that we might recognize the Spirit stirring 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: Trusting God is here—let us pray the prayer that Jesus prayed:

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.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

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.

*The First Noel, #118 (red hymnal)
Hark the Herald Angels Sing, #108 (red hymnal)
O Little Town of Bethlehem, #102 (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

SOPRANO SOLO (sung by Debbie Butcher)

O Holy Night

by Adam

***LIGHT IN THE PARADOX**

P: On this night, there is room for silence and noise--

C: For the news of God's story is heard boldly and held tenderly in our hearts.

L: On this night, there is room for holy delight and weary exhaustion—

C: For the news of God's story comes to all people and places.

P: On this night, there is room for calm and excitement—

C: For God created stillness and silence, as well as carols and laughter and uncontainable joy.

L: On, there is room for bright unbridled hope and the weight of solemn hesitation—

C: Because God is love, from start to finish, and He came to ALL people. Ready or not.

P: And holding all things in his hands and heart—Christ comes—and with bold proclamation the angels remind us that God is here!

C: So tonight we share God's light. 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.

*CAROL (next page)

Silent Night, Holy Night

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.

*** 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.

P: 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.

P: 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



Joy to the World

Isaac Watts

George Handel

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$\text{♩} = 80$

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**

P: Go in peace and joy. Share the Good News-Christ is born —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: Faye Heal, Alex & Michelle Kollasch, Barb Stebbins

Liturgist: Andrea Adams

Tech Team: Jack Herlocker, & John Kollasch, Ron Miles

Thank you to Debbie Butcher, Hayden Dallam, Christian Maletz, Danny McCracken, Scott McCracken, Sean McCracken & 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.

We also give thanks for the nativity scene at the front of the church. Longtime Mt. Zion member, Dick Koch, built the right side, minus the dome about 40 years ago. Then a bit later... as the inn keeper was more "prosperous," he built the left side. He added the "dome" 15 years ago, and his son Karl reworked the lighting before donating to the church after Dick's passing last winter.

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 2025 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 29th, 2024 in order to get credited to your 2024 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 Call to Worship is a combination of liturgies written by <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4458/worship-elements-christmas-eve-option-1>, and Chritine Jerrett, <https://christinejerrett.wordpress.com/> and accessed for use on 12/18/24.

²The Litany for Candle Lighting is written by Peter L. Haynes. Posted in the Long Green Valley Church of the Brethren website. <http://rockhay.tripod.com/worship/>.

³The 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.

⁴The Communion Liturgy is adapted with permission from a Christmas Eve Communion prayer written by Katherine Hawker, and posted on Liturgy Outside. <http://www.liturgyoutside.net/> and accessed for use 12/17/24.

⁵The Post Communion Prayer is adapted from the writings of Carol Holbrook Prickett on <https://carolhferguson.com/2016/12/24/a-christmas-eve-communion-liturgy/> and used with permission as accessed on 12/17/24

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

