

# *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

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

<b>GATHERING MUSIC</b>	<i>Canon in D</i>	Traditional
	<i>O Holy Night</i>	Traditional
<b>CHRISTMAS GREETING</b>		
<b>PRELUDE</b>	<i>O Little Town of Bethlehem</i>	Traditional

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

L: With eyes wide open and our ears on edge,

**P: we look for shepherds and listen for the songs of angels.**

L: In the light of winter's moon, with a star lighting the way,

**P: we gather outside the door of a mystery, wondering if we dare go enter.**

L: With folks and friends we love, with strangers we have just met,

**P: we gather, becoming the holy family for this time and in this place.**

## 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: God in flesh, you chose to come down to be among us. You chose to become flesh and blood. You did this that we might see more clearly how we are called to live and who we are called to be. Yet each and everyday we forget your call to love one another as we are loved. We forget to see your face in the poor, hungry and imprisoned. We forget to see your face in our friends and our enemies. Forgive us in our ignorance, in our anger, in our stress, in our hate and in our fear. Help us remember how to hope. Help us remember your promise of new life and your call to us to live into the kingdom here and now. Lead us in your way that we might help others to see you. Help us to walk in the hope of the promise born this night. 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**

*The Shepherd's Carol*

by Forrest

**READING OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY**

*Luke 2: 1-20*

**CHRISTMAS MESSAGE**

**QUARTET ANTHEM**

*Still, Still, Still*

by Gotsch

**OFFERING**

CALL TO OFFERTORY

OFFERTORY (sung by Braden Bicher & Denny Daugherty) *When Love was Born*  
Mark Schultz

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>**

*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.**

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

<sup>1</sup>The Call to Worship was written by Thom Shuman and posted on his website, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/2016/12/liturgy-wcommunion-for-christmas-eve-a.html> 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 adapted from a confession written by Rev. Elizabeth Rawlings and posted on the website <http://www.disruptworshipproject.com/liturgy/christmas-eve-liturgy/> and accessed on December 6, 2022.

<sup>4</sup>Text: 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: Tori Everhart, Nancy Kinard

Thank you to Braden Bicher, Denny Daugherty, & 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.

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/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.