ZION REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 20TH, 2020 & 11 A.M. SUNDAY BULLETIN



Hope * Peace * Joy * Love * Christ

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 us to the theme of love this week. Our Advent journey around the world brings us to Latin America as we focus on our interconnectedness as humans and as believers. The theme of neighbor and hospitality throughout the Bible has taught this concept for centuries, and the ongoing global pandemic that we find ourselves living through reinforces this concept of interconnectedness loud and bold.

Let us bask in Christ's love as we worship for is in love that we find Christ, let us worship our God, the God of Love! The love of God finds us when we want it and when we are running from it, God's love never forsakes us!

Where there is love, there is life! ~Mahatma Gandhi

Gathering Music[↑]

Words of Welcome

Prelude to Worship[↑]

"Christmas Carol Medley on Piano"

"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

WE PREPARE

Call to Worship

- Katie: Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come into you and eat with you, and you with me. *(Revelation 3:20)*
- Rich: Who will give lodging to these pilgrims who are weary of traveling the roads? We have come exhausted from Nazareth. I'm a carpenter, by the name of Joseph. In the name of the heavens, I beg you for lodging, my beloved wife can no longer travel.
- All: Although you tell us that you are weary, we do not give lodging to strangers. We don't care what your name is; let us sleep. We are telling you that we will not let you enter.
- Katie: He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God. *(John 1:10, 12)*
- Rich: Who are the children of God?
- Katie: All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. (Romans 8:14)
- Rich: To what does the Spirit of God guide us?
- Katie: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. *(Matthew 22:37, 39)*

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self–control. *(Galatians 5:22–23a)*

- Rich: How do we know we love the Lord and have faith?
- Katie: What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,"

and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So, faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. *(James 2:14-17)*

All: Lodging we will give you with much happiness; enter, good Joseph; enter with Mary. Enter, holy pilgrims. Receive this corner not of this humble home, but of our hearts.

Opening Prayer

Story of Love

Lighting the Advent Candle

Faith: defined not just as belief in the unseen, it is that which causes us to live in new ways. We live and love as Christ taught us because we have faith. Faith that God is with us. Faith that in Christ we share in the task of building God's Beloved Community, where there is safe space and welcome for all.

[The fourth candle, the candle of love, is lit.]

Meditative Interlude

WE MEDITATE

First Reading

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

David Ridenour

Kim Ridenour

"Christians, Awake"

Luke 1:26-38 (NRSV) Lector: Carol Mooers ⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ **for [God] has looked with favor on the lowliness of [this] servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;** ⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is [God's] name. ⁵⁰ **[Whose] mercy is for those who fear [God] from generation to generation.** ⁵¹ [The Holy One] has shown strength with [the] arm; [and] has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵² **[And] has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;** ⁵³ [God] has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴ **[The Lord] has helped...Israel, in remembrance of [God's] mercy,** ⁵⁵ according to the promise...made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his **descendants forever.**"

The Message

Contemplative Video Reflection

"How We Show Our Love"

"Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)"

WE RESPOND

New Member Reception of Michael Jones

Introduction

Questions of the Member

- Respecting divine mystery beyond our human knowing, revealed but not contained in the stories of our faith, will you strive to walk humbly with God?
- Celebrating the fullness of Jesus' witness flowing from the baptismal waters at the river Jordan and the stories of bread broken and shared, do you confess the God made known in the one we call Christ?
- Believing Jesus about God and trusting his example, will you accept the cost and joy of following him; welcoming the unwelcome-able, speaking the unspeakable, touching the untouchable, and suffering the insufferable?
- Honoring the Spirit revealed in the paradoxical, will you live the questions of our faith, open to the continuing revelation of our still speaking God?
- Discerning strength in vulnerability, do you acknowledge your interdependence and mutual accountability with all of creation?
- Claiming God's grace abundant in our common life, will you covenant together to cherish inquiry, embrace diversity, and honor vulnerability?

Affirmation of Faith (congregation responds with new member)

One: Do you believe in God the Source, the fountain of life?

All: I believe in God.

One: Do you believe in Christ the Servant, embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and in the church?

All: I believe in Christ.

One: Do you believe in the Spirit, the Guide, the liberating wellspring of life?

All: I believe in the Spirit.

Welcome and Reception (congregational response)

- One: Let us, the members, and friends of Zion Reformed UCC express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.
- All: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We covenant with you to equip one another for the work to which we feel called: striving for peace and justice among all people, protecting and restoring the integrity of all God's creation, and bringing hope to those most vulnerable.

Offertory Interlude

Offertory Prayer of Dedication

	One:	Holy One, this Advent season we wait with love,
	All:	And we give with love.
	One:	Love for you, our God;
	All:	Love for your beautiful people.
	One:	Receive these generous gifts.
	All:	And use them for your works of love in our world. Amen.
Litany of Love		
	One:	Creator God, we have celebrated the hope, peace, and joy that come from You. And now we celebrate Love, which is from You, and is Your very nature.
	All:	God is love.
	One:	You formed the universe out of the void, and breathed life into your creatures, all because of your great love.

