

**Mt. Zion United Church of Christ**  
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Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Associate Pastor  
Louis Allison, Tech Director  
Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church Administrator

December 24, 2024

10:00 PM

## **CHRISTMAS EVE: Yet in the Dark Streets Shineth**

*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! We have children's books and activity bags in the side hallway for them to enjoy! We pray God's blessing upon you. For today's service, we will be using the red & black hymnals.*

### **GATHERING MUSIC**

*Children of Bethlehem*

Paxton

played/sung by Mike Gibbs & Tim Pritchard

### **WORDS OF WELCOME**

### **PRELUDE**

*Little Baby Jesus*

by Sprenkle

played/sung by Mike Gibbs & Tim Pritchard

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: The streets glow softly tonight; the waiting has reached its holy hush.

**C : We gather in wonder, as heaven leans close to earth.**

L: In the dark, the cry of a newborn breaks open the world. The promise takes breath, and light floods what once was shadow.

**C: Love has a name. Hope has a heartbeat. The Light of the World has come.**

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

L: This is the night when the Word becomes flesh, when grace finds its voice in the song of angels.

**C : Glory to God in the highest! Peace on earth, good will to all.**

L: The light that once filled Bethlehem's streets now finds its home here, as we lift our hearts in worship and wonder.

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: God of glory,

**C : we have waited, we have searched, and now we stand in the glow of your coming. The child of promise has arrived, and still the wonder takes our breath away. Let the light of this night fill our hearts and spill into the world. You have found us in the dark streets — shine through us, O God. Amen.**

L: The promise has arrived — the light has come. Glory fills the night and grace fills the air.

L: I invite you to stand now as comfortable for the child of light is born among us. Come, let us adore him.

**\*GATHERING HYMN NO. 112** (red hymnal, see next page, vs. 1 & 3)

*O Come All Ye Faithful*



\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

# 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! 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!

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## **\*PRAYERS OF CELEBRATION**

L: On this night of light and wonder, we pause our songs of praise to lift our hearts in prayer. Let us join together in these Prayers of Celebration, giving thanks for the Light that still shines among us.

L: God of radiant love, on this holy night Your light shines among us.

**C: We celebrate the love that finds us in every shadow and shines through every heart.**

L: God of peace that glows steady and sure, You come into the world not with power, but with presence.

**C: We celebrate Your peace that calms our fears and calls us to be peacemakers in our time.**

L: God of joy that sparkles in the darkness, You gladden the hearts of shepherds and angels alike.

**C: We celebrate the joy You awaken in us and in all who hear good news this night.**

L: God of love that cannot be contained, You choose the smallest places for Your greatest glory.

**C: We celebrate Your light shining in manger and heart alike—in this small place made holy by Your presence.**

L: God of compassion, You come to dwell among those who are weary, waiting, or afraid.

**C: We celebrate Your mercy that meets us here and ask Your healing for all who are in need this night.**

L: God of incarnation, when You became flesh, You made room for us all.

**C: We celebrate Your Kingdom come among us, where hope, peace, joy, and love still shine bright.**

L: God of Christmas, bless us as we once again behold Your glory.

**C: We rejoice that Your light still shines and Your grace still finds us—now and always. Amen.**

L: The angels' song still echoes through the night—a call not only to shepherds long ago, but to all who have seen the light break through the darkness. Let us join their song of wonder and worship, lifting our voices as one to proclaim:

**C: Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn King.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE NO. 104** (red hymnal, see next page, vs. 1 & 4)

