

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, & Church Administrator

Christmas Eve

3:00 PM

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

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

CAROL SING

CAROL NO. 102 (RH, vs. 1 & 3)

CAROL NO. 108 (RH vs. 1 & 3)

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

O Little Town of Bethlehem

CALL TO WORSHIP¹

L: On this holiest of nights,

ALL: we come, joining the shepherds who are stunned by wonder.

L: On this most silent night,

ALL: we come, our hopes and dreams joining those of Mary and Joseph.

L: On this night of carols and candlelight,

ALL: we come, our glad songs joining with the choirs of angels over us.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE²

L: We come to adore the Christ child...When we light the Christ candle, we remember the star above the stable. 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)

O Come All Ye Faithful

*TIME OF CONFESSION

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION³

P: 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, vs. 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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

Love Has Come

arr. Larson

READING OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Luke 2: 1-20

WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM

Hope is Born

by Dengler

OFFERING

CALL TO OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY (sung by Paula Strayer & Jordyn Myers)

Were You There on That Christmas Night?

OFFERTORY RESPONSE NO. 128 (BH, 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 COMMUNION

INVITATION⁴

L: Out of the darkness of our world, we have seen a great light...All are welcome at the Table of Grace. May the God of silent nights be with you!

P: May the God of herald angels be with you!

L: Open your hearts to the One born in the little town of Bethlehem.

P: May Emmanuel come to abide in our hearts.

L: Join all believers in singing of our joy this night.

P: May our voices blend with those of the angels and shepherds.

COMMUNION PRAYER

L: In the silence of the night, God of holiness, your Child crept in among us, so small no one would notice, so poor no one would care...On this evening when we celebrate his birth, in the days to come when we follow him to Jerusalem, we sing carols of that mystery we call faith:

ALL: Christ was born, so we might have life; Christ died, so we might have forgiveness; Christ was raised, so we might have resurrection; Christ will be born again, to gather us together with him.

REMEMBERING THE STORY

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION & 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.

BREAKING OF THE BREAD & POURING OF THE JUICE

SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS (all cups contain grape juice)

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.

We will be singing the first verse of each hymn.

The First Noel, #118 (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)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

L: Loving God, we thank you for the gift of this time at the table with you. As we go into the world, help us to be the gift another needs,

P: sharing your blessings of love and grace, running to tell the Story we heard from the shepherds.

L: Help us to be the comfort which can swaddle others,

P: sharing Jesus' compassion with the poor and needy, welcoming the holiness offered by the most vulnerable we meet.

L: Help us to enkindle the lives around us,

P: sharing your peace with all the broken, learning your language of hope. Amen.

PASSING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

CAROL (see next page)

Silent Night, Holy Night

CHRISTMAS BLESSING

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World

Traditional

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.

¹The Call to Worship was written by Rev. Thom Shuman and posted on his blog, Lectionary Liturgies (www.liturgylink.net) and was accessed at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2016/12/a-call-to-worship-for-christmas-eve.html> 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.

⁴The bulk of the communion liturgy is adapted from liturgy written by Rev. Thom Shuman, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/2016/12/liturgy-wcommunion-for-christmas-day-a.html>

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: The Dallam Family, Nancy Sleeper

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 Paula Strayer, Jordyn Myers, Debbie Butcher, & 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.

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

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.