

ZION REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
NEW YEAR'S WATCH NIGHT SERVICE
DECEMBER 31ST, 2020 & JANUARY 1ST, 2021
SERVICE BULLETIN



The tradition of Watch Night may be traced to the early 18th century in Moravian churches, when churchgoers began marking the occasion with a vigil to reflect upon the year past and to contemplate the one to come. John Wesley adopted the practice for his Methodist followers, who held similar vigils monthly with the full moon. It was given new significance among African Americans on December 31, 1862, when, according to tradition, slaves in the Confederate states gathered in churches and private homes on the night before U.S. Pres. Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation was expected to go into effect, pending his signing of the document. The soon-to-be-free slaves stayed awake all night and watched the night turn into a new dawn while waiting for news that the Emancipation Proclamation had been issued, thus making all the slaves legally free.

Many mainline Protestant churches in the United States sponsor a Watch Night service on New Year’s Eve that typically begin sometime between 7pm and 10pm and end at midnight. Watch Night services like most Sunday services across the nation and around the world are going virtual due to COVID. Our Watch Night Service will be available virtually beginning at 7pm for your prayer and meditation time, bringing in the new year then or closer to midnight based on your preferred worship time.

Let us pray, reflect, and prepare ourselves for the new year as we listen for God’s message of revival. Let us open our hearts and minds as we worship! God *is* still speaking...

There comes a day when you realize turning the page is the best feeling in the world because you realize there’s so much more to the book than the page you were stuck on. ~Zayn Malik

WE GATHER

Gathering Music✦

"Fantasia in C-Major"

Words of Welcome

Prelude to Worship✦

"Chorale Prelude on If Thou but Suffer God to Guide Thee"

WE PREPARE

Call to Worship

One: For everything there is a season:

All: And a time for every matter under heaven:

One: A time to be born and a time to die.

All: A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted.

One: A time to break down, and a time to build up.

All: A time to weep and a time to laugh.

One: A time to keep and a time to throw away.

All: A time to be silent and a time to speak.

One: A time to love and a time to hate.

All: A time for war and a time for peace.

One: God has made everything suitable for its time.

All: God has put a sense of past and future into our minds.

One: God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him.

All: Whatever God does, endures forever.

Opening Prayer

The end of the year is upon us and tonight we gather to offer the strides as well as the struggles of this year to God. We gather to give to the Creator both our hopes and our fears, as we gather to worship the Lord our God. Holy Spirit, fill our hearts and our lives tonight as we worship. Grant us each the strength to sing our song, to pray our prayer, and to listen for the Word that will drive our fears away and move us to offer praise and thanksgiving. Inspire us tonight we pray, in Jesus name, --Amen.

Meditative Interlude

"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

(People's responses are in BOLD; Advent and Christ candles are lit concluding each section.)

God of new beginnings, God of sacred endings, we gather tonight under the shade of a darkened sky, in this in-between time and space, unsure of what the future holds ...awaiting transformation, renewal, the chance to begin again.

Our times are in Your hands, O God, give us Hope for the journey.

We have traveled through dangers seen and unseen, we have tiptoed through dark nights of the souls and wrestled against powers that should have kept us down.

Our times are in Your hands, O Lord, give us Courage for the journey.

Encourage us to be ever mindful of Your Still Speaking Voice; to dance without fear when the morning has come, and to know that with the coming of Your Light fear must release its death-grip on our lives.

Our times are in Your hands, O God, give us Light for the journey.

Today we stand in this present moment, frustrated by miscarriages of justice, angered by the lack of collective concern for black and brown bodies, exasperated with a broken immigration policy, racism, sexism, homophobia, mass incarceration and we deeply grieve the growing numbers of deaths by gun violence ...can we make it through this night without some form of gun violence?

Our times are in Your hands, O God, give us Justice for the journey.

The future stretches out before us full of mystery and full of surprise. We need You, God of New Beginnings, to set the course, and guide our feet in the way of righteousness.

Our times are in Your hands, Triune God, give us Life.

Video Reflection

"God's Doing A New Thing"

WE MEDITATE

First Reading

Revelation 21:1-6 (NRSV)
Lector: Aaron Kelly

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.”⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.”⁶ Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life.

Gospel Lesson

Luke 2:22-40 (NRSV)

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.” ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” ³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” ³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

The Message

“The Best and Worst of Times”

Contemplative Interlude ✦

“Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light”

WE RESPOND

Blessings at Year’s End

A Prayer by Howard Thurman from
“The Mood of Christmas and Other Celebrations”

I remember with gratitude the fruits of labor of others, which I have shared as part of the normal experience of daily living.

(pause)

I remember the beautiful things that I have seen, heard and felt—some, as a result of definite seeking on my part, and many that came unheralded into my path, warming my heart and rejoicing my spirit.

(pause)

I remember the moments of distress that proved to be groundless and those that taught me profoundly about the evilness of evil and the goodness of good.

(pause)

I remember the new people I have met, from whom I have caught glimpses of the meaning of my own life and the true character of human dignity.

(pause)

I remember the dreams that haunted me during the year, keeping me ever mindful of goals and hopes which I did not realize but from which I drew inspiration to sustain my life and keep steady my purpose.

(pause)

I remember the awareness of the spirit of God that sought me out in my aloneness and gave to me a sense of assurance that undercut my despair and confirmed my life with new courage and abiding hope.

