

Christmas Eve

December 24, 2024

6:30 p.m.

+ Indicates those times when all who are able may stand.

Bold indicates congregational response.

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

arr. Redner

Ann Hartley, flute + John Phillips, clarinet

Call to Worship *(Adapted from John 1:1-5,14,16 NRSV)*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Word was in the beginning with God.

All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us,

and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Gathering Prayer

Let us pray:

Almighty God, our heavenly parent, further than the farthest star and closer than our next breath, we have been waiting. We have been waiting for your hope. We have been waiting for your peace. We have been waiting for your joy. We have been waiting for your love. May our waiting lead to yearning. May our yearning lead to preparing. May our preparation welcome your reign of hope, peace, joy, and love. So come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel, Amen.

First Reading of Scripture

Luke 2:1-7 CEB

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

Thanks be to God!

+ Opening Hymn No. 180

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Advent Prayer

We wait in the darkness, expectantly, longingly, anxiously, thoughtfully. The darkness is our friend.

In the darkness of the womb, we have all been nurtured and protected.

In the darkness of the womb, the Christ-child was made ready for the journey into light.

It is only in the darkness that we can see the splendor of the universe – blankets of stars, the solitary glowing of the planets.

It was the darkness that allowed the Magi to find the star that guided them to where the Christ-child lay.

In the darkness of sleep, we are soothed and restored, healed and renewed.

In the darkness of sleep, dreams rise up. God spoke to Joseph and the wise men through dreams.

God is speaking still.

Sometimes in the solitude of the darkness our fears and concerns, our hopes and visions rise to the surface.

We come face to face with ourselves and with the road that lies ahead of us.

And in that same darkness, we find companionship for the journey. In that same darkness, we sometimes allow ourselves to wonder and worry whether the human race is going to survive.

And then, in the darkness, we know that you are with us, O God, yet still we await your coming.

In the darkness that contains both our hopelessness and our hope, we watch for a sign of God’s hope.

For you are with us, O God, in darkness and in light. Amen.

Giving from Our Hearts



It is the generosity of the friends and members of this church which supports this ministry. 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

Holy and gracious God, we gather in your splendid presence this holy night. We gather in hope. We gather in peace. We gather in joy. We gather in love. Bless the gifts we dedicate to you, for the ongoing labor of your living word. Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto you. Amen.

Candle Lighting Liturgy

Paul, Shanna, Nora & Luke Brinker

Advent invites us into the mystery of the night, where our bodies are given rest, our spirits are given peace, and our imaginations come alive. Tonight, we relight candles of hope, peace, joy, and love, our guides through the journey of Advent. In the Holy Darkness, we light the candle of hope. Decorating darkness, illuminating mystery, and warming our spirits for the journey towards hope.

We light the candle of hope, planting the seeds of our faith, imaginatively envisioning the new life God is preparing for us.

In the Holy Darkness, we light the candle of peace. Its light reminds us to slow down as we are given time for rest restoration and healing, calming our spirits on the journey towards peace.

We light the candle of peace, welcoming the calmness Christ brings to all who establish justice and righteousness in his realm.

In the Holy Darkness, we light the candle of joy. With the warmth of this light, we celebrate the delight and laughter of children who continue to show us the way.

Tonight we light the candle of joy welcoming the warmth of laughter and delight. With joy, we decorate the holy darkness, just as a child brings warmth to the world. May the joy of children never fade.

In the Holy Darkness, we light the candle of love. From the warmth of its glow, we are reminded that God is always with us.

We light the candle of love welcoming the steadfast and faithful presence of God. May this light remind us we are loved now and always. Waiting, hoping, preparing for hope, peace, joy, and love to be born into the world. Amen.

Tonight, we light the Christ candle. Awaken the everlasting light of Christ, born again in our hearts this night. May the radiance of hope, joy, peace, and love glow in your heart.

May we know the warmth of Christ's presence through God's holy light and holy darkness this night, and all the nights to come, Amen.

