



CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24, 2022 7:00PM

ZION REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Signs, Miracles, and Wonders
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Our Mission Statement

To share the gospel of Christ in such a way that we find God, grow our faith,
discover our purpose and make a difference

Christmas Eve

Miracles, Signs and Wonders

December 24, 2022 6:30 7:00 P.M.

Lessons and Carols

Meditation of the Day: "Where there is faith, there is love; Where there is love, there is peace; Where there is peace, there is God; And where there is God; there is no need." ~Leo Tolstoy~

WE GATHER TO PRAISE GOD

** All who are able may stand*

Gathering Music

Medley of Christmas Carols

Ringing of the Bells

Prelude

Once in David's Royal City

Words of Welcome

*Opening Hymn

O Come All Ye Faithful 112 Red

*Call to Community

(inspired by Isaiah 9 & 60)

Arise, shine, for your light has come,

and the glory of God has come upon you!

For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;

but God will arise upon you, and the glory will appear over you.

Nations shall come to your light,

and rulers to the brightness of your dawn.

The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light.

Those who lived in a land of deep darkness,

them light has shined.

Let us celebrate the Light of the world,

for upon us has the Light shined.

The season for watching and waiting is over. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. This is the light of the world, and the darkness cannot extinguish it.

The Christ Candle is lit

"O sing to the Lord a new song;
Sing to the Lord, all the earth.
Tell of his salvation from day to day.
"Declare his glory among the nations,
His marvelous works among all the peoples" (Psalm 96:1-3).

Three purple & pink candles are lit.

Choral Response (as candles are lit):

O Little Town verse 4 (black)

"Say among the nations, 'The Lord is King!'
Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice.
He will judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his truth" (Psalm 96:10a, 11a, 13b).

To us is born a Savior! Amen.

WE CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE

At the Manger: Mary

First Lesson

Luke 1:26-35 The Story of Mary
Barbara Hendershot

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born^[c] will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

*Hymn

What Child is This 148 Black

God will give you a sign.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

And they shall name him Emmanuel,

Which means, God is with us.

Prayer

God of Love, when you chose Mary to be the mother of your Son, you showed your love for the poor and lowly. Grant us grace to receive your Word, and so to be made one with Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

At the Manger: Joseph

Second Lesson

Matthew 1:18-21 The Story of Joseph

Burnie Clutz

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Choral Anthem

O Lo How A Rose E'er Blooming
Zion Choir

Scripture Response

Isaiah 11:1-2

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse.

And a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him.

The spirit of wisdom and understanding.

The spirit of counsel and might.

The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.

Prayer

O God, when you chose Joseph to raise your Son, you reached back into the ancient roots of faith and hope found in the family of David. Give us grace to live lives of faith in the most unexpected places; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

At the Manger: The Star

Third Lesson

Matthew 2:1-2, 7-10 The Story of the Star
Jean Simmons

The Visit of the Magi

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage."

Then Herod secretly called for the magi^[a] and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east,^[b] until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy.

*Hymn

Angels From the Realms of Glory 104 Red

Scripture Response

Isaiah 60:1-2

Arise, shine, for your light has come.

And the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

For darkness shall cover the earth,

And thick darkness the peoples.

But the Lord will arise upon you,

And his glory will appear over you.

Prayer

O God, by the light of a star you revealed Christ to all people. Lead us, who know you by faith, to your presence, where we may see your glory face to face; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

At the Manger: The Angels

Fourth Lesson

Luke 2:8-14 The Story of the Angels
Calvin Livingston

The Shepherds and the Angels

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[b] praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

*Hymn

Hark the Herald Angels Sing 102 Red

Scripture Response

Isaiah 10:9

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings.

Lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings.

Lift it up, do not fear.

Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Prayer

Joyful God, in the song of the angels you celebrated the light of the world found in a new born baby. On this Christmas Eve, may our hearts sing with joy for the precious gift given: through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

At the Manger: the Christ Child

Fifth Lesson

Luke 2:1-7 The Story of Jesus' Birth
Jessamyn Hackett

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

*Hymn

Away in a Manger 124 Black

Blessing of the Creche

O God, Source of all Blessings, from the very beginning of creation you have shown us your love. When your people lost hope, you showed us how extravagant your love is through the birth of Jesus Christ, who brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love. Bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to the one who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Give

Offertory

I heard the Bells on Christmas Day

Offertory Response

In Bleak Mid-Winter, verse 4 Black

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 I can I offer: all my heart

Blessing Our Gifts

With these gifts, dear God, accept the praise and thanksgiving of our hearts, which rejoice in your goodness and love. Let our gifts point to your presence in the world, and further your dream for the world through Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Amen.

Sacrament of Communion

*Hymn of Preparation

Joy to the World 132 Black

Invitation

God be with you

And also with you.

Let us open our hearts to the Spirit of Christ, born so many years ago, and who continues to live here tonight.

We thank God with joy

Thanksgiving

God of humble births and the stars in the heavens, we thank You for Your enduring love for all creation. We thank You for those who can see You and make connections that lead toward meaning. We thank You for those who are wise—who will journey out to strange lands and unknown territories in search for truth or to bring justice. We thank You for Your way of breathing life into us, and of helping us to take deep breaths when we need them.

God of love, creativity, novelty, joy, meaning, peace and hope, in spite of all the challenges on earth and in our personal lives, we give thanks for Your persistence throughout the universe.

We rejoice in Your Word through Jesus the Christ, who was born humbly, who communed with those others called outcast, who lived a complex life that sought justice, who died unfairly, and whose Spirit lives among us still.

Remembrance

Remembering Your boundless love, we offer our praise and proclaim our faith:

Christ was born. Christ lived and died. Christ comes again and again into our lives.

God, we know that Your Spirit is poured on us and on these elements of bread and juice, and we pray that Your love, peace and justice in the world may be born through us.

All praise to You, rejoicing in the Spirit of Jesus Christ, who lives among us, and the Holy Spirit, who binds us together in love. Amen.

Breaking the Bread and Pouring the Cup

Sharing the Meal

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 and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

*Sharing the Christ Light

*Closing Hymn

Silent Night 101 Red

Prelude to Service

O Holy Night

GO FORTH IN PEACE & SERVE!

Merry Christmas

Service Credits

Gathering music: Medley of Christmas carols. Performed and arranged by C. M. Moblard (harpsichord) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Prelude: Once in David's Royal City. Arr. by Alice Jordan. Performed by C. M. Moblard (organ) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Hymns: O Come All Ye Faithful. Red 112. Tune: Adeste Fideles. Latin Hymn 18th century. Performed by C. M. Moblard (organ) of Zion Reformed UCC.

What Child is This? NCH 148. Tune: Greensleeves. English traditional melody. Words by William C. Dix (1845). Performed by C. M. Moblard (organ) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Hark! The Herold Angels Sing. Red 102. Tune: Mendelssohn. Composed by Felix Mendelssohn. Words by Charles Wesley (1739). Performed by C. M. Moblard (organ) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Away in a Manger. Red 109. Composed by Carl Muller. Attributed to Martin Luther. Performed by C. M. Moblard (organ) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Source(s): Hymnary (hymnary.org).

Choral Anthem: Lo, How a Rose E're Blooming. German Melody 16th century. Arr. by Michael Praetorius.

Offertory: I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day. Tune Waltham. Composed by John Baptiste Calkin. Arr. by Mark Hayes. © 2011 The Lorenz Corp. Performed by C. M. Moblard (piano) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Pre-communion hymn: Joy to the World! Red 120. Tune: Antioch. Composed by Georg Frederick Handel. Words by Isaac Watts.

Communion: Gesu Bambino. Tune: Gesu Bambino. Composed by Pietro A. Yon. Arr. by Mark Hayes. © 2011 The Lorenz Corp. Performed by C. M. Moblard (harpsichord) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Closing Hymn (with candles): Silent Night. Red 101. Tune: Stille! Nacht. Composed by Franz Gruber (1818). Words by Joseph Mohr (1818).

Postlude: O Holy Night. Tune: Cantique de Noel. Composed by Placide Cappeau. Performed by C. M. Moblard (organ) of Zion Reformed UCC.