*Angels From the Realms of Glory*

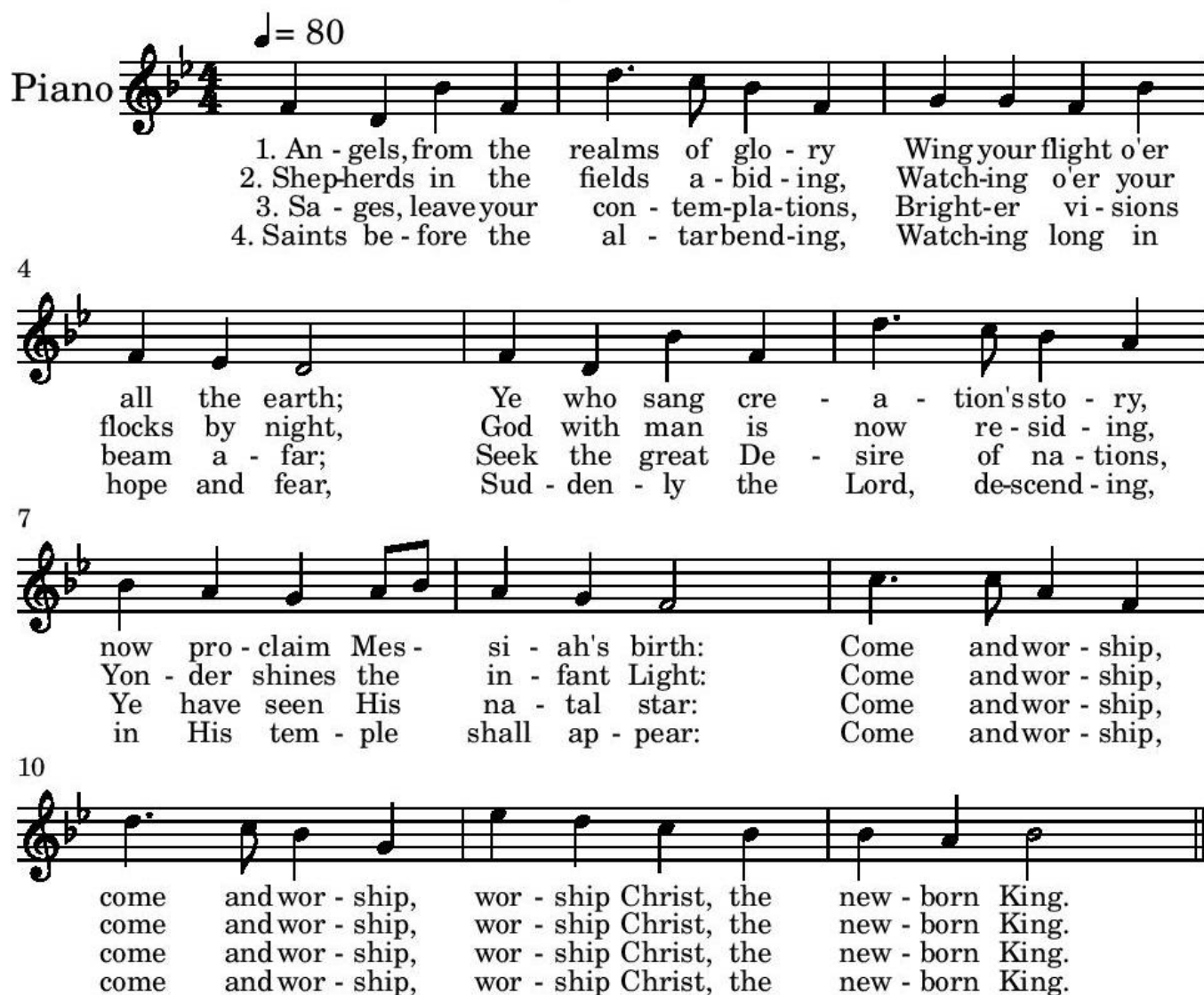
\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

# Angels from the Realms of Glory

James Montgomery, 1816

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**Piano**  $\text{♩} = 80$



1. An - gels, from the realms of glo - ry Wing your flight o'er  
 2. Shep - herds in the fields a - bid - ing, Watch - ing o'er your  
 3. Sa - ges, leave your con - tem - pla - tions, Bright - er vi - sions  
 4. Saints be - fore the al - tar bend - ing, Watch - ing long in

4  
 all the earth; Ye who sang cre - a - tion's sto - ry,  
 flocks by night, God with man is now re - sid - ing,  
 beam a - far; Seek the great De - sire of na - tions,  
 hope and fear, Sud - den - ly the Lord, de - scend - ing,

7  
 now pro - claim Mes - si - ah's birth: Come and wor - ship,  
 Yon - der shines the in - fant Light: Come and wor - ship,  
 Ye have seen His na - tal star: Come and wor - ship,  
 in His tem - ple shall ap - pear: Come and wor - ship,

10  
 come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.  
 come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.  
 come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.  
 come and wor - ship, wor - ship Christ, the new - born King.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 9:2-7 (CEB)

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

## QUARTET ANTHEM

*Jesus, What a Wonderful Child*

arr. Dilworth

## SECOND LESSON

Titus 2:11-14 (CEB)

P: The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

## HYMN OF RESPONSE NO. 107 (red hymnal, see below, vs. 1 & 4)

*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

# It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

Richard S. Willis, 1819-1900

**Piano**  $\text{♩} = 80$

The musical score is written for piano on a single staff in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The score consists of four systems of music, each with four lines of lyrics underneath. The first system starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second system starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The third system starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The fourth system starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The score ends with a double bar line.

