

# ***Mt. Zion United Church of Christ***

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Rev. Danielle E. Neff, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jeff Kardisco, Associate Pastor

Mr. Denny Daugherty, Adult Choir Director & Tech Director

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

December 24, 2018

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.*

*If you are a guest, thank you for worshiping with us today. 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 also have nursery care downstairs during our 10:30 AM worship service. Please see a member of the welcoming team for assistance!*

*We pray God's blessing upon you. For today's service, we will be using the red & black hymnals.*

## **GATHERING MUSIC**

*It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*

Traditional

*Silent Night*

Traditional

## **CHRISTMAS GREETINGS**

**ALL SING** (red hymnal #108)

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Leader: Sisters and brothers of faith, come into this place of worship joyful and triumphant – come and behold the Christ Child.

**People: O come, let us adore him! Emmanuel, God with us; Christ, the humble child born for our sake.**

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

Leader: Listen to the Angels' songs of exultation, hear them echoing from the rafters and throughout creation! Do not be afraid – come and behold the Christ Child.

**People: O come, let us adore him! The one for whom angels sang, proclaiming his coming into the world.**

Leader: Behold, in Bethlehem, a child is born who is King of Kings, Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor... savior of us all. This unassuming and humbly born baby will usher in a kingdom beyond all of our imaginations.

**People: O come, let us adore him! The King of all creation, born in a humble manger.**

Leader: O Come, all ye faithful – joyful and triumphant. Come to see the one who is begotten of God – the Christ child.

**People: O come, let us adore him – Christ the Lord!**

**\*CAROL NO. 112** (red hymnal)

*O Come, All Ye Faithful*

**\*OPENING PRAYER<sup>1</sup>**

**QUARTET ANTHEM**

*Sing to the Child*

Scott

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

Leader: The Christ candle now shines among the four candles of Advent to illuminate our hope, our peace, our joy, and our love... a reminder that through these things Christ will show us the Kingdom of God.

**People: One light conquers darkness, illuminating hope, peace, joy, and love.**

Leader: When we live each day with Christ in our heart.

**People: one love smothers hate**

Leader: When we live each day with Christ in our heart.

**People: one breath calms busyness**

Leader: When we live each day with Christ in our heart

**People: one baby brings eternal life**

Leader: Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us – our Messiah and friend.

**People: Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Giver of Everlasting Life be with us this night and throughout our lives. Amen.**

<sup>1</sup>Those for whom it is comfortable, please rise.

## \*TIME OF CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION<sup>2</sup>

**ALL: O God, it's Christmas Eve again and we feel as though we're barely ready for it. There's so much to do and to get ready – gifts to buy and wrap, parties to attend, trees to trim, houses to decorate. We're in a whirlwind of activity. In the midst of the busyness we sometimes miss what it is all about – you coming to earth – Emmanuel – God with us. Help us hear anew your promises of hope and salvation and love as we sing our familiar carols. Forgive us for forgetting the miracle of this night, for focusing on ourselves and what we need to do instead of the miracle of Jesus' birth. Rock us out of our complacency. Let us hear angel voices, see shepherds hurrying to a stable, feel the baby's soft breath on our cheeks, and ponder in our hearts what all this means for the world, and for us. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE<sup>2</sup>

ACT OF PRAISE NO. 105 (red hymnal, stanzas 1 & 3)

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

**ALL SING: Angels we have heard on high, singing sweetly through the night. And the mountains in reply, echoing their brave delight. Gloria in excelsis deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Come to Bethlehem and see Him whose birth the angels sing; Come, adore on bended knee Christ the Lord, the newborn King. Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**READING OF JOHN 1: 1-5**

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

**QUARTET ANTHEM**

*Nativity Canon*

Liebergen

**OFFERING**

CALL TO OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY (sung by Mike Gibbs) *Children of Bethlehem* by Tom Paxton

\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE NO. 128 (black hymnal, v. 4)

*In the Bleak Midwinter*

**ALL SING: What can I offer, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb. If I were a wise one, I would do my part; but what can I offer: all my heart.**

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

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

**SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**INVITATION**

Leader: Sisters and brothers this is a night of paradox – a night when we gather in the dark of a familiar sanctuary and light candles together, remembering the light that shines in the darkness....This table is not our table, but it is God’s table, and it is open to anyone who wishes to know Christ better. May the God of holy nights be with you!

**People: And also with you!**

Leader: Sisters and brothers this is a night of new birth.

**People: This is the night when God breathes once again into the creation He has made.**

Leader: Lift your voices to God and sing in celebration with all of the angels!

**People: Our voices join with all who celebrate the Birth this night.**

Leader: God of all creation – alpha and omega, who was and is and is to come – we acknowledge that you have been throughout the whole of creation since its very beginning, and yet we yearn for your presence among us....We praise you for coming to humankind, for being a child for all children, and for living for us all.

**People: “For unto us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

Leader: O God, you sent your Son Jesus into this broken world, born that we might draw nearer to you. With all the shepherds, angels, and Mary and Joseph, with those who sing carols and those whose pain only brings silence, we lift our songs to you...

**People: Holy, holy, holy are you, God of the manger. Creation hears the angel songs and rejoices. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the one who is born this night. Hosanna in the highest!**

**REMEMBERING THE STORY**

**PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND THE LORD’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, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

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

BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND POURING OF THE JUICE

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS (*all cups contain grape juice*)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

**ALL:** We thank you, O God, for your presence at this table. Grant that the angel's song may be continually on our lips, that Christ's light may radiate in our lives, and that we may bear the good news of your love in a dark and waiting world. Amen.

**CANDLELIGHTING SERVICE**

CAROL (see p. 6)

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

**CHRISTMAS BLESSING**

**POSTLUDE**

*Carol of the Bells*

Traditional

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

## Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright  
round yon virgin mother and child.

Holy infant, so tender and mild,  
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
heavenly hosts sing Alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love's pure light;  
radiant beams from thy holy face  
with the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Silent, night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light,  
with the angels let us sing,  
Alleluia to our King;  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!

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

## References

<sup>1</sup>The opening prayer was adapted from a prayer written by Lisa Frenz. Originally posted in *Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Holy Communion*, and posted on *Lisa's Liturgies*. <https://sites.google.com/site/lisaliturgies/home>. Accessed on the *Re:Worship* website at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/opening-prayer-christmas-eve.html> on December 6, 2018. Copyright© Lisa Frenz. All Rights Reserved. Used with permission.

<sup>2</sup>The prayer of confession and the assurance of pardon are from the *Ministry Matters* website at <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3406/worship-elements-christmas-eve-2017-option-2>. Originally written by Rev. Dr. Joanne Carlson Brown, pastor of Tibbetts United Methodist Church in West Seattle. Accessed on the web December 6, 2018.

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

# *Merry Christmas to All!*

Welcome Team & Communion Servers: Mary Jane Snyder, Dan Kinard, Becky & Jerry Hester

Worship Tech: Mary Jane Snyder

One poinsettia is placed upon the altar in honor of Zachary Shiffer's 11th birthday from Nanna and Pop-pop, Sue and Jim Shiffer.

One poinsettia is placed upon the altar in honor of Ben and Emily Miller's graduation from Pennsylvania State University on December 15, 2018 by Jill & Stan Miller.

The bulletins are presented to the honor and glory of God by Don & Diane Strine.

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

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

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 2019 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 31st, 2018 in order to get credited to your 2018 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.

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