

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

December 24, 2024

7:00 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.

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.

CHRISTMAS GREETING

SPECIAL MUSIC <i>Away in a Manger</i>	played by Addie Bickleman
<i>Jingle Bells</i>	played by Freddie Northridge & Elliott Stine
<i>A Mad Russian Christmas</i>	played by Jack Bicher
<i>Angels We Have Heard on High</i>	played by Hayden McCarthy

CALL TO WORSHIP¹

P: As we join in the Call to Worship, all are invited to ring their bells as they read the song of the angels "Glory to God in the highest!":

L: On a night like this, in a town far away, a baby was born, and the silence of that night was broken as the angels sang:

C: Glory to God in the highest!

P: On a night like this, in a town far away, a star shone bright, and the silence of that night was broken as the angels sang:

C: Glory to God in the highest!

L: On a night like this, in a town far away, shepherds ran to see, and the silence of that night was broken as the angels sang:

C: Glory to God in the highest!

***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!

P: On a night like this, in a town far away, God came to be close to us, and the silence of that night was broken as the angels sang:

C: Glory to God in the highest!

L: On this night, right here where we stand, God is with us, and so we break the silence as our hearts sing:

C: Glory to God in the highest!

P: Let us join the angel's song singing Angels We Have Heard on High that will be led by our Children's choir—and all are invited to ring their bells during the Glorias.

CAROL 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.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

P: 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.)

P: Jesus' interrupts our expectations and greets us with God's light! So let us stand as comfortable and 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!

Away in a Manger

James R. Murray, 1887

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♩ = 80

Piano

1. A - way in a man - ger, no crib for a
 2. The cat - tle are low - ing, the Ba - by a -
 3. Be near me Lord Je - sus, I ask Thee to

5

bed, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet
 - wakes, but lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He
 stay close by me for - ev - er and love me, I

9

head. The stars in the sky looked
 makes. I love Thee, Lord Je - sus, look
 pray. Bless all the dear chil - dren in

12

down where He lay, the lit - tle Lord Je - sus, a -
 down from the sky, and stay by my cra - dle till
 Thy ten - der care, and fit us for heav - en to

16

- sleep on the hay.
 morn - ing is nigh.
 live with Thee there.

SERMON—THE NOT SO SILENT NIGHT²

CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Happy Birthday Jesus

OFFERTORY

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY *Ukrainian Carol of the Bells* played by Danny McCracken

PRAYER OF DEDICATION & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

L: With actions songs and words

ALL: We celebrate our Lord!

P: Jesus Christ, born in a stable, Be with the poor and homeless this Christmas time. With actions songs and words,

ALL: we celebrate our Lord.

L: Jesus Christ, born of Mary, Be with young mothers across the world this Christmas time. With actions songs and words,

ALL: we celebrate our Lord.

P: Jesus Christ, visited by Shepherds, Be with all who have to work this Christmas, and those who long to work. With actions songs and words,

ALL: we celebrate our Lord.

L: Jesus Christ, who became a refugee, Be with those who fear for their lives, and those who have left homes and families this Christmas. With actions songs and words,

ALL: we celebrate our Lord.

P: Jesus Christ, worshiped by the Magi, Receive our gifts and help us use them to care for all people. With actions songs and words,

ALL: we celebrate our Lord. Amen.

HOLY DINGALINGS

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Traditional

TIME OF COMMUNION³

REMEMBERING THE STORY

P: Gathering around the table as we celebrate the story of this not so silent night, we remember so many stories shared with joy around tables; tables where bread is broken together, where families gather and generations share, where stories are remembered, refined, re-shaped.

Gathering around the table on this holy night, we remember the story of the sacred daring to share our life, the story of God dwelling among us and giving himself for us, a story that is at once both heavenly and earthly.

Of how, 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 the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

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.

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

Freddie: Trusting God is here—let us pray the prayer that Jesus prayed:

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.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Today we are communing by intinction which is a fancy church word for dipping your bread into the grape juice cup. If you have a gluten allergy please let us know and we can give you elements uncontaminated by gluten. If you are uncomfortable coming forward and would like communion brought to you in your seat, also have a welcome team member or someone gathered here with you let me know and we will bring communion to you at the end.

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)

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER⁴

SPECIAL MUSIC (sung by Caitlin Damon)

O What a King

by Nichole

*LIGHT IN THE PARADOX

***We invite you to stand as comfortable as we usher God's light into 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 this night, 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.

CAROL (see next page)

Silent Night, Holy Night



 Grafting A Green World

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 BLESSING^s**

L: O God, you have brought us again to this glad season when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our LORD.

C: Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him.

P: Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old.

C: Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

L: Go forth singing--in peace and joy.

C: Thanks be to God. Alleluia!

***SENDING HYMN** (see next page)

Joy to the World



Joy to the World

Isaac Watts

George Handel

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♩ = 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.

Merry Christmas to All!

Welcome Team & Communion Servers: The Strine Family

Liturgist: Freddie Northridge

Tech Team: Elaine Bevivino, Paul Ramsey, Joe Vacante

Thank you to Freddie Northridge for creating our cover art.

Thank you to Jack Bicher, Addie Bickleman, Caitlin Damon, Hayden McCarthy, Daniel McCracken, Freddie Northridge, Elliot Stine, the Holy Dingalings, and the Children's 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.

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 written by Rev. Amy E. Northridge, December 2021.

²The (Not So) Silent Night was written by Rev. Amy and Freddie Northridge for Mt. Zion UCC, December 2024.

³The 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.

⁴The 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

⁵ A Christmas Blessing is adapted from the United Methodist Book of Worship #284