

First Sunday In Advent

December 3, 2023

10:15 a.m.

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

WE ENTER GOD'S PRESENCE

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP *Prepare the Way, O Zion*

WE OPEN OURSELVES TO GOD

OPENING SENTENCES

One: Family of faith and children of our loving God, come to the meeting of God's people.

All: **We gather to seek hope, to discover meaning, and to find safety in worship.**

One: Where shall we find hope, meaning, and safety? To whom shall we turn?

All: **We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul: Jesus has come to set prisoners free.**

One: How shall we respond to this hope of salvation?

All: **Come, let us worship God together.**

*HYMN *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

*A PRAYER FOR THE BEGINNING OF ADVENT

God of hope who calms our fears, we begin this season of preparation with excitement and expectation. Even though the world can be a stormy place, we are not afraid because hope is our sure and steadfast anchor. Hope reminds us that no matter what trials we face, sunrise and salvation are just over the horizon. So we hold hope as we worship today, celebrating the promises you have already fulfilled and the fulfillment of promises to come. Call us out from our places of hiding into the warm safety of your presence. Amen.

ANTHEM *Prepare the Way of the Lord*

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MOMENTS

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

The Advent Song

Verse 1:

Light the Advent candle one:

Now the waiting has begun;

We have started on our way,

Time to think of Christmas day.

Chorus:

Candle, candle, burning bright,

Shining in the cold winter night;

Candle, candle, burning bright,

Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

ADVENT CANDLE PRAYER

God who protects us in times of trouble, we are not afraid because you promise that, in the end, all shall be well. And when we grow discouraged by suffering, illness, death, and violence, we remember your promises and hold hope, just as you hold us in the palm of your hand. You told us that in this world we face hard things, but you promised you would never leave or abandon us. We face the future with confidence and trust. Amen.

GOD'S WORD FOR US

SCRIPTURE READING Mark 13:24-37

MESSAGE *Let's Get Ready*

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Dixie's relatives, Marilyn Haslam, Dennis Miller, Mrs. Haug's dad, Marilyn, Gloria, Neil Tipton Family, Zach Freschi, Roger Rynke, Cindy Harzheim, Karen McGuire and Family of Don McGuire, Shelly, Paul, Mary Enstrenchi, for health, Victims of war, Floyd, Caroline, Joe Smith, Jenna, Karen Streeter, Joan Maxey Family, Sue Krause Family, Toni Fieser Family, Kathy Radtke, Glenn Damer, Dixie Tonozzi, Sara, Rusty & Mary Thies, George, Leslie, Alli Miller Family, Grace Knutson, Marsha Reed, Kathy Rue, Cheryl Johnston, Tom Kaszynski, Paul Lewis, Clinton Crouch, Carol, Evie, Mary, Healthcare/Hospital, Quinn & family, Johanna Arkels family, Deb Cooper, Karen Kradle, Terry Dean, Bonnie, Marsha Dodd, Jeanie, Cathy Rose, Martin Nussbaum, Jack Yager, Mark Bishop family, Lucille Smith family, Tim Engel family, Gary Bruno, Ron Narczewski, Jason, Paul, Jose, Debbie, Mary Fiedler, Andy Gower, Jim L., Keisha Smith, Bob & Holly Antkowiak, Darrell, Bill Vlastnik, Jean Spayer, Ron Hudkins, Mrs. Lucas.

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (debts)

PRAYER RESPONSE *O Thou Joyful*

OFFERING

RESPONSE *Angels We Have Heard On High*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION **God, you give us abundant life, and we respond with these gifts and offerings. Bless this offering to be used for your glory and for the service of our community. And for those who are experiencing the fear and uncertainty of scarcity and loss, we pray for your restoration. May we be a part of that restoration with our own generosity of spirit. Amen.**

CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

...With faithful people in every time and place we say,

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

...Let us proclaim the mystery of our faith.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

PARTAKING OF THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING **God of the past, present, and future, you have fed us with the bread of life and cup of blessing. In these humble elements, we find the hope we hold for every day to come and treasures of your eternal majesty. For this, we give you thanks. Amen.**

*HYMN *Rejoice, Rejoice Believers*

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Announcements

Listen to Pastor Alex at 8:25 every Sunday morning on 103.9 **WLPO**. Tell your friends!