1. It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - ri - ous song of old, From  
2. Still through the clo - ven skies they come, with peace - ful wings un - furled, and  
3. And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low, Who  
4. For lo, the days are hasten - ing on, by proph - et bards fore - told, when

6  
an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold: "Peace on the earth, good  
still their heav - en - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wear - y world; A - bove its sad and  
toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow, Look now! for glad and  
with the ev - er - cir - cling years comes round the age of gold; When peace shall o - ver

11  
will to all, great news of joy we bring." The world in sol - emn still ness lay, to  
low - ly plains they bend on hover - ing wing, And ev - er o'er its Ba - bel sounds the  
gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing; O rest be - side the wea - ry road, and  
all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling, and all the world send back the song which

16  
hear the an - gels sing.  
bless - ed an - gels sing.  
hear the an - gels sing.  
now the an - gels sing.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## GOSPEL READING

Luke 2:1-20 (CEB)

L: The Word of God for the people of God.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

## QUARTET ANTHEM

*He is Born*

by Armstrong

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

**\*HYMN OF THE DAY NO. 108** (red hymnal, see below)

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

# O Little Town of Bethlehem (Traditional)

Phillips Brooks, 1868

Lewis H. Redner, 1868

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$\text{♩} = 80$

Piano

1. O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem how still we see thee  
2. For Christ is born of Ma - ry and gath - ered all a -  
3. How si - lent - ly how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is  
4. O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us we

5

lie! A - bove thy deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go  
- bove while mortals sleep the an - gels keep their watch of wond'ring  
giv'n! So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the blessings of his  
pray; Cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to -

9

by; Yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing  
love. O morning stars to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly  
heav'n. No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of  
- day. We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings

13

Light. The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to -  
birth, and prais - es sing to God the King, and peace to all on  
sin, where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christen - ters  
tell; O come to us, a - bid with us, Our Lord Em - man - u -

17

- night.  
earth.  
in.  
- el!

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## OFFERING

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY & DISCIPLESHIP

OFFERTORY

The Cherry Tree Carol

(Traditional)

played/sung by Mike Gibbs & Tim Pritchard

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

L: God of holy light,

**C: you have entered our world with grace upon grace. Receive these offerings, given with thankful hearts. May they brighten dark corners, comfort the weary, and remind all people that your love has come near.**

**Amen.**

## SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

*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.**

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.



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)

*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 on the below if you’d prefer to use a hymnal.*

*The First Noel, #118 (red hymnal, v.1)  
Angels We Have Heard on High #105 (red hymnal, v. 1)  
Away in a Manger, #109 (red hymnal, v. 1)*

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!**

**SOPRANO SOLO** (sung by Debbie Butcher)

*O Holy Night*

by Adam

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## \*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

L: Tonight the waiting ends, but the wonder begins. The light we've longed for is here—fragile, radiant, real. Still, we come carrying shadows from the year behind us: regrets unspoken, hopes unmet, griefs we still cradle. Yet God's light does not shrink from the dark; it shines within it. So, let us join together in confession and forgiveness.

L: God of holy night and heavenly light,

**C: We confess that we forget how near You are. We have rushed through Your wonder, and we have not always made room for Your love. Forgive us, O God. Meet us in our weariness, in our silence, in our awe. Shine Your light into every shadow until all that is broken glimmers with grace. Find us in the dark streets and shine Your light, O God. Amen.**

P: Hear the good news: The light has come and dwells among us. In Christ, you are forgiven—we all are forgiven--and renewed.

**C: Thanks be to God. Christ's light is here! The light shines, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Amen.**

## \*INVITATION TO THE LIGHT

*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 (see next page)

*Silent Night, Holy Night*



\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

# 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.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

**\*INVITATION TO JOY**

P: The light of Christ now shines in every heart that has made room.

L: What began in stillness now stirs with wonder.

P: The waiting is over; love has come near.

