

# ZION REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

**December 24, 2023  
11:00 A.M.**

## **Fourth Sunday of Advent - LOVE**



*"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."* 1 John 4:9

### **Preparation for Worship**

"Love all God's creation, the whole of it and every grain of sand in it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things." Fyodor Dostoevsky in The Brothers Karamazov

**Gathering Music and Bells**                      "Noels" (Christmas music for the organ)                      Louis-Claude Daquin

### **Greetings, Announcements**

**Prelude**    "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"    Felix Mendelssohn

**Lighting of the Advent Candle, Luke 1:26–38**    Bell & Shafer Families

Reader 1:        O God, we light the fourth candle of Advent.

*(With the first three candles burning, a family member lights the fourth candle.)*

Reader 2:        We hear your angel Gabriel and witness the faith of Mary. Fill us with your grace and light.

Reader 1: Mary was a young, strong, spiritual woman. Even though her life was not easy, she heard God's voice and said yes. Her song was a prayer that would uplift those who were downtrodden. Her lyrics shattered the proud and called the world to change. She would bear within her the promised child, Jesus, the Light of the World. This Advent, we respond to God's beckoning to us as well.

**All: Revealing God, visit us and fill us with your Spirit. Bring your good news to life within us. Give us courage to carry your light into the injustices and shadows of this world. Amen.**

**All (sing): Shine on us, O God of justice;  
Guide our path through gloom of night;  
Bear within us Wisdom's glory;  
Come to us, O Christ the Light.**

**\*Hymn** "Christian Awake!" Red #115

**Prayer of Hope** A Vision by Wendell Berry

One: If we will have the wisdom to survive  
to stand like slow growing trees  
on a ruined place, renewing, enriching it,  
if we will make our seasons welcome here,  
asking not too much of earth or heaven,

**All: then a long time after we are dead  
the lives our lives prepare will live here,  
their houses strongly placed upon the valley's sides,  
fields and gardens rich in the windows.**

One: The river will run clear, as we will never know it,  
and over it the birdsong like a canopy.  
On the levels of the hills will be green meadows,  
stock bells in noon shade.  
On the steeps where greed and ignorance  
cut down the old forest,  
an old forest will stand,  
its rich leaf-fall drifting on its roots.

**All: The veins of forgotten springs will have opened.  
Families will be singing in the fields.  
In their voices they will hear a music  
risen out of the ground.**

One: They will take nothing out of the ground they will not return,  
whatever the grief at parting.  
Memory, native to this valley,  
will spread over it like a grove,  
and memory will grow into legend,  
legend into song, song into sacrament.

**All: The abundance of this place,  
the songs of its people and its birds,  
will be health and wisdom and indwelling light.  
This is no paradisaal dream.  
Its hardship is its possibility.**

## Choral Response

## Gloria in Excelsis Deo Gloria in Excelsis Deo

### Scripture

John 1:1-14

Lector: Carol Mooers

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

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

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.

One: Listen to what the Spirit is teaching.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### Special Music

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

John Baptiste Calkin

Performed by Claire-Marie Moblard

### Word for Children

### Scripture

Luke 1:26-38

Lector: Carol Mooers

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 will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon**

Let It Be

**\*Hymn**

"Good Christian Men (or Friends), Rejoice"

Red #116

**Morning Prayer**

**The Prayer that Jesus Teaches Us**

**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.**

**Call to the Offering**

Come now and kneel before the Christ child. Bring all that you are and all that you have.

Offer your gifts in wonder and surprise and awe. Offer your gifts in joy and delight.

**Offertory**

"Cantique de Noel"

Adolphe Adam

**\*Doxology**

**In The Bleak Midwinter (Verse 4)**

**What can I offer, poor as I am?**

**If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.**

**If I were wise one, I would do my part; but**

**What I can I offer: all my heart.**

**Prayer of Dedication** (in unison)

God is with us in amazing and powerful ways, bringing shining new hope into the world. Like Mary and Elizabeth so long ago, the ministry of our church is radiant with that great hope. And like Mary and Elizabeth, our congregation and the whole United Church of Christ also trusts in the promises of God. In our giving this morning, our joy overflows in generosity.

**\*Hymn**

"Joy to the World"

Black #132

**Benediction**

One: Depart in peace, and take with you the certain knowledge

That God is always coming into the world.

**All: We will seek God, not in a long ago stable or ancient manger,**

**But in the people we meet and the depths of our own hearts.**

One: May the blessing of Christmas make you a blessing to others;

May the peace of the season pervade all that you do.

**All: We will welcome the challenge of discipleship.  
We will offer ourselves as God's ministers.  
We will go forth in hope, peace, joy, and love.**

**Postlude**

"The First Noel"

Mary McDonald

Look for the **UCC Christmas Fund** offering envelopes in the bulletin this week. This fund provides care and resources to active and retired clergy, and lay UCC employees for emergency grants, supplementing health premiums, and much more.



Service Workers are collecting twin Size Blankets for Holly House during the month of December. Contact Carol Mooers for more information.



Micah's Backpack is collecting Hot Chocolate and Apple Cider Packets during the month of December.



Our Tuesday Night Ministry is collecting Canned Tuna, Chicken, Spam and Viena Sausages during the month of December.

Thank you for your help in these outreach ministries.