"Angels We Have Heard on High"

Blessing Our Gifts

All: In You, we live and move and have our being. We exist because of Your love.

One: Humanity rejected You. But because of your love you made a way to restore us to relationship with Yourself.

All: Love made a way. That love is Jesus Christ.

One: Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God-With-Us. Born of a virgin girl in a stable, laid in a manger, Jesus entered the world in humility and compassion.

All: Jesus lived, was crucified, died, and was resurrected from death, all for love. Love has conquered death.

- One: It is his example we live by: self-sacrificing love. And we know that "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud._It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs...."
- All: "... love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."
- One: May our hearts be illumined with the light of Love....

All: And may we share Your love wherever we go. Amen.

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

"A Virgin Most Pure, the Prophets Foretold"

GO FORTH IN PEACE & SERVE!



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Week of December 20th

New Member Welcome

Welcome to the Zion family, Michael Jones, may our time together be long and blessed! Michael is
a native of Hagerstown, born and raised here. He has lived in Hagerstown all his life except for his
4-year tour of active duty in the Marine Corps where he was stationed at Camp Lejeune. Michael
also served 5-years in the Maryland Army National Guard in Hagerstown.
Read Michael's complete bio in the January newsletter.

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 or virtual link that was mailed and emailed to you. If you did not receive your letter or email, contact Darlene in the office. Nominations <u>must be received by</u> December 22nd.

Call for Lectors

As we create the first quarter schedule for 2021, let Michael know if you would like to be included as a new or returning lector during these months at 240.203.0854 or <u>connectionssixeight@gmail.com</u>.

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.
- Children's Sunday School continues to meet by Zoom each week. Contact Kim for more information at 9:45am CM Kim Ridenour <miskim@myactv.net>

Records from Last Week

Sunday Worship Attendance: 20 online views from Sunday to Saturday.

Soup Kitchen Attendance: The Soup Kitchen served 32 meals this past Tuesday.





Soup Kitchen

Christmas Dinner, December 22nd, 5pm-6:15pm. All are welcome to dine. Social distancing and masks enforced. Volunteers needed.

Longest Night Virtual Service

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

January Newsletter Deadline

Newsletter submissions deadline is December 21st

Christmas Eve Virtual Service

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

New Year's Eve Virtual Service

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

OTHER HAPPENINGS AT ZION

4H Club Meeting

Celebrate Recovery

No Meeting this Week

Suspended until Further Notice

HELPING HANDS



Lector This Week (12/20): Carol Mooers



Lector Next Week (12/27): Conference Staff

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.



Love & Goodwill to All! Art by John Stuart of stushieart.com

Our Latin American & Caribbean Siblings



Latin America is a group of countries and dependencies in the Western Hemisphere where Romance languages such as Spanish, Portuguese, and French are predominantly spoken. Some territories such as Quebec, where French is spoken, or areas of the United States where Spanish is predominantly spoken are not included due to the country being a part of Anglo America. Haiti is sometimes included and sometimes excluded whereas Puerto Rico is always included despite belonging to the United States. Including French-speaking territories, Latin America would consist of 33 countries and 15 dependent territories that cover almost 13% of the Earth's land surface area. As of March 2, 2020, population of Latin America and the Caribbean was estimated at more than 652 million.

Countries Included in Latin America: (by largest population to smallest)

Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Guatemala, Ecuador, Bolivia, Haiti, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Paraguay, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Uruguay, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, Belize, Bahamas, Barbados, Saint Lucia, Grenada, St. Vincent & Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Kitts & Nevis

Dependencies or Other Territories Included in Latin America: (by largest population to smallest)

Puerto Rico (USA), Guadeloupe (France), Martinique (France), French Guiana (France), Curaçao (Netherlands), Aruba (Netherlands), U.S. Virgin Islands (U.S.A.) Cayman Islands (U.K.), Saint Maarten (Netherlands), Turks and Caicos (U.K.), British Virgin Islands (U.K.), Caribbean Netherlands (Netherlands), Anguilla (U.K.), Montserrat (U.K.), Falkland Islands (U.K.)

Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ in Latin America:

The Latin America and the Caribbean office currently work with dozens of partner churches and ecumenical organizations in 20 countries where they respond together to God's call to serve all of creation. Global Ministries accompanies partners as they grow innovative ministries through prayer, the sending and receiving of missionaries and financial support; Global Ministries is accompanied by these partners in the rich exchange of ideas and lasting friendships that come with the many People-to-People Pilgrimages that take place every year in this region offered through Global Ministries. Have you considered a <u>People-to-People pilgrimage</u>?

