

ZION REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 13TH, 2020 @ 11 A.M.
SUNDAY BULLETIN



Hope ❄ Peace ❄ **Joy** ❄ Love ❄ Christ

Where there is love, there is joy! ~Mother Theresa

WELCOME to *your* faith community! We are happy to worship with you today and pray that your spirit will be blessed by our time together in the presence of our Creator. If this is your first time at Zion, welcome! Zion Reformed United Church of Christ has roots over 250 years in the making with visions of thriving long into the future. We invite you to consider making Zion Reformed UCC your church home if you haven't already and let us tell the story of Jesus and His love together!

Our Advent journey of preparation, longing, and expectation brings the theme of joy this week as we light the pink candle signifying the joy of the world, the joy of Christ in our lives as faithful believers. Our continental journey through Advent brings us to the continent of Asia as we focus on our connection in Christ with our Asian siblings, uniting us together in Christ Jesus. Western Asia was home to many of earth's first civilizations and is where the Abrahamic religions including Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith all originated.

As we acknowledge true joy this week, let us pray for the joy Christ intends for us all to overflow in all of our hearts this Advent season and throughout the year. Let us bask in Christ's joy in the service of love and compassion as we worship our God, the God of Joy, even circumstances seem bleak during a global pandemic.

WE GATHER

Gathering Music✦

"Adagio Con Molta Espressione"

Words of Welcome

Prelude to Worship✦

"Crown Him with Many Crowns"

WE PREPARE

Call to Worship

One: Rejoice! The spirit of God is sending us:

All: To bring good news to the oppressed; to comfort the brokenhearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives; and to proclaim the year of favor among God's people.

One: Rejoice! The work of the Spirit is calling us:

All: To rebuild ancient relationships ruined by injustice; to repair our cities as places of hope; to restore land devastated across generations; and to proclaim the year of favor among God's people.

One: Rejoice! The Glory of the Spirit is leading us:

All: To cast off any faint spirit and put on the mantle of praise; to take root as the plantings of the HOLY ONE; and to display God's glory.

Opening Prayer

God our Sovereign, we celebrate this day the gift of your peace that came to earth in the form of a helpless baby. Born to a young woman, in the humblest of surroundings, he taught us what it means to struggle together for justice and equity. Give us the faith, so to worship you in spirit and in truth, that our hearts may be open to receive you, and our lives open to share your love. Through Christ, born of Mary, and incarnate of your love. Amen.

Meditative Interlude

"Joyful, Joyful"

Story of Joy

Rich Owens

Lighting the Advent Candle

Rich and Becky Owens

We light a candle on the third Sunday as a symbol of Joy. In a world where so much has changed, the traditions that bring us joy may not be the same this year. But the joy of God's love

born anew in Jesus is still the same. May the joy of Christ be ours as we welcome him again into our lives.

[The third candle, the candle of joy, is lit.]

Hymn of Joy

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

WE MEDITATE

Old Testament Lesson

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (NRSV)

Lector: Barb Hendershot

¹ The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ² to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³ to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴ They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸ For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹ Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Contemplative Interlude ✦

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

Gospel Lesson

John 1:6-8, 19-28 (NRSV)

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹ This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹ And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³ He said, "I am the voice of

one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴ Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵ They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸ This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Message

"Joyful Witness"

Interlude of Joyful Contemplation✦

"This Little Babe"

WE RESPOND

Offertory Prayer of Dedication

One: Holy One, we wait in joy,

All: And we give with joy.

One: Joy for all you have given us;

All: Joy because of your sacred promises.

One: Receive these generous gifts.

All: And use them to spread your joy in our world. Amen.

Prayer for Justice & Peace

All: God of life, lead us to justice and peace!

One: As we celebrate the gift of your incarnate love, born in poverty in a manger, we pray today for peace in the Korean peninsula and in Hong Kong.

All: God of light, lead us to justice and peace!

One: So, we pray when we start our Advent season, expressing our expectations to the light of the world that has come to us in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

All: God of hope, lead us to justice and peace!

One: So, we pray when we see the realities of injustices and unsolved conflicts being extended and expanded, even becoming enormous, when we see how the horizon gets filled with worries for the future of the people of conflict and oppression in Asia.

God, the Eternal, the giver of all life, our savior and comforter, give the people of this region peace, and give peace to all peoples all over the world. Grant us

that our light shine where we are, so that we share the life and the hope you have given us.

All: God in your grace, hear our prayer!

Prayer of Our Savior

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your 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 Yours is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

WE ARE SENT TO SERVE

Sending Forth (benediction)

Prelude to Service✦

"Chorale Prelude on a Melody by Melchior Vulpus"

GO FORTH IN PEACE & SERVE!



