

WELCOME TO
Old Zionsville United Church of Christ
5981 Fountain Road, P.O. Box 215
Old Zionsville, PA 18068

Email: ozuccoffice@ptd.net Web page: www.oldzionsucc.org

Church Office: 610-966-3601

Pastor: 610-393-3522 or 610-966-3436

Rev. Lori Esslinger

Pastor

David Carlson

Organist

December 24, 2023

10:15 a.m.

**those who are able may stand*

Fourth Sunday of Advent (Love)
Christmas Eve Morning

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Candles

Call to Worship

Leader: We will sing of your steadfast love, O God; Forever, with our mouths we proclaim your faithfulness.

All: We declare your love, unending, unending. We will sing. We will sing.

Leader: Our never-ceasing songs shall show. The mercies of God for the ages to know.

All: We declare your love, eternal, enduring. We will sing. We will sing.

Leader: Our song forever shall record the tender mercies of the LORD;

All: We declare your love, immortal, sustaining. We will sing. We will sing.

*Opening Hymn: "O Come, All Ye Faithful"

p.249

Lighting of the Love Candle

Hope is assertive, and peace subversive, and joy provocative. But we know that faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love. Love is all these words and all the things we cannot say. Love is transformative. Love is the only thing that can change the world because love has changed us. Love has come to us as a God who became one of us, lived and died for us, and lives again. Love has come to us as a God who risked everything to make us understand that nothing is impossible. Love bears all

things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. We will never give up because love is real. Love simply is there. God's love in us is a fire that never dies. God loves you so, so much, that God sent the only Son for us, so that we might all know God's love eternally. We light this candle because God is love.

Light the fourth candle

Prayer (unison)

God of love, remind us that love is transformative, but it must be shared. We must love one another as You have first loved us, for You loved us so much You sent the Son to us, so that we might know that love can never die, that Your steadfast love remains forever. As Your love transformed the world long ago, Your love continues to transform us into Your children, and we await the promise that love will change the world again. Amen.

Special Music: "Born on Christmas Day" by Kristin Chenoweth, Cover by One Voice Children's Choir

Prayer of Transformation

Let us pray: God with us—

The one who takes us from the tent to the throne—The one who prepares places for us and promises rest from our enemies—we open our hearts and souls to the beauty of your kin-dom. We seek to hear the precious news once again that we might be continually renewed, transformed, and awed by your abundant love, everlasting peace, miraculous hope, and quenchless joy. May our praise and prayers be pleasing to you. May our lives reflect the beauty you have birthed in us. Amen.

Words of Grace

God hears what is named aloud, what is named within, and what is yet to be named. Go forth knowing that the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, and this joy you have – the world didn't give it and the world can't take it.
Amen.

*Hymn: "Angels We Have Heard on High" p.278

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7 p.889

Choir Anthem

Scripture: Luke 2:8-20 p.889

Reflection

Invitation to Generosity

On this day that has become synonymous with gift giving, let us reflect on the gifts of love, hope, joy, and peace. Let us respond to the generosity of the Giver of all things beautiful. Let us give generously to share God's beauty in our community.

Offertory

* Presentation of our Gifts and The Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

*Prayer of Dedication (unison)

Generous God, we give thanks for all the beautiful resources you have given to us. Let these gifts bring glory and honor to you and beauty and peace to your creation. Amen.

Choir Anthem

Light the Christ Candle

Prayer: (unison)

O come to us, abide in us, our Lord, Emmanuel. God with us, make Your presence known to us, now and always. Shine bright in the shadows and despair, and may the warmth of Your love carry us forward. You changed the world forever that night long ago when You were born, and You are changing our lives, right now. On this Christmas Eve, we pray for Your transformative love to be renewed, for our own hope, peace, joy and love to be restored. We ask for Your guidance in helping each of us live into Your reign on earth as it is in heaven, for Your reign is at hand, and it is coming. Lead us into ways of participating in Your reign now by doing justice, practicing compassionate love and kindness, and walking humbly with You, our Savior and Redeemer, the Living God, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Hymn: "It Came upon the Midnight Clear"

p.251

Service of Holy Communion

* The Lord's Prayer (sung)

