

The 4th Sunday in Advent

December 22, 2024

9:00 a.m.

+ Indicates those times when all who are able may stand.
Bold indicates congregational response.

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude *“Love Came Down at Christmas”* Smith

Call to Worship

Love deeply, creating the wells of kinship,

For in the Body of Christ, we belong.

Love boldly, like the spirited colors of a rainbow,

For in the Body of Christ, we find peace.

Love joyfully, like the blissful songs in the wind,

For in the Body of Christ, we claim our connections.

Gathering Prayer

Let us pray:

Holy Tapestry of Bliss, the patches of memories are stitched together as we tell our stories with you, Loving God. We cherish the individual pieces of our diverse stories and the beauty of narratives sewed together. We honor the ways these Holy Threads have connected us. May the creation from our connections be like a quilt to our souls, keeping us warm in this season of reflection. Amen.

First Reading of Scripture

Luke 1:57-66 CEB

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church...

Thanks be to God!

+ Opening Hymn No. 649

“Gather Us In”

Candle Lighting Liturgy

Joshua, Bronwen, Sutton, Nate & Nalee Birke

The Love of God-With-Us does not come as mere feeling or sentimental fluff. Love cannot be imposed from on high. Love is our greatest commandment—tending tenderly to God, to other, and to self. The Love of God-With-Us is love in action, radical love practices: redistribution of resources and risks, solidarity with those most exposed to threat, hospitality to caravans, refugees, migrants, and sojourners, caring for those we’ve been taught to despise, or fear. This love is fierce, and tender. It defies unjust rules and flattens hierarchies of value.

The Love of God-With-Us is collective, liberating us from deadly alienation. Love is gestating in darkness; it comes unexpectedly. Love invites our expectation, and demands our participation. Prepare the way, for Love enfleshed. May Love be birthed among, within, and through us, this Advent.

Musical Response:

*O come, O come, Immanuel, and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Divine Light and Love, we have been weighed down by the heaviness of the season, the sorrows carried from the past, and the expectations of the present and future. We hide in shadows instead of the light. We embrace individualism instead of basking in the joy of community love. Create a new path in our hearts so that we can find levity and grace. Reconnect us with the Body of Christ instead of the distressing comfort of spiritual solitude. Amen.

Words of Grace

The grace of God infinitely streams into our lives, drawing us from the shadows into the light, and reconnecting us again with our neighbors. May the mercy of our Creator help us rediscover the Spirit of Joy in our midst.

By the love of God, we are forgiven. Praise be to God! Amen.

Giving from Our Hearts



It is the generosity of the friends and members of this church which supports this ministry. Over 95% of our budget is directly supported through our offering. While the ministry at Zion is sustained by more than dollars and cents, the monetary giving is vital to the work we do. We give thanks for all who have supported Zion over the years. For those contributing financially, there is an offering plate just outside the sanctuary or you can donate online through the online giving button at zionunion.org.

+ Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host: praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

+ Prayer of Dedication

God of All Joy, Holy Hope, We delight in living in your ways as we create your Realm here on earth. These offerings of talents, treasures, and time are not to appease you but to collaborate with you. As co-creators, we seek your intentions and celebrate your love for us and our neighbors. Amen.

Second Reading of Scripture

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church...

Thanks be to God!

Luke 1:67-80 CEB

Special Music

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

John Phillips, saxophone

arr. Conley

Sermon

Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Our Savior

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

+ Closing Hymn No. 154 **“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”**

+ Benediction

+ Postlude **“Let All Rejoice This Christmas”** Anderson

Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Advent Year C was written by the Rev. Michelle L. Torigian, senior pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ, Belleville, Illinois. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-4c-december-22/>
Candle Lighting Liturgy © enflashed 2018, Rev. Anna Blaedel.

Zion United Church of Christ, 115 S. Washington Ave., Union, MO 63084-1849

Home Page address is: www.zionunion.org

Office Hours: Monday-Friday-8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (closed Tuesdays)

Church Office: (636/583-2814) fax (636/583-7949)

