

**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

<u>Rev. Lori Esslinger</u>	<u>Pastor</u>
<u>David Carlson</u>	<u>Organist</u>
<u>December 14, 2025</u>	<u>10:15am</u>

**those who are able may stand*

Third Sunday of Advent

Son of Mary

Gathering

Like the iconic figures gathered around the Christ Child in our nativity scenes, we gather together because we want to know Jesus more as we seek to bring his Reign of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love on earth.

(Today you have been given a sticky note on your bulletin. You will use this during the prayer time to write a word or phrase to give to Baby Jesus as a wish or joyful desire for the world.)

Prelude: "Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne"

(Matthews)

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Altar Candles

We Gather at the Scene

Leader: This week in our Advent series of asking and answering the complex question "What Child IS This?", we encounter another description of the Christ Child that will tell us much more about who he was destined to be.

Sung:

Page 281

**What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath:

Millie Kohler, Caroline French, Deb Schoenberger and Matthew Yenser:
Confirmands and their mentors

Leader: We often hear Jesus referred to as the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man.” But this carol points out his identity over and over as the “Son of Mary.” This equally powerful description points to his being reared by a woman who, upon hearing she would bear a child, said “yes” to one of the most difficult and precarious situations she could face. And then she sings with joy a song of justice for the ages. She goes on to guide and help form this child who would tend to the suffering ones.

Reader 1: We light this candle of Joy for those who need it most.

Reader 2: For all whose despair feels endless.

Reader 1: For all who find little joy in daily living.

Reader 2: For all whose disappointment runs deep.

Reader 1: Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this: “How can we proclaim a deep joy “in spite of” hardship in our time?”

Reader 2: What child IS this? This, this, is the Son of Blessed Mary who reigns with joy forever.

Sung:

Page 281

**This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

See our Congregation's Nativity Scenes

Prayer of Invocation (unison)

**Here, at the nativity of your birth,
give us the courage to face this moment
with an uncanny joy.
Open us to new understandings of
the unfolding story of your presence among us.
Show us how to praise you even when songs and carols feel empty.
We pray in the name of the Child,
the One Who Uplifts our hearts and lives.
Amen.**

Bring Him Laud

*Opening Hymn: “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

see insert

Proclaiming

We all have witnessed people who “rise to the occasion,” who bring energy and commitment, even and especially in the midst of the most unsettling times. From the book, The First Advent in Palestine, we read: “...without a doubt, [Mary] experienced the push and pull of war and resistance that shaped the villages of Galilee.” The situation for women in the time of Jesus’ birth was more difficult than we might imagine. In the scripture today, we hear that Mary will be perceived as an unwed mother, something that could

have ruined her future forever. But she believes in the mission that God is laying out for her, and her role in it. Hear now this remarkable account:

We Hear the Story Luke 1: 26-56

Reflection

Responding

Our faithful response is to praise God for this story of Emmanuel, God-With-Us, even and especially in the midst of difficulty, for God is indeed with us even still.

"We Keep Watch" – Prayers

"Great Holy One"

Brian Wren and Susan Heafield

Sung by congregation and choir:

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Leader: In this moment of silent contemplation, we lift up our prayers for the world, for its people, for the kind of kin-dom embodied by the child who was son of a strong and wise woman. **[You have a sticky-note and we invite you to write a word or phrase of joyful desire for the world that we can give to baby Jesus.)**

Time of Silent Contemplation

Spoken in Unison:

Living one, how will you lead us?

**"Not by scheming or by stealth, not with glamor, power and wealth,
but through Jesus, teacher, healer,**

In a manger born, [joy] on Christmas morn."

Sung by congregation and/or choir:

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Pastoral Prayer

Be with us as we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world.

We pray this in the way you taught us, saying...

*The Lord's Prayer

Page 631

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.

Amen

Sung by congregation and choir:

Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,

show us who You are in a human face.

"So Bring Him..."

(Offering)

What gifts are adequate for the Son of Mary, the Bringer of Joy? Our theme song says, "so bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own him." Whether what we have to give is simply the gift of our presence and gratitude, or if we are privileged with coffers of precious resources, we give what we can. In this way we "take ownership" of our role in the scene, in the unfolding story of Joy. **(please place your completed sticky notes in the offering plate.)**

Offertory: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"

(Willis)

*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.**

Blessing of our Gifts

Choir Anthem

Sending Forth

Just as our theme carol asks, "what child is this?" we, too, have come with our questions this day. We go into the world with answers of Good News, being the Body of Christ through our words and deeds.

