

RINGING OF THE BELL

*The candles on the altar are lit, reminding us of
the presence of the Holy Spirit.*

FAITH IN ACTION – ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE Sue Monson, organist

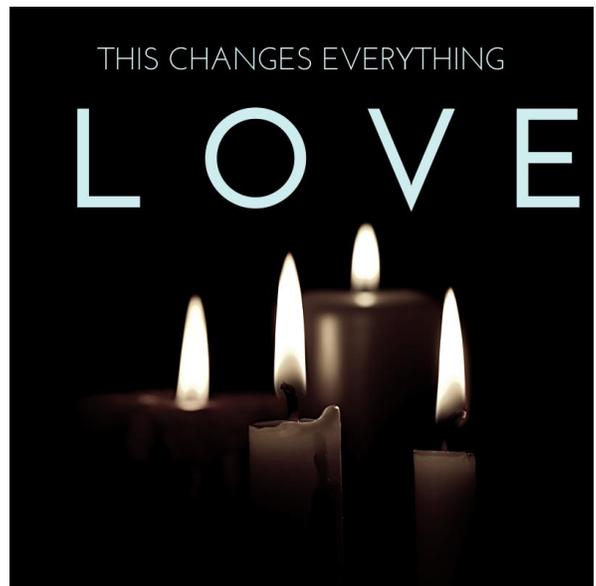
CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 89:1-2, 15 (NLT)

I will sing of the tender mercies of the Lord forever!
Young and old will hear of your faithfulness.

Your unfailing love will last forever.

Your faithfulness is as enduring as the heavens.

Happy are those who hear the joyful call to worship, for
they will walk in the light of your presence.



HYMN *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*

It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold;
“Peace on the earth, good will to all, From heaven’s all gracious King.”
The world in solemn stillness lay, to hear the angels sing.

And ye, beneath life’s crushing load, Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way With painful steps and slow,
Look now! for glad and golden hours Come swiftly on the wing.
O rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing!

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O holy God, our very waiting in Advent is itself a confession:

If we are waiting for Emmanuel, we are not yet with you;

If we are waiting for Jesus, we need a Savior.

If we are waiting for a Messiah, the proud are still powerful, the mighty are still exalted, the hungry stand unheard at the door.

If we are waiting for your incarnation in human form, we confess that we have not known you in our sister, we have not loved you in our brother, we have not served you in our neighbor. In the stillness of Advent love and light, hear our deepest confession; heal us, forgive us, make us new through the good tidings of our Savior, Christ the Lord. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

... in the name of Jesus Christ: our sins are forgiven!

Thanks be to God! Amen.

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you!

And also with you.

➤ **Have your Advent wreath ready, or 4 candles of any kind**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE

We light again these candles that remind us of God's gifts of HOPE, PEACE, and JOY

(pause to light candles)

Advent is the time to prepare for the coming of God's love, shown to us in Jesus Christ.

We light the candle of LOVE to remind us that Jesus is God's perfect love in human form - God's love that redeems us and shows us the way.

(light blue Candle of LOVE)

Let us pray. O God of Love, Emmanuel,

- thank you for coming to us in the flesh to show us how to love. Give us courage to love others as you love us. Help us to remember that Your love will never come to an end. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"365 Days of Christmas Each Year"

by Robert Mantzke

The Family Von Hoffmeier Singers:

Katelynn and Leea Waasdorp; Addyson, Avery, and Jackson Yanke

Accompanist: Joy Combs

GOSPEL

Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

And Gabriel came to Mary and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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.