Pastor: Rev. Nicholas Knoblauch

Minister to Youth & Families: Alysha Petry

Organist: Brenda Herring

Music Director: Dr. Karen Stafford

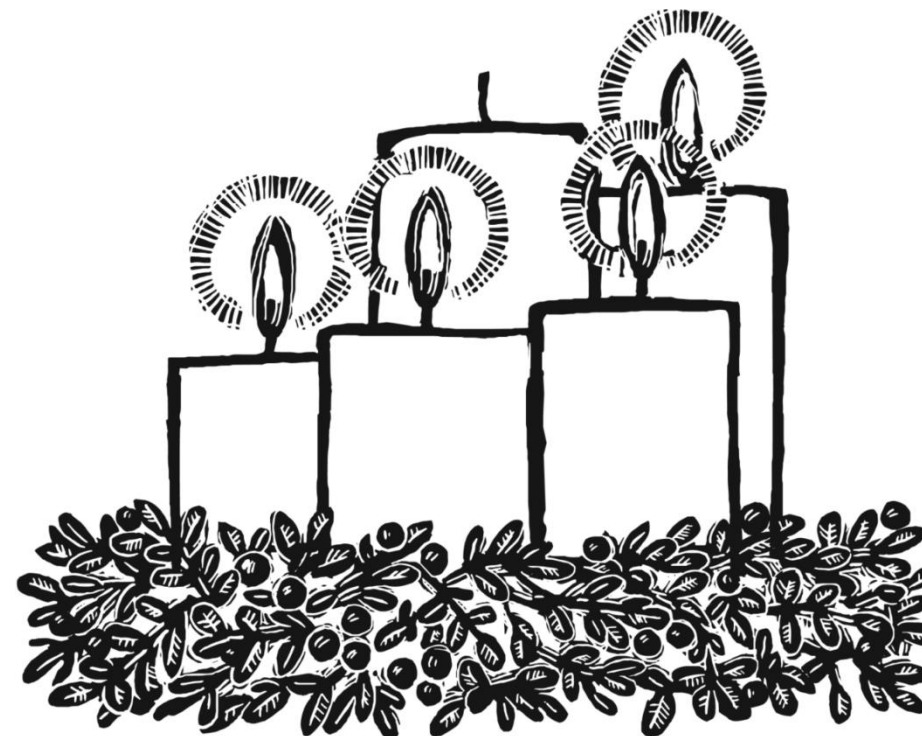
Administrative Assistant: Connie Thompson

Coordinator of Elementary Youth: Mandy Frick

Council President: Fern Dewert

Church Custodian: Joy Bradley

We commit ourselves...
to worship God
to form faithful followers of Jesus
and to care for our wider community.
We care as Christ cares.



+ The 4th Sunday in Advent +
December 22, 2024 + 9:00 a.m.
Zion United Church of Christ
Union, Missouri

Please take the Sunday News home with you for information and happenings during the week at Zion Church.

SUNDAY NEWS

DECEMBER 22, 2024

Serving This Morning

Liturgist: Carla Kilgore

Ushers: Dennis & Karen Tucker Greeter: Pam Klenke

Advent Candle Lighters: Joshua, Bronwen, Sutton, Nate & Nalee Birke
Sound System: Jason Dewert Camera Techs: Blake & Camden Dewert
(Hearing devices are available if needed. Please ask an usher for one.)

Usher Dismissal - An usher will dismiss you by row at the conclusion of the service. They will begin at the front.

Coffee/Fellowship Hour will be in the lower commons each Sunday following the worship service.

Disaster Relief - As the United Church of Christ continues relief efforts for Hurricane Helene and responds to Hurricane Milton, we invite you to give to the **Hurricanes 2024 Appeal**. Your gift will make a direct impact, providing relief to those suffering, rebuilding homes, and helping restore communities. Together, we can extend the support and hope so desperately needed during this time. Offering envelopes are available by the offering plate for your monetary gifts. Thank you for your compassion and generosity.

Christmas Fund for Veterans of the Cross - The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the UCC for over 100 years. It provides emergency grants, helps with health premiums and Christmas 'thank you' gift checks each December to lower-income retirees. The Christmas Fund is managed by the Pension Boards of the UCC. Offering envelopes were provided in the December newsletter for your gifts; additional envelopes can be found next to the offering plate in the narthex.

2025 Offering Envelopes are now available in the upper commons. If you do not have any envelopes and would like them, please contact the church office. Thank you.

On Our List For Prayers

Health and Healing:

