

Third Sunday In Advent

December 14, 2025

10:15 a.m.

(* Indicates: all who are able to please stand.)

WE ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

WE OPEN OURSELVES TO GOD

OPENING SENTENCES

L: We gather together in this place:

P: **prophets and dreamers, singers and poets,**

L: we who dare to imagine a world renewed;

P: **We who dare to dream God's dream.**

L: We sing with Elizabeth and Mary.

P: **Our spirits rejoice in God, our savior!**

L: We bless the God of justice and joy,

P: **who lifts up the lowly and vulnerable.**

L: God's mercy is upon us all,

P: **from generation to generation.**

L: Come and worship, all you who dream and wait.

P: **We have come to wonder and praise.**

*HYMN *As With Gladness*

*ADVENT PRAYER

God of surprises, you interrupt our world with joy and hope beyond our wildest dreams. When we feel forgotten or despair, bless us with your holy joy. When our world feels barren, bless us with the gift of possibility. We pray as people of deep faith, entrusting ourselves and our world to the holy unknown, brought to birth in Jesus, our light and life. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*
(acappella) Nia Jarosz

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

ADVENT CANDLE PRAYER

God of whispers and shouts, you proclaim the good news of joy from all corners of creation. As we turn to our scriptures, may the words inspire us to dream of a world where joy thrives among us. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Ending Super Mario Theme*
(piano) Nathan Jarosz

GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 11:2-11

MESSAGE *John & Eddie*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN *Joyful, Joyful*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE K. J., Karen Hauser, Holly and family of Bob Antkowiak, Lois Wilmot, Tina Garncarz, Dave Wagner Family, Steve Theisinger, Shelly, Mary Thies, Kittilson Family, Debbie, Ristau Family, Family of Gene, Kevin Kramer, Dixie, Arnie & Jan Watkins, Dawn & Ron Narczewski, Deb Cooper, Ryan, Cindy Harzheim, Paul Lewis, Marilyn Haslam.

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

PRAYER RESPONSE *O Thou Joyful*

OFFERING

RESPONSE *Angels We Have Heard On High*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION **Holy God, we bring our gifts and offerings to you because the voices of the prophets remind us of something bigger, something greater than any system this world offers us. We believe when we trust you with our resources, the kingdom of God comes much closer to reality on earth. Help us steward these gifts to create abundant life and love. Amen.**

*HYMN *Joy to the World*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

New Prayer Requests

-K. J. (child), for health

*If you would like to make an announcement during worship, please request a microphone. Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who supported and helped with the cookie sale! The bulletin will be printed before the sale is over so we'll have a report for you next week.

The Women's Guild will be selling baked goods from the sale after worship today.

The Church Council will meet tomorrow at 7:00pm.

Tune in to Pastor Alex every Sunday morning at 8:25 on 103.9 WLPO. Be sure to spread the word to your friends!

Giving Tree Update-We're delighted to share that all the gifts for our adopted family have been purchased, wrapped, and delivered this past week! Thanks to the incredible generosity of our Zion Church family, four children will experience a brighter and more joy-filled Christmas this year. Your kindness and giving spirit truly reflect the love of Christ at work among us. A special thank-you to Terri Kelly for coordinating this wonderful effort and ensuring everything came together so beautifully. Thank you all for sharing God's love through this project!

The **Zion Diners Christmas Party** will take place this Thursday, December 18th at 6:00pm at Liberty Restaurant and will feature the **famous White Elephant gift exchange**. Dixie Tonozzi will be hosting. Please let her know if you are planning to attend. All are welcome!

Join the CREW! Our Sunday School program, **CREW**, is meeting again every Sunday at 9:00 AM. Kids in kindergarten through 5th grade are invited to join us for stories, games, crafts, and activities that help build faith and friendships. We're excited to see you this Sunday! ***Zion Children's Christmas Program will be next Sunday December 21st during morning worship. You don't want to miss it!***

Join us for Christmas Eve candlelight service at 7:00 pm in-person or on YouTube.

We are blessed to welcome **Keith Jarosz** to the pulpit on Sunday, December 28! Keith, a newer member of Zion, will be bringing the morning message. Keith is experiencing a powerful spiritual awakening and has recently written several heartfelt songs that reflect his journey of faith and life. Come and be inspired as he shares his story with us during worship.

