

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ

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Rev. Danielle E. Neff, Senior Pastor

Rev. Amy Northridge, Transitional Minister

Mr. Denny Daugherty, Adult Choir Director & Tech Director

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

December 24, 2021

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.

GATHERING MUSIC	<i>It Came Upon a Midnight Clear</i>	Traditional
	<i>Silent Night</i>	Traditional

CHRISTMAS GREETING

PRELUDE	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	Traditional
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CALL TO WORSHIP¹

L: Tonight old dreams die and new dreams come to life.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

L: Hope gives way to joy and prayer to proclamation.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

L: The candles tell the story. Dawn invades midnight. The Light of the World has come.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.

L: The light is a light for all, warming us from within, radiating love, lighting our lives with the presence of God in human flesh, within us and among us now and always.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace. Goodwill to all.

L: O wondrous God of the stars, we come tonight with breathless wonder to see the babe who will change our lives...Make this night magical again. Amen.

***CAROL NO. 112** (RH, vs. 1 & 2)

O Come All Ye Faithful

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE²

L: We come to adore the Christ child. On bended knee, with hopeful heart, and eyes stretched wide with wonder and awe...We celebrate the light coming into the darkness.

ALL: Glory to God in the highest! We give thanks for the Light of the World, born this night!

***CAROL NO. 112** (RH, v. 3)

O Come All Ye Faithful

***TIME OF CONFESSION**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION³

L: God of Joy, we come to celebrate again the arrival of Love Incarnate here in our very midst. Your glorious arrival is enough to cause the forests to sing for joy, yet we still find reasons to complain and sigh. Your light of salvation is bright enough to illuminate every corner of our lives, yet we still find ourselves shrouded in worry and doubt. Your gift of Love is big enough for the whole world, yet we still find ourselves resentful that your love extends to those whom we deem to be unworthy. God, you invite us into the light of the stable where the overlooked and forgotten have gathered to celebrate the miracle of your love. Give us the strength and courage to join you at the manger. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

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.

QUARTET ANTHEM

Love Came Down at Christmas

by Burrows, Rossetti

READING OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Luke 2: 1-20

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

**QUARTET ANTHEM
OFFERING**

Hope is Born

by Frombach, Dengler

CALL TO OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY (sung by Mike Gibbs) *Beautiful Star of Bethlehem* by Phipps

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

SOPRANO SOLO (sung by Debbie Butcher)

O Holy Night

by Adam

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION⁴

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.

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.

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, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS (all cups contain grape juice)

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!

PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

CAROL (see p. 5)

Silent Night, Holy Night

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Carol of the Bells

Traditional

¹The Call to Worship was written by John W. Howell and published in the book *Touch Holiness: Resources for Worship*, edited by Ruth C. Duck & Maren C. Tirabassi, pg. 21, ©1990. The Opening Prayer was written by Joanne Carlson Brown and posted on the website Ministry Matters, <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3406/worship-elements-christmas-eve-option-2> and accessed on December 7, 2021.

²The liturgy for the Lighting of the Christ Candle was based on liturgy written by Rev. Martha K. Spong and posted to her blog, <https://marthaspong.com/category/advent/advent-wreath/> and accessed on December 7, 2021.

³The Prayer of Confession was written by Nancy C. Townley and published on the website Ministry Matters, <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/3411/worship-connection-christmas-eve-option-2> and accessed on December 7, 2021.

⁴Text: Beth Quick, 2013. Refrain text, vs. 3-9: William C. Dix, 1865.

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!

Merry Christmas to All!

Welcome Team & Communion Servers: Nancy Kinard, Jim Shiffer, Tori Everhart

One poinsettia is placed in honor of all those who participate in the music program at Mt. Zion UCC.

One poinsettia is placed in honor of the congregation of Mt. Zion UCC. It is a blessing to serve you! Merry Christmas, Pastor Danielle.

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 to this evening. The quartet is made up of: Debbie Butcher, Brenda Beyer, Dave Firestone, & 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 2022 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 26th, 2021 in order to get credited to your 2021 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.