Jim Doehring	Phyllis Olson	Carolyn Donoho	Frank Fazzari	Myrt Dunigan
Charlotte Ellison	Kim Yenzer	Kevin Vorderbruegge	Carol Bean	Keith Stahlman
Sarah Berghorn	Bruce Crane (at New Haven Care Center)		Anne Parker (at Willow Brooke in Union)	
Chris Branch (niece of Gerry Hoelscher)		Sharon Waldrop (friend of Jim Doehring)		
Mitch Angell (friend of Charlotte Ellison)		Tammy Wettling (friend of Charlotte Ellison)		
Eric Heitman (nephew of Jim Doehring)		Heather Gooch (great niece of Charlotte Ellison)		
S (Karen Stafford's CASA buddy)		Carol Mossoney (mother of Dan Mossoney)		
Bob Truel (husband of Shirley Truel)		Josh & Tricia Pardee-Jacka (friends of Charlotte Ellison)		
Mike Bailey (husband of Leslie Bailey)		Cindy Roach (friend of Charlotte Ellison)		
Liz Klemme (daughter/sister of Armin, Norma & Phil Klemme)				
Glenda Foster (friend of Charlotte Ellison)		Vanessa Dobsch (niece of Charlotte Ellison)		
Mary Dobsch (sister of Charlotte Ellison)		Aubrey Reed (granddaughter of Charlotte Ellison)		
Wayne Herring (father of Matt Herring)		Beverly Elliott (mother of Mike Elliott)		
Nancy McKenzie (sister of Vicki Hooper)		Bill Stolle (friend of Jim Doehring)		
Whitney Henle (eye surgery, granddaughter of Susan Merlino)				
Roger McDaniel (brother-in-law of Larry & Betty Clark)		Jake Phillips (father of John Phillips)		
Darlene Farrell (sister of Charlotte Ellison)		Marvin Huggins (brother-in-law of Barb Harvey)		

Church Family Undergoing Cancer Treatment:

Brenda Viehland	Jake McNiel (member of Zion & son of Sarah Davenport)
Skip Buehrle	Susie Andell
Ronald Dobsch (nephew of Charlotte Ellison)	Sarah Reed (daughter-in-law of Charlotte Ellison)
Cynthia Johnson (friend of Karen Stafford)	Kim Gallagher (friend of Chris & Dawn Robinson)
Trish Kennedy (friend of Charlotte Ellison)	Allen Coffman (friend of Shawn Pehle)
Marissa Schollenberger (friend of Tom & Gayle Williams)	Aaron Dixon (nephew of Dan Mossoney)
Mike Meyer (friend of Mandy Frick)	Brenda (friend of Hettie Becker)
Leland Stahlman (brother of Keith Stahlman)	Eddie Kennedy (friend of Annie Buehrle)
Bill Diestelkamp (cousin of Liz Short & friend of Mandy Frick)	

Various Concerns:

Prayer for our country and those actively serving:

Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Hunter Grafrath (son of Lindsay & Greg Traffas, grandson of Mike & Lynne Elliott)
Ross Groenke (son of Cindy & Dale Groenke)

Adult Education Opportunities

This Morning - The JOY Adult Class beings meeting again this morning in the lower commons classroom. They will be discussing the book *'If God is Love Don't Be a Jerk'* by John Pavlovitz.

Christian Education/Faith Quest/Youth News

This Morning – All Sunday School classes will meet from 10-11 a.m.; *Preschool* – ages 3-5 will meet in the Preschool Room (the nursery); *Faith Quest* – grades kindergarten-5th grade will meet in the Bible Max Theatre; *Confirm NOT Conform* – grades 6-12 will meet in the high school room.

Please Note – There will be NO Faith Quest on next Sunday, December 29th.

Church Calendar – December 22, 2024 to December 29, 2024

Today -	The 4th Sunday in Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Christian Education/Fellowship Hour
Tues., Dec. 24 -	6:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
Wed., Dec. 25 -	Christmas Day Church Offices will be closed
Thurs., Dec. 26 -	Church Offices will be closed
Fri., Dec. 27 -	6:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall in use
Next Sun., Dec. 29 -	The 1st Sunday in Christmas 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Fellowship Hour 4:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall in use

Tues., Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve Service with Candlelight begins at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 24th.

Do you have Christmas lights that are no longer working? Bring them to church to be recycled! The Green Team will take them to Earthbound Recycling in Eureka -- and all funds we earn will go toward local missions. There is a box in the Lower Commons for your contributions. Thank you!

Help Thyself Meals - HELP THYSELF meals program has had two successful years with the endeavor and we plan to continue as a service to those that need a bit of support in the future. These meals are for anyone in need of a bit of help with meals during the week. We want you to help yourself. The meals and simple desserts are in the freezer in the kitchen in the Lower Commons kitchen. This is a reminder to mark the chart on the front of the freezer for taking meals or bring meals to donate to those in need. If anyone needs assistance in receiving meals please contact one of these people: Kathy Young (314-580-3105), Carol Rohrbach, (636-583-3659), Ann Hartley (636-346-5921), Dorothy Mitana (636-239-1296), Jane Ridder (314-520-7090) and Maxine Harrison (636-583-2159)

Little Food Pantry – Thank you for the great support in keeping the Little Food Pantry going! A list of the most needed items is posted on the bulletin board in the lower commons. Monetary donations can also be given – contact the church office.

Little Free Library – Just a reminder that Zion has a Little Free Library located close to the corner of Washington and Springfield Avenue. If you have any gently used adult/children's books please feel free to drop them in the free library or drop them off in the church office. Thank you!

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