Please join us for fellowship refreshments after worship today.

CREW (Creative Rejoicing in Early Worship)

Calling All CREW Members! Get ready for adventure, fun, and faith! Join us every Sunday at 9:00AM if you're in kindergarten through 6th grade. We'll have games, stories, crafts, and more that will help you grow in your faith and friendships! Mark your calendars and don't miss the boat. Bring your energy and excitement as we learn how God is at work in our lives and world. Parents and grandparents - bring your kids and grandkids to CREW this Sunday! We can't wait to see everyone on deck for this exciting new year! **Zion Children's Christmas Program "Alphabet Christmas" will be on December 17th during morning worship. You don't want to miss this!**

The Illinois Valley Flute Ensemble Recital: Festival of Flutes

is today at 2:00pm here at Zion. The event is free and open to the public. A variety of holiday music will be featured. We hope to see you!

Cookie Sale Update

First, thanks to everyone who has already volunteered to help. But, of course, we can use all the help we can get. How can you help? **Bake cookies. What ever kind you like.** If you make cut outs that you want us to decorate have them at church by Wed. December 6th.

Also, come to one of the following fun events:

Wednesday, Dec. 6th – 3:30pm **Cookie Decorating Party**

Thursday, Dec. 7th - 9:00am **Cookie Packaging Party**

Friday, Dec. 8th – 3:00pm **THE SALE**

(Worker "Elves" gather at 2:30pm)

Give your friends and neighbors an invitation flier.

Thanks in advance for all your help.

Any questions: Contact the Church Office or Kay Harding

****Please note: This Tuesday, December 5th, the Church will be open to drop off cookies—The Auto Door will be on at 9:00am.**

Mark your calendars for the **Zion Diners Christmas Party!** The event will take place on Tuesday, December 12th at 6:00pm at Liberty Restaurant and will feature the **famous White Elephant gift exchange**. Jyll Janz and Dixie Tonozzi will be hosting. Please let them know if you are planning to attend.

Join us Sunday, December 24TH

We will be having morning worship at 10:15AM and Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:00 PM

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

****HELP FEED THE HUNGRY!**** Zion UCC is providing a delicious hot meal delivered to the Peru PADS homeless shelter each month. Please open your hearts and wallets to support this important cause. 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. Together we can make a difference for the less fortunate in our community! 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!

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

*Also- they are collecting men's pants. Please bring items to donate to church and place them on the designated table in fellowship hall. Contact Diane Gebhardt with any questions.

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.

Beginning in 2024, the Zion UCC Messenger will be going to a digital format! The newsletter will be sent to your inbox monthly or bi-monthly beginning late January/ early February next year. Due to rising costs of materials, postage, and other changes concerning bulk-mail, this will help our church financially. The church office has email addresses for many of you, and if you have received an email blast from us in the past, you are good to go to receive *The Messenger*. If you do not think the office has an email address for you or if that address has changed, please send Erin a message at:

office@zionperu.org.

The Messenger will also be available in print in Fellowship Hall and can always be viewed on our website: www.zionperu.org.

If you do not have an email address and are unable to pick a paper copy up at church, you will still receive the newsletter by mail.

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).

Copies of the hymns are available in the Narthex.

Copies of "These Days" Daily devotions are available in fellowship hall.

Zion United Church of Christ

6th & 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
Fellowship	Martin & Laurie Johnson

Attendance: Morning Worship November 26–

In person: 24 (6 Children)

On YouTube: 15

This week:

Tuesday, December 5th

Cookie Drop off- Church door will be open at 9:00am

Wednesday, December 6th

3:30pm Cookie decorating party

6:30pm Choir practice

Thursday, December 7th

9:00am Cookie packaging party

Friday, December 8th

3:00pm Cookie Sale (Worker Elves meet at 2:30)

Saturday, December 9th

8:00am Weight Watchers meeting

Sunday, December 10th

8:25am Pastor Alex on WLPO

9:00am CREW

9:35am Choir practice

10:15am Worship in person, also available on YouTube

Followed by fellowship refreshments

Office Hours

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 9:00am-2:00pm

Wednesday: Closed

Thursday: Closed

Friday: 9:00am-1:00pm