**C: Christ's light is here, and our hearts rejoice in its glow.**

L: Let us lift our voices together proclaiming—

**C: Joy to the World!**

*Individual lights are extinguished as light returns to the Sanctuary.*

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

*Joy to the World*



\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

# 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.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## **\*BENEDICTION**

P: As you leave this holy night, carry the light that has found you here—soft enough to calm your fears, strong enough to guide your way, radiant enough to shine through you for all to see. May Christ’s love dwell within you, God’s grace surround you, and the Spirit’s light lead you home. Go in peace, for the Light of Christ goes with you—shining before you, within you, and through you.

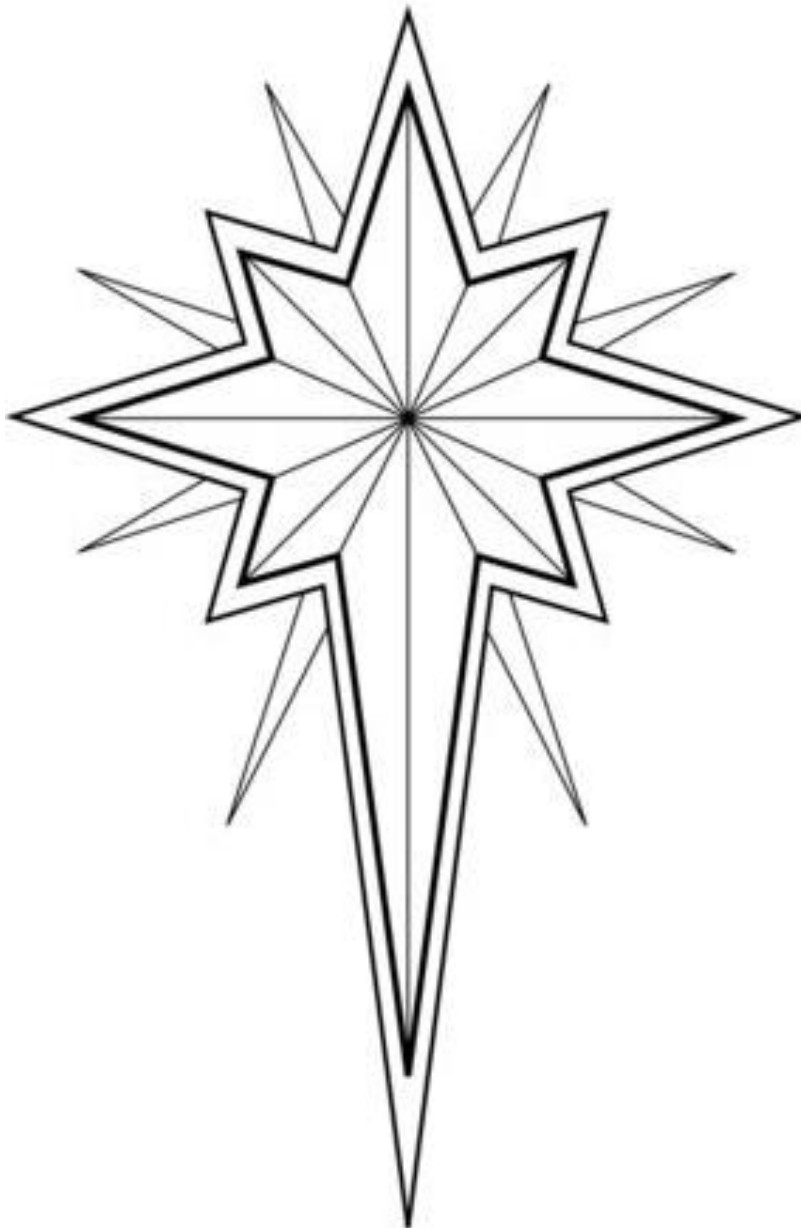
**C: Amen.**

## **POSTLUDE**

*The Shepherd’s Song*

by Sprenkle

played/sung by Mike Gibbs & Tim Pritchard



\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

# *Merry Christmas to All!*

**Welcome Team & Communion Servers:** Jodi Bender, Deb & Terry Barnes

**Guest Preacher:** Rev. Susan Emmons

**Liturgist:** Deb Herlocker

**Tech Team:** Jack Herlocker

Thank you to Debbie Butcher, Mike Gibbs, & Tim Pritchard for enhancing tonight'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, Mike Gibbs, & Braden Bicher.

Thank you to our Advent Team: Elaine Bevivino, Deb Herlocker, Lana Fritz, Cindy Hogentogler, & Melody Stine for arranging the beautiful decorations in our sanctuary!

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!

