

WHAT CHILD IS THIS?



Serve & Enrich
Zion United Church
of Christ

Our Mission: United by Christ's loving embrace, a welcoming light in an unsure world, we serve and enrich the community and provide a safe gathering space for fellowship, spiritual growth, and self-exploration.

Our Vision: Transforming and caring for our community through Christ's love.

Pastor: Sarah Frische-Mouri Hannigan



Organist: Martha Main

Bell Choir Director: Vivian Thomas

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December 24, 2025 – Christmas Eve

Welcome

Prelude

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.

***Gathering Song**

Joy to the World, 179

Advent Wreath Lighting

The Gephart Family

Please join us in singing the “What Child Is This” when prompted (lyrics on screen).

Prayer of Invocation—Here, at the nativity of your birth, give us the courage to face this moment with humility and hope. Open us to new understandings of the unfolding story of your presence among us. Show us the true meaning of the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We pray in the name of the Child, the One Who Reigns in our hearts and lives.

The Lord’s Prayer (unison)—**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.**

Carol

A Reading from the Prophets

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep
darkness—on them light has shined.
³ You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.
⁴ For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of
Midian.
⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors

O Come, All Ye Faithful, 182

Isaiah 9:2-7

and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
⁶ For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Great will be his authority,^[c]
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Choir

We Hear the Story at the Nativity

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.

Were You There on That Christmas Night
with “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
the hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

Innkeeper – Dennis Frische-Mouri
Joseph – Nathan Law
Mary – Kaylee Gephart
Shepherds – Michelle Van Dyke
Angel – Paula Prange
Wise Ones – Linda Frische-Mouri

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.

We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

Prayers at the Nativity

Bell Choir

I Wonder as I Wander

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation— What gifts are adequate for the King of Kings, the Child of Light? 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 treasures 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 Light in the dark corners.

December Benevolence

The Christmas Fund

*Doxology

We Give Thanks—God, we give you thanks for your Son, Jesus the Christ, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel born among us, the greatest gift there ever was. Bless the gifts we bring this night that they might used to share your light as we serve and enrich your beloved. Amen.

A Litany

We Ask, We Answer

One: Let us ask and answer the question we came with, the one we've been asking all season long.

Many: What child IS this?

One: This is the one born into a time when hope was hard.

Many: What child IS this?

One: This is the one whose lowly status would send a message of peace with justice.

Many: What child IS this?

One: This is the one who promises us joy even when life is difficult.

Many: What child IS this?

One: This is the “King of Kings” who shows us the way of true love for all people.

Many: What child IS this?

One: This, this, is the babe whose Light spreads through our lives to others and to the world.

We Welcome the Light of Christ

Special Music

O Holy Night, Karie and Matt Main

Hymn

Silent Night, 186

Silent night! Holy night! All is calm, all is bright
'Round yon virgin mother and child; holy infant so tender and mild,
 Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night! Holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
 Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night! Holy night! Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
 Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

The Light Goes with Us

"Blessed Are You Who Bear the Light" by Jan Richardson

Benediction—“This, this is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary!” May the True Sovereign,
the Child of Light, the Spirit of Hope be with you now and as you go.

Postlude

Liturgy from © worshipdesignstudio.com/whatchild

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **WORSHIP WITH ZION**—You’re invited to worship with Zion every Sunday at 10 am either in-person or online during our livestream, which can be found at www.facebook.com/zionuccindy. You are welcome here.
- **CAROL SING**—Join us the Sunday after Christmas for a carol sing in worship. Continue the celebration of Christ’s birth as we lift our voices in joy and praise. A reception with Christmas treats will follow worship.
- **EPIPHANY**—A great light guided the way of the magi long ago, and God’s light still guides us today. On Sunday, January 4 we will follow God’s guiding light for our lives and will receive our Epiphany Star Words to help guide us through the year.
- **DECEMBER BENEVOLENCE**—For over 100 years, The Christmas Fund has been providing and caring for active and retired UCC pastors, church workers, and their families. This year, help *Be the Light* that brings joy to those that are and have faithfully served. This is one of the five special offerings of the United Church of Christ. Please consider support those who have served so faithfully.