We Ask, We Answer

As we prepare to go into the world,
let us ask and answer the question we came with.

What child IS this?

This is the one born into a time when
unbridled joy was squelched by those in power.

What child IS this?

This is the one whose birth would stir the world from slumber
and challenge us to know joy that comes from right relationships.

What child IS this?

This, this is the "Son of Mary"
who shows us the song of life that is ours when we stand up for the least.

*Closing Hymn: "O for a World"

(see insert)

Benediction

May the Womb of Life,
the Child of Joy,
the Spirit of Resistance to Injustice

be with you now and as you go.

All: Amen.

Sung Response:

**This, this is Christ, the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!**

Page 281

*Extinguishing of the Candles

Postlude: "Shout the Glad Tidings"

(Avison)



<http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/whatchild>

TODAY'S GREETER is Ruth Stansfield.

TODAY'S LITURGIST is Lee Hoch.

TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Paula Lilly in memory of parents, Vincent & Emma Christman and Howard & Helen Lilly

TODAY'S BULLETIN is sponsored by Mina Reinhard in loving memory of Gene & Timothy Reinhard.

We thank Millie Kohler, Caroline French, Deb Schoenberger and Matthew Yenser: Confirmands and their mentors, for Lighting our Third Advent Candle today.

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.

Greeters and Liturgists Needed. If you would like to get on our schedule to help in our Worship Services by being a Greeter or Liturgist, please contact the church office. Email and phone number are on front page or put a note in the Secretary's mailbox. Thank you.

Don't forget to pick up your ordered **Soup and/or Sandwiches on Thursday, December 18** between **3:30-5:00pm** in the downstairs social room. Thank you.

Sunday Brunchers

When: Sunday December 21, 2025, After Church (Cash Only)

Where: The Mercantile Club

427 Railroad St. Emmaus

RSVP by Tuesday 12/16/2025

Supper Club

When: Wednesday January 7, 2026, 6:00 PM

Where: Delizioso Italian Grill

1985 Brookside Rd., Macungie

RSVP by Sunday 1/4/2026

All Things Free Room (ATF) next Sort and Store will be Monday, December 15 at 10:00am. If you can help or have any questions, call or text Millie Kohler. Thank you for your help with this giving ministry.

Christmas Eve services are scheduled for 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. this year. 3 p.m. will be a little shorter for those who can't sit so long and those who don't like to drive at night - candles, carols, communion. The 7 p.m. service will be a more traditional service; however, the Choir will be presenting a wonderful Cantata for our enjoyment. There will be candles and carols too. O Come one and all!

Share the Warmth

Again, this year we will be collecting items to warm someone from the inside. All items will be donated to support the Zionsville Area Food Pantry.

Beginning in December 2025 and through January 2026 we will be collecting the following items: Tea bags, Coffee (regular and/or decaf --- NOT coffee beans, which need to be ground; NOT K-cups), Soup, Hot chocolate. Please note: Tea and Coffee are especially needed.

Week of December 15 through December 21:

Pastor Lori will have office hours on Wednesday from 10am-3pm.

Other times by appointment

Pastor Lori will be on vacation December 26 through January 1.**She will be at the December 28 worship service.**

Church Secretary Hours: Tues. 12:30am-3:30pm, Wed. 10am-1:30pm,
Thurs. 10am-2:00pm

(please call before coming to make sure she is in the office)

Ellie will be on vacation December 22 through 26, December 31 & January 1.

Monday: 10am ATF

6pm Scouts

Tuesday: 7pm Consistory

Thursday: 3:30-5:00pm Soup & Sandwich Pickup

7:30pm Choir

Sexton: Richard Shoemaker (with Thanks to his wife, Brenda)

Next Sunday—9:00 am Sunday School

10:15 am Worship, 4th Sunday of Advent

After service: Sunday Brunchers

Total Offerings from December 7, 2025:

General Offerings: \$2104.00

Missions: \$60.00

Flowers: \$40.00

Pastor's Discretionary Fund: \$20.00

Heat/Electric: \$20.00

Communion: \$10.00

Building Repair: \$90.00

Sunday School: \$4.00

Furnace: \$20.00

Attendance: 56