Special Music

"Peace, Peace"

Bock

Chancel Choir + Ann Hartley, flute + Jeanne Lischer & Fern Dewert, descant

"Tell the Good News"

Barrett

Chancel Choir + Liz Pace, descant + Jeanne Lischer & Gail Mefford, percussion

Second Reading of Scripture

Luke 2:8-20 CEB

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

Thanks be to God!

+ Hymn No. 185

"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"

Sermon

Special Music

"O Holy Night"

Liz Pace, soloist + Danny Pace, pianist

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.

Passing the Light

(Ushers will bring to you the Light, taken by the pastor from the Christ candle. They will hold their candles upright as they come to the end of each pew. Please take the flame from their candles as you tip your candle. Pass the flame to your neighbors as we sing, always holding the lit candle straight. As the light increases from the candles, the house lights will be dimmed, so that, as we finish the carol we will be lighted by the candles.)

Closing Hymn

“Silent Night”

Jeanne Lischer, guitar

**Stille Nacht, heilige Nacht! Alles schläft, einsam wacht,
Nur das traute, hochheilige Paar Holder Knabe im lockigen Harr,
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh, Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!**

**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, Heavn’ly 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.**

Benediction

Postlude

“Carols of Joy and Gladness”

Smith

The Candle Lighting and Advent Prayer was adapted from Exquisite Darkness Winter Solstice Liturgy written by the Rev. Ashley Goff, and were used and adapted with permission from Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. 2020.

Christmas Welcome!

Welcome to our friends and visitors! May you and yours find the blessing and joy given to us all on that first Christmas Eve, and may Christ’s love and light find a home in your heart in the days to come. May peace be with you always.

Our **Christmas Eve** offering envelopes will be given to help the recent hurricanes in the United States. Extra envelopes are next to the offering plate on the table in the narthex.

Worship leader: Rev. Nicholas Knoblauch, Pastor

Ushers: Skip & Pat Buehrle, Scott Buehrle,

Shanna Brinker, Sammi Blankenship

Organist: Brenda Herring + Music Director: Karen Stafford

Candle Lighters: Paul, Shanna, Nora & Luke Brinker

Pre-Service Musicians: Gail Mefford, Danny Pace, Caeligh Knoblauch

Greeters: Daryl & Ann Hartley

Sound Tech: Jeff Petry Video Recording: Alysha Petry

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)

Christmas Gifts Given

Poinsettia Gifts Given:

In memory of Fletcher Simons by his family.

Peace on earth and God’s blessings on us all by Susan Merlino.

In memory of our parents by William & Fern Dewert.

In memory of our parents by Skip & Pat Buehrle.

In memory of Clarence & Amelia Peters by Pauline (Peters) King.

In honor of our children & grandchildren by Wayne & Ellen Brinkmann.

In memory of loved ones by Kirk & Sallie Hancox.

In honor of our parents, Skip & Pat Buehrle, by Scott Buehrle, Shanna Brinker & Sammi Blankenship.

In memory of loved ones by Linda Kroeter & family.

In memory of Hugo & Lucille Viehland by Brenda Viehland.

In memory of Elmer Holtgreve & in honor of Katelyn Meyer and Brandon & Lindsay Titter by Bernice Holtgreve.

In memory of Greg Stevens & Josh Camden, our daddys, husbands & friends by Jean & Adam Stevens and Laurel, Amelia & Archer Camden.

Benevolent Gifts Given:

In memory of Fletcher Simons by his family.

In memory of our parents by Gary & Karen Stafford.

In honor/memory of our parents by Brad & Louise Parker.

Peace on earth and God's blessings on us all by Susan Merlino.

In honor of our grandchildren – Abigail, Blake, Camden, Hannah & Natalie Dewert by William & Fern Dewert.

In honor of our children & grandchildren by Skip & Pat Buehrle.

In honor of Zion friends by Carl & Jane Ridder.

In memory/honor of Don & Kurt Puls & my family by Melva Puls.

In memory of family & Steve Hooper by Vicki Hooper.

In memory of my grandparents by Brenda Viehland.