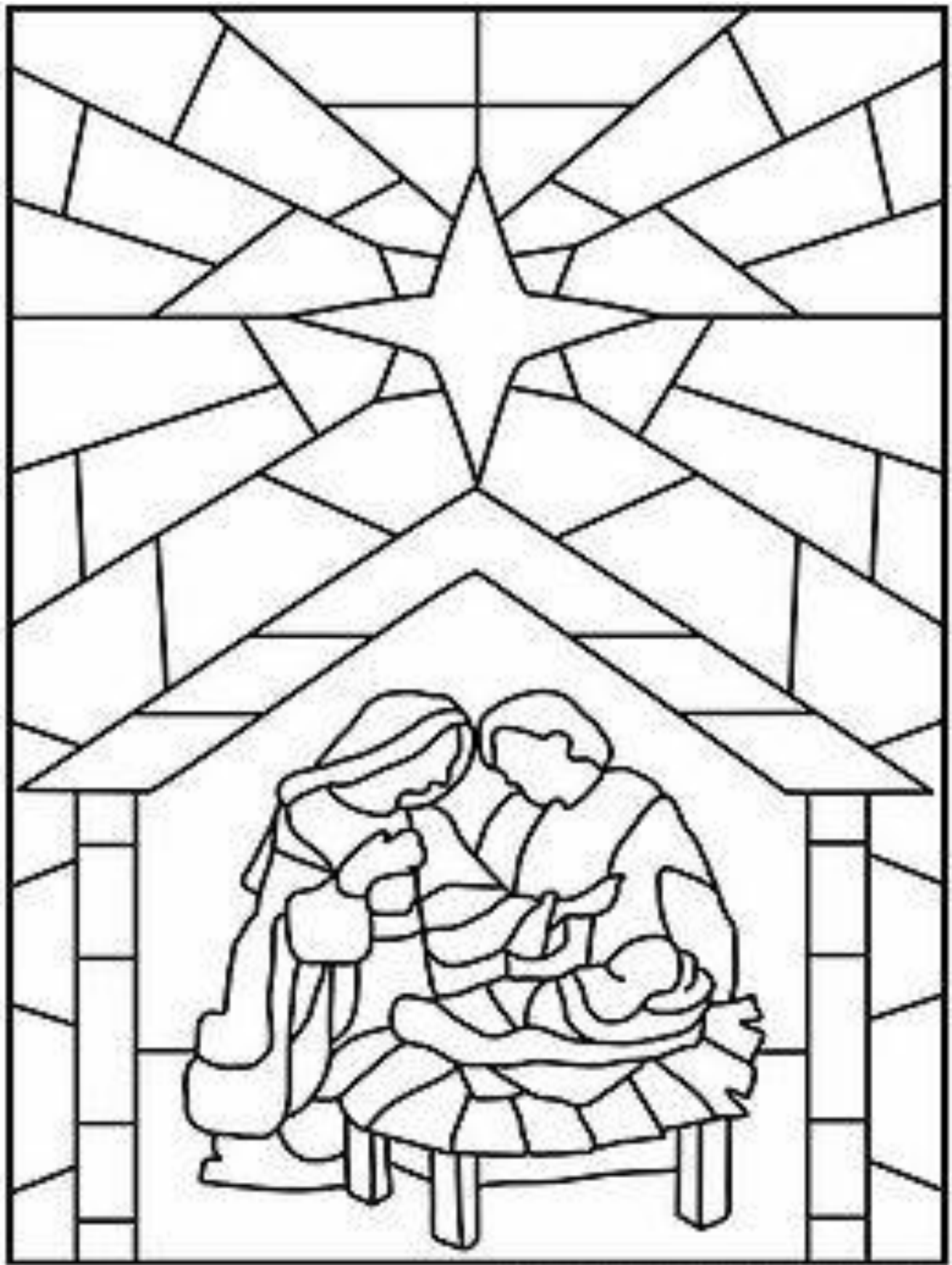
If you commune, please complete a communion card found in the pew racks and place it in the offering plate.

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

**Please pick up your 2026 offering envelopes** if you haven't already done so. They are on the table in the west narthex. All 2025 contributions must be received at the church on or before December 28th, 2025 in order to get credited to your 2025 giving statements.

**Mt. Zion is Streaming!** This service will be posted on the Mt. Zion website at: [www.mtzionucc.org/live](http://www.mtzionucc.org/live), with both a live feed (during the actual service) and a version you can watch later.

\*Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.



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