Did you know that almost 90% of people in Latin America are Christian? (Trivia fact from Maps of the World)

In Latin America the church reminds us that ministry is not limited to pastors and missionaries, but includes all walks of life - nurses, teachers, sociologists, lawyers, economists, human rights advocates, farmers, health educators, social workers, construction workers, physicians - all who engage in preaching through their talents, energy and time to share the Good News of God's love that calls for justice and peace for all of humanity. Our Global Ministries is blessed by the many churches, organizations, and institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean as they strive to:

- Provide theological training for the next generation of church leaders
- Promote the rights and livelihoods of women and children
- Build communities of peace with justice
- Advocate for the rights of displaces peoples
- Heal the deep wounds caused by violence and natural disasters
- Challenge the lingering injustices of colonialism

Learn more about Global Ministries in Latin America and the Caribbean at www.globalministries.org/lac.

Christmas Traditions in Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean are rich in cultures. From one country to another, and even from one city to the next, traditions can vary significantly because each people incorporate its local history and preferences into them. In this diversity, however, some common themes generate shared identities. Christmas traditions in this area are very religious with some secular influences.

Lodging the Baby (Las Posadas)



In Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other Central American countries, families carry out "Las Posadas", which is a performance representing how the parents of Jesus traveled from one place to another looking for a place to stay temporarily. In these countries, people improvise a small procession in which two persons dressed up as Mary and Joseph transport a baby Jesus statue from one house to another, looking for a family to provide him accommodation for one day. As they move through the streets, performers sing litanies asking for shelter given that the holy baby needs a place to be born. "In Heaven's name, I beg you

for lodging, for my beloved wife cannot walk anymore. Don't be inhuman and have mercy on us," the pilgrims sing outside the house expected to open its doors. Once the statue enters into his temporary lodge, the host family and their guests kneel around the Nativity scene and pray the Rosary. This ritual is repeated for nine nights. On the last day of the tour, families hold a special party for children in which they break star-shaped piñatas. On Dec. 24, however, Mexican families do not give gifts to children as the date to do so is January 6, the Three Wise Men's Day.

The Nativity Scene (El Pesebre)



Since the arrival of the Spanish in 1492, Catholicism has been the predominant religion in Latin America. Therefore, it is not surprising that the most widespread Christmas tradition is the construction of the Nativity scene, a tradition that Francis of Assisi promoted in the 13th century when he mounted a representation of the birth of Jesus with living characters. Once the Franciscan priests arrived in the Americas, they also promoted the construction of mangerbased decorations as a way of claiming a celebration based on values such as poverty and simplicity. The Nativity scene consists of an exhibition of figurines

representing the place where Jesus was born. It usually includes the newborn baby and his parents as well as shepherds, donkeys, cows, and sheep. In the Latin American folk culture, however, Pesebres also include what families consider worthy of being exhibited in their small artworks. This preference turns their Nativity scenes into montages of objects, which could include small planes, cars, trains or other objects that children might like.

Learn about other Latin American and Caribbean <u>Christmas traditions</u> like La Novena, Los Villancicos, and the Caribbean Junkanoo celebration at.

Mexican Hot Chocolate

Traditional Mexican hot chocolate, sweetened with sugar, and spiced with cinnamon makes the perfect drink to warm you up when the weather is chilly.



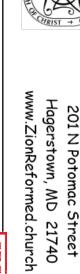
INGREDIENTS: 8 1/4 cups water, divided; 3 cinnamon sticks; 6 ounces Mexican chocolate; 4 tablespoons corn starch; 1 cup milk, whole or almond milk

INSTRUCTIONS: Bring 8 cups of water with cinnamon sticks to a boil; remove from heat, cover, and let steep for 1 hour. Discard cinnamon sticks and return water to medium-low heat. Add Mexican chocolate stir until dissolved. In a separate cup, dissolve corn starch in ¼ cup of cold water. Stir to prevent clumps and add to pot, stirring as you pour it in. Add the milk and

let it come to a slow boil, being careful to turn off heat as soon as it boils. It will thicken a little and will be creamier with whole milk.

Learn more about this recipe at <u>https://muybuenocookbook.com/mexican-hot-chocolate</u> or check out Mexican Food Journal's version at <u>https://mexicanfoodjournal.com/mexican-hot-chocolate</u>, or Goya's simple version at <u>https://www.goya.com/en/recipes/champurrado</u>.