He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

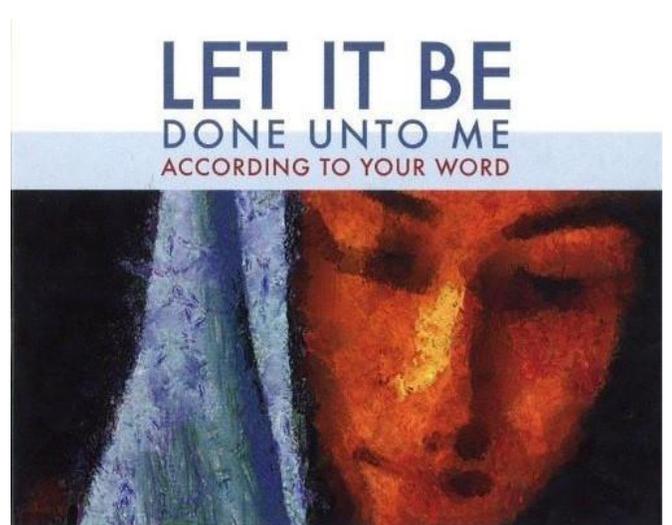
Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

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.

Gabriel continued, "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. For nothing will be impossible with God."

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.



SUNG RESPONSE

What Child is This?

What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?

This, this is Christ the King, Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;

Haste, haste, to bring Him laud, the Babe, the Son of Mary.

GOSPEL Luke 1: 46b -55 "The Magnificat" NRSV

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

SERMON

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy 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 Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

We are so thankful for the generous and diverse gifts of our members and friends!

We know this is a difficult time for many. If you are able, we hope that you will choose to support the work of Zion United Church of Christ with your financial gifts.

If you would like to contribute online, please go to our website, www.zionucclowden.org, and click on the donate button.

OFFERTORY

*DOXOLOGY *What Child is This?* (vs. 3)

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh, Come, one and all to own Him
The King of kings salvation brings Let loving hearts enthrone Him
Raise, raise the song on high, the Virgin sings her lullaby;
Joy, joy for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

* PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, we thank you for this season of carols and gifts, and for your most precious gift of Jesus. Accept these offerings: our hopes and our plans, our work and our play. May love and justice blossom through our giving. In the name of the One whose birth we await. Amen.

*HYMN *Angels We Have Heard on High*

VSS. 1-2

Angels we have heard on high sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Glo - o - ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo - o - ria, in excelsis Deo!

Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say, what may the tidings be which inspire your heavenly song?
Glo - o - ria, in excelsis Deo! Glo - o - ria, in excelsis Deo!

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE

Thank you to Today's Worship Leaders!

Organist:	Sue Monson
Liturgist:	Jamie Nabb
Videographer:	Cheryl Boedeker
PowerPoint:	Koby Stewart
Ministers:	All believers
Pastor:	Rev. Susan Schneider-Adams

Register NOW to attend Christmas Eve worship in person

Reminder: If you would like to attend Christmas Eve worship in person on Thursday, December 24, please SIGN-UP NOW for either the 3:30 pm or the 6:30 pm service. Worship will be livestreamed at 6:30 pm.

Share the LIGHT of Christ!

"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:5)

Whether you plan to worship with us in-person at Zion on Christmas Eve, or Livestream worship from the safety of your own home, you are welcome to borrow candles from church to use in your celebration of Christ's birth. For the candle-lighting at the close of Zion's Livestream worship at 6:30 pm, we plan to carry the Light of Christ out "into the streets" to sing *Silent Night* and *Joy to the World*. We encourage you to do the same! Let's use the gloom of being separated to good use - wherever we are - by spreading the Light in the dark of night!

Zion
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOWDEN, IOWA



THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

LOVE



Join us for worship at Zion this Sunday at 9:30 am.

ONLINE WORSHIP ONLY

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

COMING UP AT ZION

SUNDAY, DEC. 20 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Worship at 9:30 am

ONLINE ONLY (Facebook Livestream, YouTube and Local Cable)

Outdoor Live Nativity (Drive-Thru or Walk-Up) from 5 to 6 pm

THURSDAY, DEC. 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE

Drop-in/Drive-up Communion from 1 to 2 pm (one household in church at a time)

Worship with Communion at 3:30 pm *Tentative In-Person*

Worship with Communion at 6:30 pm *Facebook Livestream/YouTube and Tentative In-Person*

FRIDAY, DEC. 25 - CHRISTMAS

CHRIST IS BORN - CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS!