Peace on Earth

Art by John Stuart of stushieart.com

Activity Page Answer Key:

Write the Letter:

"I baptize with water." John said, "but among you stands One you do not know. He is the One who comes after me."

Write the Letter:

1)thermos, 2)can, 3)meat, 4)nose 5)saw, 6)hen

There came a man who was sent by God; his name was John.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week of December 13th



Membership Sunday

Interested in becoming a Zion member? New members will be received into the Zion family on December 20th during worship. Let Pastor Katie or Darlene know if you are interested no later than noon on Thursday the 17th if you are interested. Darlene: zionrucc@myactv.net or 301.739.7244, or Pastor Katie at zionruccpastor@myactv.net or 240.418.8028.

Consistory Nominations

Nominations are still being accepted for Vice President, Secretary, Deacons, and Elders for 2021's consistory. Self-nominate or recommend a nominee by email or phone, or by mail using the Nomination Form that is being mailed to you or nominate virtually using the link provided with your Nomination Form letter. Nominations must be received by December 22nd.

Call for Lectors

Are you interested in serving as lector on a rotating schedule? We need your voice! As we create the first quarter schedule for 2021, let Michael know if you would like to be included as a lector during these months at 240.203.0854 or connectionssixeight@gmail.com.

Advent Bible Study

Our Advent Bible Study by mail continues. If you aren't receiving your weekly study by mail let Darlene know in the front office.

Prayer Requests



Submit your prayer requests to the church office by phone at 301.739.7244 or email at zionrucc@myactv.net so we can pray for one another. The prayer list of names can be emailed or mailed to you upon request due to privacy concerns.

Please Remember

- ❖ Search & Call Committee members needed, contact the office if interested.
- ❖ Choir Rehearsals are postponed until further notice.
- ❖ Zion Book Club postponed until January.

Records from Last Week

Sunday Worship Attendance: 22 online views from Sunday to Wednesday.

Soup Kitchen Attendance: The Soup Kitchen served 13 meals this past Tuesday.



IMPORTANT DATES

Week of December 13th



Soup Kitchen

December 15th, 5pm-6:15pm. All are welcome to dine.
Social distancing and masks enforced. Volunteers needed.
(*Special Christmas dinner menu scheduled for December 22nd)

Sunday Worship

Advent 4 (Love) and New Member Reception, December 20th at 11am.
Virtual service at www.zionreformed.church/sermons.

Longest Night Virtual Service

December 21st, 7pm, at www.zionreformed.church/sermons.

January Newsletter Deadline

Newsletter submissions deadline is December 21st

Christmas Eve Virtual Service

December 24th, 7pm, at www.zionreformed.church/sermons.

New Year's Eve Virtual Service

December 31st, 7pm, at www.zionreformed.church/sermons.



OTHER HAPPENINGS AT ZION

4H Club Meeting

December 17th, 4:30pm via Zoom

Celebrate Recovery

Suspended until Further Notice

HELPING HANDS



Lector This Week (12/13): Barb Hendershot

Lector Next Week (12/20): Carol Mooers



If unable to serve during your designated week, please contact the church office by Wednesday of the week prior to service so a replacement can be found.

Our Asian Siblings



Asia is the largest and most populous continent on earth, covering 30% of earth's land area with over 4.5 billion people. Asia is also home to the Himalaya mountains, which is the highest point on Earth, and also to the Gobi desert which spreads across most of the Middle East. Western Asia was home to many of earth's first civilizations and is where the Abrahamic religions including Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith all originated. Asia includes 51 countries: (listed most populous to least)

China, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, Philippines, Vietnam, Turkey, Iran, Thailand, Myanmar, South Korea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, Yemen, Nepal, North Korea, Taiwan, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Syria, Cambodia, Jordan, Azerbaijan, United Arab Emirates, Tajikistan, Israel, Hong Kong, Laos, Lebanon, Kyrgyzstan, Singapore, Oman, State of Palestine, Kuwait, Georgia, Mongolia, Armenia, Qatar, Bahrain, Timor-Leste, Cyprus, Bhutan, Macao, Maldives, Brunei Darussalam

Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ in Asia:

East Asia and the Pacific ([EAP](#)):

The EAP Initiative currently has partners and projects in Mongolia, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Micronesia, Fiji, and the Marshall Islands, including 16 missionaries in 7 different countries. Some partnerships, such as our relationship with Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan, have lasted well over a century. Others are new and continue to develop. For instance, responding to the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS in rural China, in 2003, Global Ministries began to partner with villagers in Shuangmiao Village, Henan Province. Whether supporting long-standing relationships, or creating new ones, Global Ministries continues to be open to new and innovative ways to share in God's mission of peace, justice, and shalom in this region of the world.