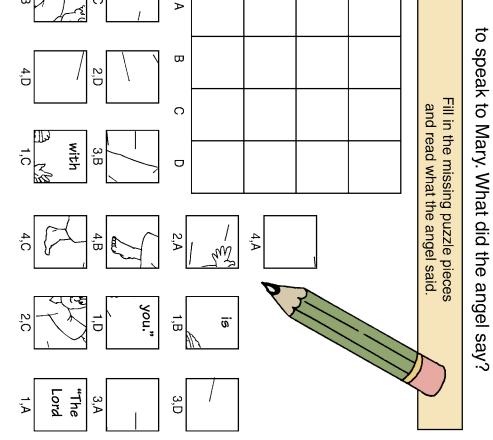






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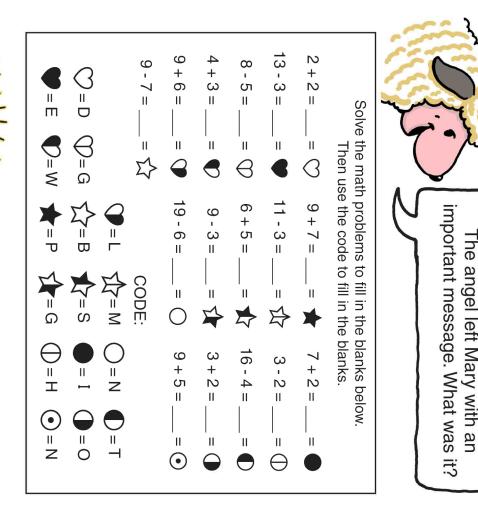
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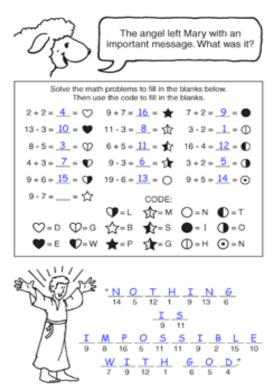


God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to speak to Mary. What did the angel say?

Ages 7+

Activity Page Answer Key:

Solve the Math Problems:



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Fill in the Missing Puzzle Pieces:



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Gathering Music: "Christmas Carol Medley on the Piano" – Arranged by Claire Marie Moblard, used with permission, all rights reserved. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist)

Video Intro: "Advent Worship 4: Love" by The Skit Guys and licensed by the Skit Guys. All rights reserved. *Source(s): <u>The Skit Guys</u>.

Prelude to Worship: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" – Tune, "Mendelssohn" by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1840), ©Public Domain. Arrangement by Dan Miller, ©2001 by Morningstar Music Publishers, a division of Birnamwood Publications. Lyrics by Charles Wesley (1739), altered by George Whitefield (1753, 1782), ©Public Domain. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist) and Byron L. Stay (Trumpeter) of Zion Reformed UCC. All rights reserved. *Source(s): <u>Hymnary</u> and <u>Hymnary (Arr)</u>.

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Contemplative Video Reflection: "Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)," performed by Amy Grant and remastered in 2007 by UMG; and featuring scenes adapted from "The Nativity Story" released in 2007 by New Line Productions, Inc. *Source: <u>YouTube</u>

Offertory Interlude: "Angels We Have Heard on High" – Tune, "Gloria," a Traditional French Carol Melody, ©Public Domain. Lyrics from the traditional 18th Century French Carol, "Les Anges Dans Nos Campagnes," ©Public Domain. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist) and Byron L. Stay (Trumpeter) of Zion Reformed UCC. All rights reserved. *Source: <u>Hymnary</u>.

Prelude to Service: "A Virgin Most Pure, the Prophets Foretold" – Tune, "Virgin Most Pure," an Ancient Carol, ©Public Domain. Arrangement by Alice Jordan, ©2002 by Church Street Music, Nashville, TN. Lyrics by Barney W. English, ©Public Domain. Performed by Claire Marie Moblard (Organist) and Byron L. Stay (Trumpeter) of Zion Reformed UCC. All rights reserved. *Source(s): <u>Hymnary(tune)</u>, and <u>WorldCat(Arr)</u>.

Liturgical Components: Opening Prayer, "Las Posadas," from the United Methodist Book of Worship. All other liturgical components adapted from <u>Worship Ways</u>, a ministry of the United Church of Christ, ©2020 by Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Ministry Team, unless otherwise noted. Used with permission, all rights reserved. Rae Smith reading the people's responses.

Scripture Lessons: from the <u>New Revised Standard Version</u> of the Bible, ©1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved, used with permission. Carol Mooers as lector.

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Door Knock Effect: A Free Sounds Library effect licensed under Creative Commons 4.0 international license (CC BY 4.0). Used with permission. *Source: <u>Free Sound Library</u>

Zion Reformed United Church of Christ

201 N. Potomac Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740 Office Hours: 8:30-12:30, Monday through Friday Facebook: @ZionRUCC YouTube: Zion Reformed UCC Web: www.zionreformed.church Email: zionrucc@myactv.net Phone: 301.739.7244



Rev Katie Penick, Interim Minister

Phone: 240.418.8028 Email: zionruccpastor@myactv.net