SUNDAY, DEC. 27

Worship at 9:30 am *Facebook Livestream/YouTube and Tentative In-Person*

[VIEW THE ZION CALENDAR FOR ADDITIONAL EVENTS](#)

Due to COVID-19, it is REQUIRED that face coverings be worn at all time inside the church building for worship services, meetings, and other church functions. Also, please practice social distancing throughout the church. Thank you for your cooperation in helping to prevent the spread of the virus.

Sunday worship is currently available ONLINE ONLY. Worship is livestreamed on [FACEBOOK](#) and posted to our [YOUTUBE](#) channel later in the day and later in the week on local cable channels. The livestream video begins about 9:20 am.

[FACEBOOK LIVE STREAM WORSHIP LINK](#)

[VIEW THE ONLINE WORSHIP BULLETIN FOR DEC. 20 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SERVICE FROM HOME.](#)

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES SUSPENDED

Out of an abundance of caution and with utmost concern for the health and wellbeing of our congregation and community, **the Church Council has agreed to continue the suspension of all indoor IN-PERSON worship services, Christian Education classes and organization/committee meetings through Dec. 20.** The outdoor Live Nativity presented by the Christian Education department this Sunday will go on as planned with social distancing measures in place. An announcement regarding Christmas Eve worship and future activities will be made this weekend.

[VIEW THE FULL SUSPENSION ANNOUNCEMENT ISSUED DEC. 10](#)

TENTATIVE CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP

The church council has **TENTATIVE** plans to resume in-person worship beginning Christmas Eve.

Two identical Christmas Eve worship services are planned for Thursday, Dec. 24 for 3:30 pm and 6:30 pm. It is important to note that these services will *not* be like the “normal” Christmas Eve that many of us have come to enjoy. There will be no children’s program and there will be no indoor singing. We plan to gather to hear a Christmas message, listen to well-known Christmas songs, receive communion and then dismiss for outdoor candle lighting and carols.

A limitation on the number of individuals/households that may attend each service will be in place in order to adhere to social distancing measures. Masks will be required and all safety protocols in place prior to the suspension will continue to be followed. **We want to ensure that everyone who wants to attend in-person Christmas Eve worship has an opportunity, so we are requiring advanced registration.** The 6:30 pm service will also be livestreamed on Facebook if you are more comfortable worshipping at home.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TO ATTEND IN-PERSON CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP](#)

You may also register by e-mailing zionpastor@fbcom.net or call the church office at (563) 941-7726 and leave a message with your name, service preference and number of people attending.

We are also planning to offer drop-in/drive-up communion on Christmas Eve from 1 to 2 pm. This will be an opportunity for households to safely come into the church one-by-one to receive communion and view the beautifully decorated sanctuary. If you would rather not leave your vehicle, Pastor Susan will come outside and offer communion. It is not necessary to register for drop-in/drive-up communion; however, you are welcome to fill out the registration form as it will help us for planning purposes.

AN OFFICIAL DECISION REGARDING IN-PERSON CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON SUNDAY, DEC. 20.

Registrations will be granted in the order received and confirmed beginning Monday, Dec. 21.

WITH APPRECIATION

A special thank you to Zion volunteers Joy Combs, Julie and Barry Hoffmeier, Terry Lasack and David Niermeyer for assisting with the North Cedar Bells food basket assembly and gift distribution this week. The Zion community was able to deliver 11 food baskets and gifts to 24 children this year. Thank you to everyone who contributed to make this important ministry possible.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE NEWS

The Missions Committee annually allocates funds from the Norman and Emogene Conrad Trust to assist a number of local, regional and worldly missions. This year the committee agreed to support the following causes:

- Elizabeth Dole Foundation - \$500
- Friendly House - \$500
- Global Ministries - \$500
- Human Trafficking Prevention - \$1,000
- King's Harvest - \$500
- North Cedar Clergy Christmas Bells - \$1,000
- Water for Wells - \$1,000
- UCC "5 for 5" Missions and Special Offerings - \$500
- Zion Deacon's Fund - \$500

Live Nativity

Drive-Thru or Walk-Up



Sunday, Dec. 20, 2020 | 5 to 6 pm

Zion United Church of Christ
402 Main St., Lowden, Iowa

Join us for this free community event.