Southern Asia ([SA](#))

The Southern Asia Initiative faces along with the people of this area a seemingly unfathomable complexity of contradictions and challenges while celebrating its rich diversity of people, languages, religions and cultures. Amidst these realities, Global ministries partners – churches, church-related institutions, community initiatives, healthcare services, theological seminaries, child care centers, and many others - are striving to be faithful and creative in their witness and service even though small and vulnerable within the larger contextual dynamics. Global Ministries invites you to connect with your heart and soul to the people of Southern Asia, through the work of its partners as challenges of poverty, violence against and trafficking of women and children, economic injustice and marginalization (particularly for youth and women), forced migration, and dispossession are being addressed along with initiatives in education, healthcare, and cultivation of collaborative interfaith relationships for justice and dignity.

Through all outreach partnerships, Global Ministries endeavors to partner with those initiatives that seek justice to the poor and the marginalized – those who struggle against caste and gender based discrimination, children and women who are exposed to trafficking and violence, and the Indigenous populations and other vulnerable groups.

Christmas Traditions in Asia

Christmas traditions in [Asia](#) are a collection of religious and secular practices by different religions occurring during the holiday period. Only a small fragment of the population of most countries in Asia are Christians, and their Xmas celebrations only take the form of church services and are sometimes overrun by secular New Year celebrations. It is only in schools run by Christian missionaries, except in Christian Asian countries, that children and their parents actively participate in Xmas celebrations.

Christmas in India



Only a small percentage of the Indian households celebrate the Christian faith, and yet decorating for the season seems to permeate even non-Christian households in every village. Houses are typically decorated in greenery, mango leaves, strings of light and the "Star of Bethlehem" is hung inside the home. Small personalized gifts are the norm and are exchanged even in non-Christian homes. Christmas, also known as "Badaa Din" (Big Day) in Northern India and people tend to plant trees to celebrate this day.

Christmas in Korea

South Korea has a public set of Christmas traditions because it is recognized as a public holiday. Thus, some non-Christian Koreans sometimes engage in gift-giving, Christmas cards and trees because children enjoy Santa Haraboji or Grandfather Santa, their version of Santa Claus. The Christians carol after Xmas Eve services among their church members. The commercial influence is strong in Japan and the Japanese enjoy the secular celebrations of Christmas, second only to New Year's Day which is a sacred holiday. Xmas is more of a time for lovers who exchange gifts and go on special dates. There are, however, sincere Christians who celebrate Christmas from the religious viewpoint.

Christmas in Muslim Countries

In Muslim countries, no Christmas traditions are celebrated except in some countries who allow Christians to celebrate and even recognize Xmas as a public holiday, such as in Jordan. In Malaysia, although Christmas is a public holiday, there is an unofficial ban on Christian religious motif, so the celebration is purely secular.

Christmas in China and Hong Kong

While in China and Taiwan, Christmas is a private celebration (not a public holiday), in Hong Kong and Macao, December 25th is a public holiday by western influence expanded lately by commercial inroads into the culture. December 25th is an official holiday as the Constitution Day. Christians in China light their homes with beautiful paper lanterns during Advent. Santa is called Dun Che Lao Ren. The children are encouraged to hang stockings like their counterparts in the US. Many of the traditions for celebration among the Christian communities in China were imported by the missionaries that delivered the message of Advent.

Christmas in the Philippines



The Philippines celebrate the longest Christmas traditions in Asia due to its Spanish influence. The advent of Christmas in this country is ushered by dawn masses. September 1st marks the official Countdown to Christmas, as the whole country prepares for the longest celebration of Christmas anywhere in the world! The Christmas feast is celebrated after the midnight mass on Xmas eve. Other winter holidays are also followed like Innocent's day and Epiphany, so the season finally ends the third or fourth week of January.

Christmas in Japan



Christmas is widely celebrated in [Japan](#) despite the Christian population being so fractionally small. Nevertheless, the Japanese celebrate Xmas with curious vigor that can rival that of believers. The decorations of the Christmas celebrations in Japan include all the traditional elements. The Nativity scene is given a corner in every house. They also have turkey for Christmas dinner, Christmas trees, evergreens and mistletoe in their stores and homes and even their own version of Santa (pictured left), Hoteiosho, a Buddhist monk that bears gifts to the children. Family members exchange gifts and send cards with the true heart of giving. It is still undeniable that Christmas celebrations in Japan are a time to spread happiness and romance. The Christmas traditions of Japan for Japanese Christians is dedicated to worship and charity for the poor and sick. The children perform plays re-enacting the Nativity scene on Xmas Eve. It is more common at this time of year for Christians to spend this time on good deeds and helping those in need.