In memory of Greg Stevens & Josh Camden, our daddys, husbands & friends by Jean & Adam Stevens and Laurel, Amelia & Archer Camden.

In memory of Elmer Holtgreve & in honor of Katelyn Meyer and Brandon & Lindsay Titter by Bernice Holtgreve.

In memory of loved ones by Kirk & Sallie Hancox.

In memory of our parents August & Alma Brinkmann & August & Pauline Scheidegger by Wayne & Ellen Brinkmann.

In memory of Arline Stahlman & Alan Freiermuth by Keith & Marilyn Stahlman.

In memory of loved ones by Ken & Carol Rohrbach.

In honor of our family by Mr. & Mrs. Alan TenEyck.

In memory of loved ones by Armin & Norma Klemme.

In memory of Robert Barreth by Suzanne, Mindy & Brian Barreth.

In memory of Judy Doehring by Jim Doehring, Paula & Krista & families.

In memory of Arline Stahlman by Tim, Annette, Travis & Nicholas Stahlman.

In memory of Pauline Altholz by Pauline (Peters) King.

In memory of family & John Leicht by Sue Leicht.

In memory of our parents by Dan & Lanora Mossoney.

In memory of David Kinworthy by Linda Kinworthy & family.

In memory of Robert L. Pope & Robert W. Pope by Carol Pope.

In honor of our children by Dennis & Maxine Harrison.

In honor of Stacy, Scott, Molly & Owen Mertz and Ryan, Kara & Jackson Hall by Dave & Linda Hall.

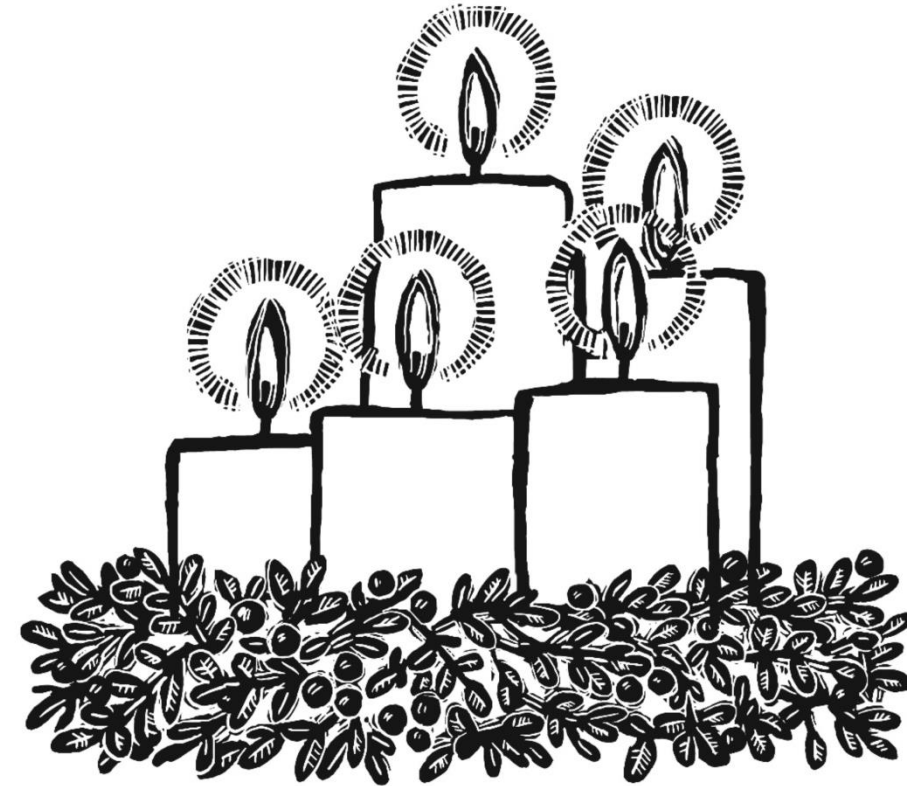
We commit ourselves...

to worship God

to form faithful followers of Jesus

and to care for our wider community.

We care as Christ cares.



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Zion United Church of Christ
Union, Missouri