LIVE ANIMALS. REFRESHMENTS. MUSIC.

Enter off of Main St. on the west side of the church.

Presented by the Christian Education Dept.

zionucclowden.org | (563) 941-7726

Zion
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOWDEN, IOWA

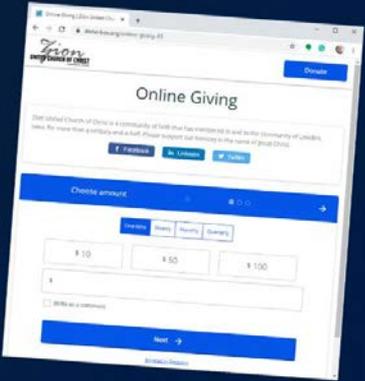
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT OPENING

Zion United Church of Christ is seeking a personable self-starting Administrative Assistant with strong computer skills, including but not limited to Word, PowerPoint, social media, Excel, and other platforms. If you are organized with digital literacy skills, and able to work as a team with a high degree of confidentiality, we encourage you to apply! 12-15 hours per week with possibility of a flexible schedule. Wage commensurate with experience. Complete job description available upon request. Please send cover letter and resume to zionucclowden@gmail.com (PDF or Word). EOE

zionucclowden.org

Online Giving

**GIVE ANYWHERE,
ANYTIME!**



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Online Giving' page for Zion United Church of Christ. The page includes a 'Donate' button, a 'Choose amount' section with buttons for \$10, \$50, and \$100, and a 'Next' button at the bottom.

YEAR-END GIVING DEADLINE

As we approach the end of 2020, we urge you to consider a gift to Zion. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us in many ways and while we have worked diligently to find new ways to connect and share the message of Jesus Christ, we continue to incur expenses to support our ministry. **Financial gifts that you would like recorded for 2020 must be submitted to the church office no later than Dec. 31.** Thank you for continuing to support the church through your regular financial giving. You may [give online](#), mail a personal check, drop off your gift during office hours or schedule an online banking payment. Your generosity is so important and greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR GIFTS

Thank you to everyone who purchased poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season. We are also grateful for several monetary gifts that support our various ministries. To view the list of poinsettias and gift donations, please check out the [December Herald Newsletter](#).



WE DID IT!

The pandemic has caused us to adapt and embrace new ways of carrying out the important work of our church and this past Sunday we held our first ever virtual Zoom Congregational Meeting! We appreciate everyone who made an effort to join us. Congratulations to our new council members Diane Esbaum and Jody Yutesler. We also thank Joy Combs and Terry Lasack for serving as our conference delegates.



THE CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

For over a hundred years, the [Christmas Fund](#) (formerly "Veterans of the Cross") has been an expression of God's love and light in the world. Funds are used to provide direct financial assistance to retired UCC clergy and lay employees. These funds may be used to supplement small pensions, reduce healthcare premiums and provide "Thank You" gift checks for 503 retired clergy and lay workers. Emergency grants are also provided for active or retired UCC clergy and lay workers. This special offering will be received in our church during the month of December. Prayerfully consider how you may support these special gifts.

ANNUAL MEETING AND REPORTS

The Annual Meeting of Zion United Church of Christ will be held on Sunday, Jan. 31 following worship. 2020 activity and financial reports from committees and organizations are due in the church office no later than Jan. 13. Please drop them off or send by [e-mail](#).

CONTACT ZION

PASTOR

Rev. Susan Schneider-Adams
email: zionpastor@fbcom.net
phone: (563) 941-7726

CHURCH OFFICE

Linda Behrens, Secretary
email: zionucc@fbcom.net
phone: (563) 941-7726

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday, Wednesday, and
Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm
(or by appointment).

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday, Wednesday, and
Thursday from 8:30 am to Noon.

If you have church news or information to share in the weekly Zion News, please e-mail news@zionucclowden.org.