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

We gathered in peace to give God praise. We gathered in joy to give God thanks. We gathered, by God's grace, to experience a love that we can neither outgrow nor outlive. So go forth in the

name of the Lord, To calm uneasy spirits; To heal the broken-hearted; To lift up the down-trodden; To proclaim God's message of love and hope in the world. For in so doing, we are being redeemed, now and forevermore, --Amen.

Prelude to Service✦

"Auld Lang Syne"



A NEW DAY, A NEW YEAR, A NEW THING!

Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.
~Isaiah 43:18-19 (NRSV)

God is doing something new! Are you excited for the revival God is brewing?

GO FORTH IN PEACE AND SERVE!



CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 31st – January 3rd



Consistory 2021 Elections

New nominations for the 2021 consistory include: Reinstatement of Tina Shafer as Deacon, and new first-time installation of Michael Jones as a deacon. Current member, Kim Ridenour, was nominated to fill the officer position of Vice President, and current member, Carroll Sager, was nominated to fill the officer position of Secretary. All other officer positions are filled by continuing members. There are still vacant elder positions to be filled.

Voting opened at noon, December 22nd and runs through noon, Jan 3rd. Voting can be done by calling the office, emailing the church, mailing in the Voting Form you received by mail and/or email, or vote electronically using the secure link that was mailed and emailed to you. If you did not receive any information by mail or email, contact the church office at 301.739.7244 or at zionrucc@myactv.net.



Prayer Requests



As a faith community, we are here to support and pray for one another. As a rule of thumb, we should pray for all of our Zion siblings even when a specific need isn't voiced, but especially when a specific need is. Submit your prayer requests to the church office by phone at 301.739.7244 or email at zionrucc@myactv.net so we can pray with you and your loved ones.

Asking for prayer is not a weakness but a privilege of faith. Due to the sensitive nature of some prayer needs, the prayer list of names is not published publicly but can be emailed or mailed to you upon request so you can include your Zion siblings in your prayers.

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.



IMPORTANT DATES

December 31st – January



New Year's Day

Happy New Year! (Jan 1st)

Church office closed.

Virtual Sunday Worship

Communion Sunday, January 3rd (Second Sunday After Christmas Day) at 11am.

Virtual service at www.zionreformed.church/sermons.

(Children's Sunday School via Zoom @ 9:45am)

Consistory 2021 Voting

Votes must be received by noon, January 3rd, either in the office or online.

See announcement on previous page for more info.

Consistory Meeting

January 4th, 7pm



"On New Year's Eve the whole world celebrates the fact that a date changes.

Let us celebrate the dates on which we [find God] and change the world."

~Akilnathan Logeswaran

May the New Year bring you hope, love, joy, peace, and Christ to share with the world!

OTHER HAPPENINGS AT ZION

4H Club Meeting

January 7th, 4:30pm via Zoom

Celebrate Recovery

Postponed until Further Notice



Auld Lang Syne



As the clock strikes midnight on New Year's Eve, voices all over the world will resurrect the centuries-old tradition of singing "Auld Lang Syne" to say goodbye to the passing year. Despite efforts to belt the tune every New Year's Eve, few people seem to actually know the words. The British Supermarket chain Sainsbury's conducted a study in 2017 which revealed that while a third of the people polled plan to sing the song in the last moments of the year, only 3% of them knew the words.

"Auld Lang Syne" translates to "old long since" but the less literal meaning behind the phrase is "days gone by" or "times gone by." While it is one of the most iconic New Year's Eve songs ever to exist, New Year's Eve is never mentioned in the song's lyrics but only a tribute to old times and good friends.

"Auld Lang Syne" originated as a poem written by Robert Burns, the national poet of Scotland, and is thought to have been based on a Scottish folk song. He wrote it in 1788, however, it wasn't printed until after he died in 1796, according to Britannica. The poem yields a nostalgic aura to a night that is about old friends reminiscing on the past and looking toward the future. It wasn't until 1799 that George Thomson weaved Burns' eloquent words and the music that we now know to be "Auld Lang Syne" together into the classic we love yet today.

1. Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne?

Chorus: *(repeat chorus after each verse)*

For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

2. And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.
3. We two have run about the hills,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.
4. We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine;
But seas between us broad have roared
since auld lang syne.
5. And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
for auld lang syne.

New Years' Reflections



New Years' is a time we like to reflect, meditate, and renew, challenging ourselves to grow into better people, healthier, happier, and stronger followers of Christ. I challenge you to use the next few days and weeks to reflect and meditate upon the Lord, to do a self-inventory, and to reflect some more. Following are some scriptures and quotes that you may utilize during this time of reflection if you like.

"Celebrate endings—for they precede new beginnings." ~Jonathan Lockwood Huie

The Lord has done great things for us and we are filled with joy. ~Psalm 126:3 (NIV)

"There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind." - C.S. Lewis

"Let our New Year's resolution be this: we will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word." - Goran Persson

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." ~Matthew 11:28-30

"The best way to predict the future is to create it." - Abraham Lincoln

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ~Philippians 4:8

"You can get excited about the future. The past won't mind." ~Hillary DePiano

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ~Philippians 2:3-4 (NRSV)

"What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven't even happened yet." ~Anne Frank

Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established. ~Proverbs 16:3

"Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go. They merely determine where you start." ~Nido Qubein

**Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.
~1 Corinthians 16:13-14**

"Change can be scary, but you know what's scarier? Allowing fear to stop you from growing, evolving, and progressing." ~Mandy Hale

"Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely." ~Karen Kaiser Clark

"Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better person." — Benjamin Franklin

**God crowns the year with a bountiful harvest, even the hard pathways overflow with abundance.
~Psalm 65:11 (NLT)**

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