

The 3rd Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

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 *“Joy to the World”*

Call to Worship

Joy is the gift God gives us upon waking in the morning to see beams of sun dance in dusty corners or hear much needed rain, even on a leaky roof.

Joy is in the delight of tiny precious things.

Joy is the magnificence of the Redeemer when the tests come back clear, or when a school test is finally passed, or when the spirit is tested and chooses faith over fear.

Joy is in the hands that hold our own while we sit silently and wait.

Joy is the patience of Emmanuel when petty disagreement turns into great injustice and change is slow to bend towards what is right and good.

Joy is in the small actions we take each day to help righteousness and peace abound.

Gathering Prayer

Let us pray.

Beloved, we come now seeking to recognize moments of delight when we feel connected to you. We bring our fragmented hearts filled with good cheer, gentle reverence, and utter amazement; we share our secret hopes, dependable comforts, and cozy moments of Advent

peace. Rise up within us as we cherish the divinity of all that is good. Amen.

First Reading of Scripture

Isaiah 35:1-10 NRSVUE

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

Thanks be to God!

+ Opening Hymn No. 180

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Lighting the Candle of Joy

Jerod, Sammi, Allie & Raegan Blankenship

Today we light the Candle of Joy. Joy is often considered the easiest of these four weeks before Christ’s holy birth. We may cling to hope, and pray for peace, but in joy, we delight. In joy, our struggles are released. In joy, we find relief and comfort, a connection to friends and family and God. In joy, we find innocence within that has not been ground out. The lighting of this candle is joy. And it reminds us of candles lit in our lives. No matter the size or color of the wax, no matter what room it is lit in, the act itself is exquisite.

While the flame dances, we are one in the miracle and beauty of its light.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Great Redeemer, too often we allow the idea of absolute happiness to block the existence of joy from our daily lives. Our hopes are crushed under the weight of the world’s sorrows, and our peace is disturbed by the agonies of an interconnected existence. We race toward solutions without pausing to meditate on the greater good.

We lay bare the sorrows we carry without acknowledging the small delights that make the fight against injustice worthwhile. Relieve us of the pain we wear as a badge of honor, ignoring your love, even as it surrounds us. Amen.

Words of Grace

Our loving God does not spare us from pain, as empathy is born from suffering, but neither does God remove joy from our lives as a punishment for our indiscretions. We are bound together with a sacred braid of hope, peace, and joy designed to hold fast against the greatest adversities.

In faith, no anguish can take hold completely; no sorrow completely outweigh the possibility of joy. 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. 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

Precious God, take these gifts in the spirit they were given, with joy and love for our siblings around the world. Let us remember that we all have times of trouble. We will each stand before you, hands clasped in prayer, begging for relief. Use what we have here to bring that relief where it is needed most. Amen.

Second Reading of Scripture

Luke 1:68-79 CEB

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

Thanks be to God!

Hymn No. 231

“Arise, Your Light Is Come!”

Children’s Christmas Program

“Christmas Birds in Zion”

adapted from *“The Birds of Bethlehem,”* by Tomie dePaola) and
The Carol of the Birds (A Poetic Reading)

Hymn No. 229 (vss. 1, 2 & 4) *“The First Noel”*

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. 59 *“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”*

+ Benediction

+ Postlude *“O Come, Little Children”* Broughton

A special thank you to Carl and Jane Ridder for the treats for the youth participating in the Christmas Program!

A special thank you to Jeanne Lischer, guitarist, and Brenda Herring, pianist for their help with the Christmas Program!

Called the Holy Way: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday of Advent Year A was written by Maria Mankin. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/advent-3a-december-14/>

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

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 3rd Sunday of Advent +
December 14, 2025 + 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 14, 2025

Serving This Morning

Liturgist: Carl Ridder
Ushers: Dan Mossoney & Jane Wilson Greeter: Colleen Simons
Sound Tech: Jason Dewert Camera Techs: Blake & Camden Dewert
Advent Candlelighters: Sammi, Jerod, Allie & Raegan Blankenship
(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.

2026 Offering Envelopes are now available in the upper commons. If you do not have offering envelopes and would like either weekly or monthly, please contact the church office.

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.

Winter Care Packages Assembled - Winter care packages for the Little Free Pantry will be assembled during the Intergenerational Sunday School hour this morning following the worship service.

Christmas Poinsettias/Benevolent Gifts - This morning is the deadline to order a Christmas poinsettia or give a donation to the Union Food Pantry/Little Free Pantry. Cost of the poinsettias is \$18 per plant.