The Pharisees questioned John, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ?" How did John answer?

Write the letter that is in the first word but not the second. Then fill in the blanks.



1. rate - tea = _____ 9. yarn - ran = _____
2. meal - alm = _____ 10. team - met = _____
3. told - old = _____ 11. zone - one = _____
4. trash - star = _____ 12. waste - seat = _____
5. moose - some = _____ 13. dune - den = _____
6. beat - tea = _____ 14. main - aim = _____
7. pint - tin = _____ 15. sand - and = _____
8. time - met = _____ 16. meager - eager = _____

" _____ 8 _____ 6 10 7 3 8 11 2 12 8 3 4
 _____ " J _____ d,
 12 10 3 2 1 _____ 5 4 14 15 10 8
 " _____ 6 13 3 10 16 5 14 _____ 9 _____ 9 5 13
 _____ d _____ 15 3 10 14 15 5 14 2 9 5 13
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 5 _____ 5 3 14 5 12 4 2
 _____ 8 15 3 4 2 5 14 2 12 4 5
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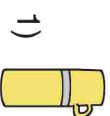
Ages 7+

December 13, 2020 • John 1:6-8, 19-28

Make Straight the Way of the Lord

This Scripture is about a man who came as a witness. Find out about him.

Name each picture. Write all the letters of each word in order on the blanks at the bottom.



1) _____

4) _____



2) _____

5) _____



3) _____

6) _____



_____ e _____ a _____
 1 1 1 1 2 3 3 3
 _____ a _____ w _____ s _____ n _____
 1 4 6 4 2 4 6 3
 by G _____ d; hi _____ m _____
 1 5 6 5 4

_____ a _____ Joh _____.
 5 1 2



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Prelude to Worship: "Crown Him with Many Crowns" – Tune, "Diademata" by George J. Elvey (1868), ©Public Domain. Arrangement by Jason D. Payne, ©2018 by Lorenz Publishing, a division of The Lorenz Corporation. Lyrics by Matthew Bridges (1851), ©Public Domain. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist) and Byron L. Stay (Trumpeter) of Zion Reformed UCC. All rights reserved. *Source(s): Hymnary and [The Lorenz Corporation](http://TheLorenzCorporation).

Hymn Response: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus," performed by Fernando Ortega. All rights reserved. *Source: YouTube.

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Interlude of Joyful Contemplation: "This Little Babe" from A Ceremony of Carols (Op. 28) – Tune, "Das Neugeborne Kindelein" by Melchior Vulpus (1609), ©Public Domain. Arrangement, "A Ceremony of Carols" (1942), by Benjamin Britten, ©1943 by Boosey & Co., LTD (copyright renewed). Lyrics by Robert Southwell (1561-1595), ©Public Domain. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist) and Byron L. Stay (Trumpeter) of Zion Reformed UCC. All rights reserved. *Source(s): [Hymnary\(tune/lyrics\)](http://Hymnary(tune/lyrics)), SheetMusicPlus and Wikipedia.

Prelude to Service: "Chorale Prelude on A Melody by Melchior Vulpus" (HWC 155) – Tune, "Gelobt sei Gott" by Melchior Vulpus (1609), ©Public Domain. Arrangement by Healey Willan (1950), ©1950 by Concordia Publishing House. Lyrics, "Good Christians All, Rejoice and Sing" by Cyril Alington (1931), ©1958, 1986 by Hope Publishing Company. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist) and Byron L. Stay (Trumpeter) of Zion Reformed UCC. All rights reserved. *Source(s): [Hymnary\(tune\)](http://Hymnary(tune)), [IMSLP\(arr\)](http://IMSLP(arr)), [CPH\(arr\)](http://CPH(arr)) and [Hymnary \(lyrics\)](http://Hymnary(lyrics)).

Liturgical Components: Prayer for Justice & Peace adapted from [World Council of Churches](http://WorldCouncilofChurches), a fellowship of churches and denominations within the ecumenical movement. Other liturgical components adapted from [Worship Ways](http://WorshipWays), a ministry of the United Church of Christ, ©2020 by Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team. Used with permission, all rights reserved. Rae Smith reading the people's responses.

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