



Zion Goshert's United Church of Christ

Christmas Eve Worship Saturday, December 24, 2022

Ministers: All the Faithful Members

Preacher: Rev. Joel Risser

1588 Mount Zion Road, Lebanon, PA 17046

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www.ziongosherts.org

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

PRELUDE

WELCOME (Ringing of the Bell)

INVOCATION

Out of deep shadows, we are attracted to your brightness, Glorious God. From the trauma of life's battles, we are drawn to the peace you alone can provide. Away from our irreligion and worldly passions, you invite us to center our lives in you. Come, Holy One, to reign among us. Bring the joy we cannot know apart from you. Lead us in the ways of justice and righteousness that you intend. Establish among us your marvelous works that we might declare them to a waiting world. Amen.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: An unmarried teenage girl was invited—

People: to carry Christ into this world.

L: An ordinary carpenter was invited—

P: to be a father to a child unlike any other.

L: The shepherds were invited—

P: outcast and isolated, included at the manger.

L: The Magi were invited—

P: foreigners and seekers, included at the manger.

L: And if she was invited, and he was invited, and they were invited—

P: then we can trust that we too are invited.

L: This story is for us.

P: This love is for us.

L: Family of faith, this is our invitation. Welcome home.

All: Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

O Come, All Ye Faithful

Hymnal #318

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CHRIST CANDLE

SPECIAL MUSIC

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Rachel and Tracy

CALL TO CONFESSION

Every Sunday we pray a prayer of confession together. As a kid, I used to think that this was a time to air out all the things I did wrong—all the reasons I was a bad person. However, as I have grown, I have realized—that's not what this is. Instead, this is a small moment for all of us to pause and recognize that we aren't perfect, we are still works in progress, and we want God's help to grow. How powerful is that? Where else in the world does a group of people gather every week and say out loud: "I'm sorry. I want to grow. Help me get there." So tonight as we pray, remember how powerful this is. This is one small way we accept God's invitation to deeper faith and life-changing love. Let us pray together now ...

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, You throw open the door and invite us into relationship, day in and day out. However, instead of running toward you, we dip our toes in the water of this faith. We hold our breath. We play it safe. We struggle to believe that a love so unfettered, so unfiltered, could be for us. As a result, we often deny this worth for ourselves and others. Forgive us for ignoring your invitation to be the people you call us to be. Forgive us for the ways in which we hold back from deeper connection to you or withhold your radical love from others. Open our ears to not only hear your invitation, but to trust that this good news exists even for us. Gratefully we pray, amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Family of faith, Even when we fail to trust God's love, and even when we fail to love others as we should, God still loves us. That door never closes.

So hear and believe this good news:

God invites us into a life of faith. God loves us through every season of life. God forgives us when we lose our way and invites us deeper every step of the way. We are loved, invited, claimed, celebrated, and forgiven. Thanks be to God!

PRAYER FOR DISCERNMENT

God be with you. **And also with you.**

SCRIPTURE : Luke 2:1-20

SERMON: Invited Home

SPECIAL MUSIC *What Child Is This?* Ollie

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.

OFFERING - GOD'S WORD ON GIVING

Jesus was not born in a real home. He was born into poverty. He was born into simplicity. He was born into a manger in Bethlehem. And despite the little he might have had, Jesus still spent the rest of his days on earth giving to others. Generosity is in the DNA of our faith. We give what we can, not because we should or because scripture says to. We give because we're family. We give because we belong to one another. We give because all are invited into God's house. So let us give our tithes and our offerings now.

OFFERING HYMN *Away In A Manger* Hymnal #322

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow

Tune: *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Musical score for the Offertory Response. The score is written on a single treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here be - low. Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly host. Praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost. Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el." The score is divided into four systems, each with a measure number (1, 5, 10, 15) at the beginning. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: Em, G, C, D7, G, D, G, C, G; Am, Bm7, Em, Am, Em, B7, Em, A7, D, Em; D, Bm, G, C, Am, D7, G, D, Em, Bm, G; C, D7, Em, D, G, C, G, Am, Em, Bm, Em.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray

Gracious God, Your story is one that forever invites us to be our full selves, to take up space, to go where we feel called, and to allow this community to feel like home. So use these gifts to keep building your home here. With gratitude as tall as the ceiling, we pray. Amen.

HYMN

Silent Night

Hymnal #321

[As the singing transitions to Silent Night, light from the Christ candle is passed among the congregation.]

CANDLELIGHT POEM

***HYMN**

Joy To The World

Hymnal #314

BENEDICTION

As you leave this service, your service begins: Comfort the homesick. Open your doors to others. Seek sanctuary. Be brave enough to go home by another way. And remember that here in God's house, all are welcomed—so come back soon. In the name of our Foundation—God, Spirit, and Son—go in peace.

NOTES ON PARISH LIFE and THE POSTLUDE

Citations for Worship

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