On Our List For Prayers

Health and Healing:

Jim Doehring	Phyllis Olson	Carolyn Donoho	Charlotte Ellison
Brenda Viehland	Kim Yenzer	Kevin Vorderbruegge	Myrt Dunigan
Hettie Becker	Bruce Crane (at New Haven Care Center)		
Anne Parker (at Aspen Valley Fox Crest in Washington)	Chris Branch (niece of Gerry Hoelscher)		
Sharon Waldrop (friend of Jim Doehring)	Darlene Farrell (sister of Charlotte Ellison)		
Mitch Angell (friend of Charlotte Ellison)	Bill Stolle (friend of Jim Doehring)		
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)		
Heather Frederick (niece of Marilyn Freiermuth)	Nancy McKenzie (sister of Vicki Hooper)		
Josh & Tricia Pardee-Jacka (friends of Charlotte Ellison)	Mike Bailey (husband of Leslie Bailey)		
Cindy Roach (friend of Charlotte Ellison)	Glenda Foster (friend of Charlotte Ellison)		
Vanessa Dobsch (niece of Charlotte Ellison)	Mary Dobsch (sister of Charlotte Ellison)		
Aubrey Reed (granddaughter of Charlotte Ellison)	Pat Pappas (sister of Jim Doehring)		
Marilyn Fish (aunt of Carla Kilgore)			

Church Family Undergoing Cancer Treatment:

Linda Kroeter	Jake McNeil (member of Zion & son of Sarah Davenport)
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)
Britt Fassler (daughter of Nancy Kossmann)	Willie Beckett (nephew of Vicki Hooper)
Dasha Musante (granddaughter of Marilyn Stahlman)	Erica Sterling (friend of Amy Dewert)
Sammie Baker (friend of Brenda Viehland)	Sharon Birke (sister of Ron Griffin)

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)

Christian Education/Faith Quest/Youth News

This Morning - All Sunday School classes meet in the fellowship hall for our Intergenerational Sunday School hour. We will be assembling winter care packages for the Little Free Pantry.

Please Note - There will be NO Faith Quest on Sunday, December 28th.

Church Calendar – December 14, 2025 to December 21, 2025

Today -	The 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship/Faith Quest Christmas Program 10:00 a.m. Fellowship Hour/Intergenerational Sunday School
Mon., Dec. 15 -	6:30 p.m. Church Council (lower commons)
Tues., Dec. 16 -	1:30 p.m. Book Club (lower commons)
Wed., Dec. 17 -	10:00 a.m. January newsletter assembled (fellowship hall) 12:00 noon Loops of Love (lower commons) 6:15 p.m. Meditative Drum Circle (chapel) 7:30 p.m. Chancel Choir (chapel)
Thurs., Dec. 18	8:00 a.m.-12:00 noon Quilting Circle 1:30 p.m. Historical Team (conference room)
Fri., Dec. 19 -	7:00 p.m. Fellowship Hall in use
Next Sun., Dec. 21 -	The 4th Sunday of Advent 9:00 a.m. Worship 10:00 a.m. Fellowship Hour/Christian Education Hour

January 2026 Newsletter Articles Due – Mon., Dec. 15 – Final articles for the January 2026 'Spirit of Zion' newsletter are due in the church office on Monday morning, December 15th. Newsletter will be assembled on Wednesday, December 17th at 10 a.m.

Meditative Drum Circle – Wed., Dec. 17– The next Meditative Drum Circle will be on Wednesday, December 17th at 6:15 p.m.

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

A Request from the Quilters – Zion Quilters are asking if you or anyone you know has quilts that need to be quilted to please contact the church office or one of the quilters. Thank you!

Hope Ranch of Missouri will be accepting several new teen girls as residents in the next few weeks. Needed supplies include: shampoo and conditioner, deodorant, body wash or bar soap, feminine hygiene products, facial tissue toilet paper, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hair brushes. In addition, household cleaning supplies are needed to replenish stores to save money for other uses. Supplies include: paper towels, microfiber cleaning cloths, Mr. Clean kitchen sponges, Dawn dish soap, dishwasher tables, rinse aid for dishwashers, all-purpose cleaner, laundry detergent, dryer sheets, Swiffer refills, 33-gal trash bags, windex, toilet bowl cleaner. Please consider a donation of the above items and drop them off at the church office. Thank you!

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

Church Office: (636/583-2814)

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