

Zion Reformed United Church of Christ

December 28, 2025 at 11:00AM



Gathering Music & Bells

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

*Call to Worship

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. Alleluia and Amen.

*Carol Purple 128

Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Prayer of Praise and Adoration (in unison)

Glorious God, who is born among us, we praise and worship you this day.

You share our humanity; you enter into the struggle of our lives, bringing us life and love. We thank you for your presence, here with us now. We praise you for the gift of your Spirit, the Spirit of Christ born among us.

You make yourself vulnerable for the sake of our salvation. You put yourself into the hands of frail humans and trust us to care. You show us all what we can be, inviting humankind to be loving, faithful, and just.

Receive our adoration, for you delight us with love and grace. May our worship honor you. May we delight you with our praise. May our words, thoughts, and songs bring you pleasure. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

Carol Purple 147, Verses 1 & 2

The First Nowell

Story *The Little Shepherd Girl*
By Juliann Henry and Jim Madsen

Rae Smith

Carol Purple 145, Verses 1 & 3

What Child Is This

Prayer of Illumination

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.

Scripture Luke 2:1-7, NRSV

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Word for Children *One Baby Jesus: A New Twelve Days of Christmas*
By Patricia Pingry and Wendy Edelson

Scripture Isaiah 60:1-6, The Inclusive Bible

“Arise, shine, for your light has come! the glory of YHWH is rising upon you! Though darkness still covers the earth and dense clouds enshroud the peoples, upon you YHWH now dawns, and God’s glory will be seen among you! The nations will come to your light and the leaders to your bright dawn! Lift up your eyes, and look around: they’re all gathering and coming to you—children journey from afar, escorted in safety; you’ll see them and beam with joy, your heart will swell with pride. The riches of the sea will flow to you, and the wealth of the nations will come to you— camel caravans will cover your roads, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; everyone in Sheba will come, bringing gold and incense and singing the praise of YHWH.

Listen to what the Spirit is teaching us.

Thanks be to God.

Story *The Christmas Candle*
By Richard Paul Evans and Jacob Collins

Rev. Dr. E. Scott Winnette

*Carol Purple 144, Verses 1 & 4

In the Bleak Mid-Winter

*Litany of Christmas

If there is no cross in the manger,
there is no Christmas
If the Babe doesn't become the Adult,
there is no Bethlehem star.
If there is no commitment in us,
there are no Wise Men searching.
If we offer no cup of cold water,
there is no gold, no frankincense, no myrrh.
If there is no praising God's name,
there are no angels singing.
If there is no spirit of alleluia,
there are no shepherds watching.
If there is no standing up, no speaking out, no risk,
there is no Herod, no flight into Egypt.
If there is no room in our inn,
**then "Merry Christmas" mocks the Christ Child, and the Holy Family is just a holiday card,
and God will loathe our feasts and festivals.**
We affirm our faith in Jesus Christ, who lived and died and rose again, and is with us still.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer 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.**

Carol Black 160

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Call to the Offering

On this holy day, we remember the greatest gift ever given — God's own Son, born in a humble manger, bringing light and life to the world. Just as the shepherds came with open hearts and the magi brought their treasures, we too are invited to offer what we have. Our gifts today are more than coins and bills — they are acts of love, seeds of hope, and signs of God's kingdom at

work. Let us give joyfully, knowing that through our offering, Christ's light shines in places of need and hearts are warmed with Holy Peace.

Doxology

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.

*Carol Purple 113

Angels We Have Heard on High

*Benediction

May the love of God fill our hearts.
May the grace of Christ keep us true.
May the peace of the Spirit make us strong
And may the Spirit of the Christ-child fill us with joy.
Now and forever. Amen.

Postlude