Please Note: Pastor Alex will be on vacation beginning December 29th and will be back in the office January 5th. Rev. Kay Harding will preach on Jan 4th. and will be available for emergencies. Her phone number is: (815)993-9220

Tuesday Night Bible Study will take a break through the holidays. We'll resume on Tuesday, January 6, 2026.

Feeding the Future – The Illinois Valley Food Pantry launched a major fundraiser to fund their new building purchase, necessary renovations, and expanded food programs —so that we can continue to serve the growing number of individuals and families in need across our region. Local individuals, churches and businesses are joining together to make this vision a reality. Learn more or donate at www.ivfoodpantry.com or by contacting the Pantry directly.

Did you know? Copies of the hymns and large print bulletins are located in the Narthex.

Prayer Requests In the Bulletin We are grateful for the privilege of praying for one another. To help us keep our prayer list current, each new request will be included in the bulletin for four weeks. After that time, we will remove it unless we are asked to continue sharing it longer. If you would like a request to remain, please let us know—we want to walk alongside you in prayer for as long as you need.

Zion Spaghetti Express-Save the Date! On Wednesday, February 19, 2026 we'll be hosting a Drive-Through Spaghetti Dinner. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a delicious meal while supporting our church community. We'll need plenty of hands to make this event a success—help will be needed to prepare the

food, serve meals, and clean up afterward. More details will be shared soon, so stay tuned!

Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the **Peru PADS homeless shelter** each month. Every little bit helps us provide a nutritious meal each month through May. Write a check to the church and note "**PADS Meals.**" Or go online and donate through the Giving page on our website. Your donation helps provide a healthy, hearty meal to those who need it most. Thank you for your generosity and support in feeding the hungry!

HELP WANTED! Ushers: We are building a new Ushers List. If you previously served as usher and would like to serve again, we would like to add you to the new ushers list. Previously ushers served for an entire month. Ushers now will serve when they are available to serve even for a single Sunday. You can let Larry Grosenbach know you will serve as usher or email ushers@zionperu.org to be added to the ushers list. Evangelism: We are updating our visitor information about Zion church and will be creating a visitor packet that will contain our new updated information about Zion Church and a thank you gift or two for them visiting. If you would like to help the Evangelism Team with the visitor project you can let Pastor Alex, Jerry Koehler or email evangelism@zionperu.org.

Live Life (Pre and Post Transplant Support Group) meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm at Zion UCC.

The Compassionate Friends Group meets at Zion every fourth Thursday at 6:30pm. This meeting is open to any parent who has lost a child. Please contact the church office for information.

Weight Watchers is meeting every Saturday morning at 8:00 here at Zion. We're happy to provide space for this worthwhile service to our community.

Tonica Church is collecting personal hygiene products to give away. Items needed include: *Bar soap *Shower gel *Shampoo Razors *Deodorant *Toothbrushes *Toothpaste *Combs or Brushes *Contact Diane Gebhardt with any questions!

You can now donate to Zion by Text to (815)393-1954

Enter the amount you want to give to Zion in the Text box and send. If it the first time you are giving by text you will be prompted to set up your giving method (credit card or bank account).

Zion United Church of Christ 6 th & Grant Streets, Peru, IL Follow us on Facebook: Zion UCC, Peru, IL office@zionperu.org 1-815-223-2671 www.zionperu.org	
Ministers	Members of the Congregation
Pastor	Pastor Alex Garncarz
Organist	Jim Greening
Secretary	Erin Lewis
Liturgist	Shelly Garncarz
Audio Technician	Jerry Koehler
Video Technician	Rhonda Essl
Song Leader	Dave Jacobson

Attendance: In Person: 40 + 9 children
On YouTube: 8

This week:

Monday, December 15th

7:00pm Church Council meeting

Thursday, December 18th

6:00pm Zion Diners Christmas Party

Saturday, December 20th

8:00am Weight Watchers meeting

Sunday, December 21st

Advent 4

8:25am Pastor Alex on WLPO

9:00am CREW

9:30am Choir practice

10:15am Worship in person *with CREW Christmas program*, also available on YouTube

Followed by fellowship refreshments

Office Hours this week

Monday-Thursday: Closed

*Friday: 9:00am -5:00pm *