## **PRAYING WITH ONE ANOTHER**



Prayer is one of the most important spiritual disciplines of our faith, promoting communication with God, and love for God and neighbor. Join us in prayer as we pray for all those in our communities that we have touched or that have touched us and those that simply crossed our paths. Let us also remember to pray for peace and safety around the world and to pray with and for our Zion siblings: Bruce Albright, Janis Albright, Holly Bell,

Brenda Bowers, Naomi Brackett, Linda Cantilena, Richard Cantilena, **Steve Cavey**, Kim & Bill Cook, Donna France, Michael Graff Jr. (son of Sue and Mike), Beth Gross, Elwood Hauver, Brian Johnson, Bradley, Hanna & Ellie Jump, Maddison & Rexton Jump, Tena Kindle, Dee Krause, Calvin Livingston and Family, **Paul Loveless**, Heather Morgan, Annie Penick, James Penick, Mary Pietsch, David Ridenour, Wells Ridenour, Betsy Roulette, Verna Rosenfield, Emma Schnebly, Ralph & Scherry Sellers, Felicity Shafer, Staci Shafer, Tina Shafer, Melanie & Wesley (granddaughter and great grandson of Danny Springer), **The Sringer Family grieving the loss of Danny Springer**, Jessica Stark, Jovan Summers, Thelma Summers, Tracy Roach Walls.

***\*\*New additions to the Prayer List will be printed in bold for the first week.***



The lector this week is Carol Mooers. The lector next week is Jean Simmons. Ushers for this week are Frank Ebersole, Carol Mooers, Rich Owens, Mark Bagby. Next week's ushers are Domenick Gerlando, Barb Hendershot, Matt McDonald, William Wanz.

Greeters for this week are: Front Door – Rich Owens. Middle Door – TBD.

Please sign up to be a greeter on Sunday mornings. The sign-up sheet is on the table at the middle door.

## **Birthdays**



12/24 Sandra Rhodes  
12/29 Mackenzie Ridenoiur

### Anniversaries

12/29 Richard & Susan Lohman

### Upcoming Events:

- 12/24 Worship Service 11:00am  
Candlelight Service 7:00pm
- 12/25 Office Closed
- 12/26 Historic Houses of Worship Tour 3:00 – 7:00pm  
Tuesday Evening Ministry 5:00-6:30 pm (Downstairs in Fellowship Hall)
- 12/27 No Potluck – Will resume on January 3rd
- 12/31 Sunday School 9:45am  
Worship service 11:00am
- 1/1 Office Closed
- 1/2 Staff Meeting 12:00 pm  
Tuesday Evening Ministry 5:00-6:30 pm (Downstairs in Fellowship Hall)
- 1/3 Properties Team Meeting 4:00pm  
ONA Team Meeting 4:30pm  
Wednesday Potluck 6:00pm
- 1/4 Executive Team Meeting 2:00PM  
4-H Club Meeting 4:30pm  
Choir Practice 5:30pm



### Wednesday Potluck

Resuming on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. This is a great way to leave the workday behind and just relax. Join us every Wednesday evening at 6:00pm in the Chapel for good food, interesting discussions, and great fellowship. Bring your favorite dish for everyone to try.



### Offering Envelopes



If you would like a box of Offering Envelopes for the upcoming year, please use the sign-up sheet on the table in the Chapel or let Rae Smith know. Office phone number 301-739-7244, e-mail [zionrucc@myactv.net](mailto:zionrucc@myactv.net)

### Historic Houses of Worship Tour – December 26<sup>th</sup> 3-7pm

**We are looking for volunteers to host, give tours, and provide cookies for our visitors. We are asking that if you are bringing cookies, please bring 2 dozen to share. Any questions, contact Carol Mooers.**

**Service Credits**  
**December 24**  
**(Morning)**  
**CCLI Number: 6212519**

**Gathering music:** Noels (Christmas music for the organ). Composed by Louis-Claude Daquin. © by Belwin Mills Publishing Corp. Performed by C. M. Moblard (organist) of Zion Reformed UCC.

**Prelude:** Hark! The Herald Angels Sing. Composed by Felix Mendelssohn. Arr. by Dan Miller. © 2001 by Birnamwood Publications. Performed by Byron L. Stay (trumpeter) and C. M. Moblard (organist) of Zion Reformed UCC.

**Hymns:** Christians, Awake! Tune: Yorkshire. Composed by John Wainwright. (1750). Words by John Byrom (1750). Performed by Byron L. Stay (trumpeter) and C. M. Moblard (organist) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Good Christian Men Rejoice. 18<sup>th</sup> Century German melody. Medieval words. Performed by Byron L. Stay (trumpeter) and C. M. Moblard (organist) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Joy to the World. Red 120. Tune: Antioch. Composed by George Fredrick Handel. Words by Isaac Watts (1719). Performed by Byron L. Stay (trumpeter) and C. M. Moblard (organist) of Zion Reformed UCC.

Source(s): Hymnary ([hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org)).

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

**Offertory:** Cantique de Noel. Composed by Adolphe Adam. © 1957 by Consolidated publishers. Performed by C. M. Moblard (pianist) of Zion Reformed UCC.

**Postlude:** The First Noel. Arr. by Mary McDonald. © 2019 by The Lorenz Corp. Performed by Byron L. Stay (trumpeter) and C. M. Moblard (organist) of Zion Reformed UCC.



## Zion Reformed United Church of Christ

### **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.**

A Special Welcome to Our Visitors

Welcome to the Zion Reformed United Church of Christ! We are glad you have joined us for worship this morning. I believe you will find Zion Church an open and safe place to ask the difficult questions of life and a community that honors each spiritual journey. We encourage you to ask our members about our community, explore our bulletin and website and to gift us with your contact information (phone, address, email) in our Guest Book as you exit worship. We are ready to answer any question or to help connect you to any program that we can. I hope I have the opportunity to greet you in person after the service or that you'll contact me. Many blessings,  
Scott Winnette, Pastor ([pastorwinnette@gmail.com](mailto:pastorwinnette@gmail.com))



### **Zion Reformed United Church of Christ**

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