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Lighting of Candles

*The light will be brought to the end of each row, tip your unlit candle into the flame so that it may take hold. **Do not tip your lit candle!** Pass the light along your row until every candle is lit. After the candles are lit we will join in singing.*

*Hymn: "Silent Night! Holy Night!" (all vs.) p.253
(words will be on the screen)

Pastoral Blessing and Extinguishing of Candles

*Closing Hymn: "Joy to the World!" p.270

*Benediction: "The Work of Christmas" by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,

When the star in the sky is gone,

When the kings and princes are home,

When the shepherds are back with their flock,

The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,

To heal the broken,

To feed the hungry,

To release the prisoner,

To rebuild the nations,

To bring peace among others,

To make music in the heart.

Go in hope, peace, joy, and love...to spread the beauty of Christmas. Amen.

*Extinguishing of the Candles

*Postlude

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**A Tent, A Tabernacle, A Throne: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Advent/Christmas Eve Morning Year B** was written by The Rev. Mia M. McClain, Senior Pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Washington D.C. She is an ordained UCC minister.

The poem, "The Work of Christmas" is excerpted from Howard Thurman's *The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations* and is used by permission of Friends United Press. All rights reserved.

<https://bookstore.friendsunitedmeeting.org/collections/howard-thurman/products/mood-of-christmas-and-other-celebrations-the>

**TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS** are in memory of Dorothy and Ronald Richards sponsored by the Richards-Brown Family.

**TODAY'S BULLETINS** are sponsored by Paula Lilly in honor of her Children and Grandchildren.

**TODAY'S GREETER** is Ruth Stansfield.

**TODAY'S LITURGIST** is Robin Yoder.

RESTROOMS ARE AVAILABLE on the main floor of the Church and downstairs. Bulletin MAGNIFIER SHEETS can be found on the sound system.



Our church is equipped with an Assistive Listening System. You provide your own headphones which can be connected to the transmitter which will allow you to more clearly hear the Worship Service or any program being offered in the Sanctuary. See anyone at the sound booth to inquire.

**Epiphany Lesson Bible Study** - 9 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Sunday morning, Jan. 7, 2024! Bring your Bible. We will meet in the Lower Social Hall. All Welcome. No previous Bible Study experience necessary!

**ATF** is still looking for a sturdy clothing rack. Thank you! If you know anyone that could use a Wedding Gown, ATF has a very pretty one, brand new with tags still on, size 14. See Millie. The next ATF Giveaway will be on Monday, January 8 from 4-6pm and Saturday, January 13<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm.

**ATF is asking for everyone to please hold your donations till February. Thank you!**

**January Soup of the Month** – Social and Aid will be making Chili in January. Order forms can be found in your bulletin. Chili is \$8.00/quart and Ham and Cheese Sandwiches are \$5.00. Orders must be placed by January 7, 2024 and pick up will be on Thursday, January 18, 2024 between 4-6 p.m. in the lower social hall.

December 25, 2023 until January 2, 2024. If you need Pastoral Assistance please call the church office or Kathy Latshaw.

This Christmas season, **the Food Panty** provided \$25 gift cards for the children of our client families. In prior years we asked for gift cards to be donated by civic groups and local churches but, due to timing and logistics, we needed to purchase the cards upfront this year. We are asking for anyone interested to make a donation, of any dollar amount to help defray the costs. Donations so far have covered about 15% of our outlay for what has turned out to be a record number of children. If you are interested in contributing, please consider any of the following options:

- Add it as a special item on your offering envelope
- Provide a check or cash to Robin
- Send a check to

Zionsville Area Food Pantry  
PO Box 56  
Old Zionsville PA 18068

As all cards have already been purchased, no additional cards are needed. Thank you in advance for any contribution you may make.

**Next Sunday, December 31, 2023 – No Sunday School**

10:15am Worship – Carol Sing, Led by our Lay Leadership with music by Beth Eck and a special presentation by Neil Harrison, “Hiking in Switzerland”. You won’t want to miss this with a surprise ending!