

Mt. Zion United Church of Christ  
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Rev. Danielle E. Neff, Senior Pastor  
Rev. Amy E. Northridge, Associate Pastor  
Mr. Denny Daugherty, Adult Choir Director & Tech Director  
Mr. Travis Pinci, Accompanist, Children's Music Coordinator, & Church  
Administrator  
Ms. Donna Gross, Custodian

December 24, 2022

3:00 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 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 (red hymnal, vs. 1 & 3)

*Hark the Herald Angels Sing*

CAROL NO. 108 (red hymnal, vs. 1 & 3)

*O Little Town of Bethlehem*

### MEN'S CHOIR

*Born, Born in Bethlehem*

### CALL TO WORSHIP<sup>1</sup>

L: Augustus and Quirinius—ancient names that seem odd to today's ears...

**P: characters in an ancient story that we long to hear.**

L: Nazareth and Bethlehem—distant towns we know little about...

**P: places our hearts long for, because of the One who traveled there.**

L: We gather together to hear once more, a story so ancient and yet so current, so distant and yet so near.

**P: We come to hear the story of God coming to us.**

L: This story is for us.

**P: This love is for us.**

L: Family of faith, welcome here- welcome home.

**P: Amen.**

## **LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE<sup>2</sup>**

L: Here, in God's house, there is hope—

**P: For God loves us too much to leave us just as we are.**

L: In God's house, there is peace—

**P: for all that separates us from God falls away.**

L: In God's house, there is joy—

**P: Because God created music, and Christmas cookies, and laughter that is contagious and babies that love peek-a-boo; and if those things have God's fingerprints, then God's house surely exudes joy.**

L: In God's house, there is love—

**P: Because God is love, from start to finish, and that love exists for us all.**

L: And in the center of our hope, in the center of our peace, in the center of our joy, in the center of our love, is God- who came to this earth to dwell among us.

**P: So tonight we light the Christ candle, for God's love just could not stay home. Amen.**

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

*O Come All Ye Faithful*

**\*TIME OF CONFESSION**

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION<sup>3</sup>

**ALL: Lord of Light and Hope, our minutes and hours have been swallowed up in preparation for this night and for the coming day. We have been so caught up in the preparations for gatherings and gifting that we have pushed aside the wonder of what you have done for all Creation. Forgive us when we so easily get entangled in our own plans and forget to pay attention to the true event. Help us to relax and listen, instead of rush and shout.**

May the songs of the angels, the surprise of the shepherds, and the joy of the Holy Family become part of our preparations and our lives. Open our ears, our eyes, our hearts and our spirits to again hear the old, old story, spoken by new voices in new ways. Remind us again of your never-changing love for us. Prepare us to serve you by serving others. This night we offer this prayer of our hearts to you, gracious God. 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.

**WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM**

*Worship Christ the Newborn King*

by Larson

**READING OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY  
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

*Luke 2: 1-20*

**WORSHIP CHOIR ANTHEM**

*All Is Well*

Smith; Kirkpatrick/Graham

**OFFERING**

CALL TO OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY (played by Jackson Kollasch & Travis Pinci) *Meditation* Gounod

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 COMMUNION<sup>4</sup>

### INVITATION

HYMN NO. 165 (black hymnal, v. 1)

*Love Came Down at Christmas*

**ALL SING: Love came down at Christmas, Love all lovely, Love divine; Love was born at Christmas; star and angels gave the sign.**

### COMMUNION PRAYER

HYMN NO. 165 (black hymnal, v. 2)

*Love Came Down at Christmas*

**ALL SING: Worship we the Godhead, Love incarnate, Love divine; Worship we our Jesus, but where is God's sacred sign?**

### REMEMBERING THE STORY

HYMN NO. 165 (black hymnal, v. 3)

*Love Came Down at Christmas*

**ALL SING (#165): Love shall be our token; love be yours and love be mine; Love to God and neighbor, love for plea and gift and sign.**

### 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 below)

*Silent Night, Holy Night*

## **CHRISTMAS BLESSING**

### **POSTLUDE**

*Joy to the World*

Traditional

## **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

Thank you to Jackson Kollasch, 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.

Thank you to Charlie Hull for sharing the Nativity panel he created hanging above the fireplace on the chancel.

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 2023 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 25th, 2022 in order to get credited to your 2022 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.

<sup>1</sup>The Call to Worship was written by Bryan Schneider-Thomas and posted on the website, Ministry Matters at <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4458/worship-elements-christmas-eve-option-1> and accessed on December 6, 2022.

<sup>2</sup>The Candlelighting liturgy for Christmas Eve was written by Rev. Sarah Speed for the Close to Home series presented by [santifiedart.org](http://santifiedart.org).

<sup>3</sup>The Prayer of Confession was written by Rev. Nancy C. Townley and posted on the website Ministry Matters at <https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2127/worship-connection-christmas-eve-option-1> and accessed on December 6, 2022.

<sup>4</sup>The Communion liturgy was written by Carol Holbrook Prickett and posted on her website, <https://carolhferguson.com/2016/12/24/a-christmas-eve-communion-liturgy/> and accessed on December 6, 2022.