



Zion Goshert's United Church of Christ
First Sunday of Christmas Worship Sunday, January 1, 2023

Ministers: All the Faithful Members

Preacher: Rev. Joel Risser

1588 Mount Zion Road, Lebanon, PA 17046 717-865-3286 www.ziongosherts.org

*Please stand if you are able. Congregation, please speak the words in **bold**.

PRELUDE

WELCOME (Ringing of the Bell)

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from heaven! Praise God on the heights!

People: ² Praise God, all of you who are his messengers!

Praise God, all of you who comprise his heavenly forces!

L: ³ Sun and moon, praise God! All of you bright stars, praise God!

P: ⁴ You highest heaven, praise God! Do the same, you waters that are above the sky!

L: ⁵ Let all of these praise the LORD's name because God gave the command and they were created!

P: ⁶ God set them in place always and forever. God made a law that will not be broken.

L: ⁷ Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all you ocean depths!

P: ⁸ Do the same, fire and hail, snow and smoke, stormy wind that does what God says!

L: ⁹ Do the same, you mountains, every single hill, fruit trees, and every single cedar!

P: ¹⁰ Do the same, you animals—wild or tame—

you creatures that creep along and you birds that fly!

L: ¹¹ Do the same, you kings of the earth and every single person,
you princes and every single ruler on earth!

P: ¹² Do the same, you young men—young women too!—

you who are old together with you who are young!

L: ¹³ Let all of these praise the LORD's name because only God's name is high over all.
Only God's majesty is over earth and heaven.

**P: ¹⁴ God raised the strength of his people, the praise of all his faithful ones—
that's the Israelites, the people who are close to him. Praise the LORD!**

*OPENING HYMN

It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

Hymnal #316

INVOCATION

Redeemer of all who put their trust in you, we seek your presence here. Only our own attitudes can separate us from you. Re-create us in your own image so we may be true to your intentions for us and in tune with your purposes for our life together. In our times of distress, pour out your pity and your love that we may know we are not alone. Lift us up and carry us when our strength fails. Now in the midst of this congregation, we would praise you and honor your name. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

CALL TO CONFESSION

Surely God longs to draw us close, to enter our thoughts and clarify our vision. It is God's will and purpose to free us from our fears and our frantic, self-protective ways. We cannot be whole apart from God, so we come to confess how lost we are.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, we have been so busy with things that do not satisfy! We have tried to fill our emptiness with activities and possessions that drain our energies rather than give life meaning. We do not know how to live, and we are afraid to die. We excuse our own sin at the same time that we deplore the abuse and violence we see in others. We deny the witness of the One who shared our common lot, for we are not willing to take the risks of genuine love. O God, save us from ourselves. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Christ identified with us to show us whose we are. Christ suffered for us to help us in our times of testing. Christ died to lead us to life in all its fullness. Now our merciful and faithful High Priest welcomes us to be at one with God and our own best selves. We are forgiven, we are redeemed, we are lifted up to a life of true freedom.

PRAYER FOR DISCERNMENT

SCRIPTURE : Isaiah 63: 7-9

SERMON: Empathic Distress

HYMN: *Angels, We Have Heard On High* Hymnal #310

OFFERING - GOD'S WORD ON GIVING

We are invited to praise God with the offerings of our best. In the generous spirit of this season, we give thanks for God's providence with an answering generosity. The needs of our brothers and sisters, both spiritual and material, cry out for the help we can give. What a privilege to act for God through our giving!

OFFERING HYMN *We Three Kings of Orient Are* Hymnal #313

*OFFERTORY RESPONSE *Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow*
Tune: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Em G C D⁷ G D G C G
Praise God from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God, all crea - tures

5 Am Bm⁷ Em Am Em B⁷ Em A⁷ D Em
here — be - low. Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly host. Praise

10 D Bm G C Am D⁷ G D Em Bm G
Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em -

15 C D⁷ Em D G C G Am Em Bm Em
man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray:

Awesome God, when we recount your gracious deeds and praiseworthy acts, we want to imitate them. Because of your mercy and favor and the abundance of your steadfast love, we are moved to respond. Thank you for the gift of life, for all you have entrusted to us, for your watchful care over us, for surrounding us with love when loss and suffering overwhelm us. It is when we give with generous hearts that we begin to understand how much we have been given. Thank you, God. Amen.

PRAYERS of the people and pastoral prayer

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your Name. Your kingdom come; Your 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.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

***HYMN**

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing

Hymnal #317

BENEDICTION

The joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the Magi, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas. And the blessing of God almighty, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer be upon you and remain with you always. Amen.

NOTES ON PARISH LIFE and THE POSTLUDE