

ZION'S REFORMED UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Rev. June Boutwell, Senior Pastor

Lori Seinar-Roknick, Director of Music Ministries

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

10:30 a.m.

*Where the past and the future with Jesus Christ are celebrated
so the present can be lived abundantly.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Andrea Colaiaco, Lector

THE SOLEMN DECLARATION

Leader: And now may we prepare our hearts and minds for worship as we are gathered in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE ENTRANCE OF THE LIGHT

Ali Calvin, Acolyte

THE PRELUDE

“Veni Emmanuel”

Noel Rawsthorne

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP Luke 2:1-7 NIV

Andrea Colaiaco, Lector

2 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

Andrea Colaiaco, Lector

Leader: The ways are crowded,

People: God is not lost.

Leader: The days are busy,

People: God's time stands still.

Leader: The journey is long,

People: God's light guides our feet.

Lighting the City/Busy Places Candle

OPENING HYMN

“O Come, All Ye Faithful” (bulletin page 4)

CALL TO CONFESSION

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Our ways are not our own, O God. We hurry and race, twist and turn, trying to keep up, trying to get ahead, trying to stand out in the crowd. We change our ways at a moment's whim. We change our minds by fear or persuasion. We are told where to go, where not to go. We struggle to listen for you. We cannot sense your way. Where the ways are crowded and confused, guide us we pray. Where the noise fills our ears, bring a quiet peace to our hearts. Hear our prayers in the silence of this time with you....

A MOMENT OF SILENT CONFESSION AND PRAYER

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

SONG OF ASSURANCE

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.**

THE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH AND 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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Do You Hear What I Hear"

Children's Chime Choir

SERMON

Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life

Caleb T. Winchester, an editor of the 1905 Methodist Hymnal, challenged Frank M. North (1850-1935) to write a hymn text on city missions. North had intimate knowledge of urban life because of his work for the Methodist Church in New York City. Inspired by Jesus' words "Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find" (Matt. 22:9), North wrote "Where Cross the Crowded Ways." North's descriptive phrases may have been startling at the turn of the century, but they are even more accurate descriptions of the massive cities in our world today. His prescription to follow in the footsteps of Christ and bring the gospel in word and deed is relevant as long as the Lord delays in bringing the New Jerusalem.

*Where cross the crowded ways of life, where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife, we hear your voice, O Son of Man.
In haunts of wretchedness and need, on shadowed thresholds fraught with fears,
from paths where hide the lures of greed, we catch the vision of your tears.
From tender childhood's helplessness, from human grief and burdened toil,
from famished souls, from sorrow's stress, your heart has never known recoil.
The cup of water given for you still holds the freshness of your grace;
yet long these multitudes to view the sweet compassion of your face.
O Master, from the mountainside, make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide; O tread the city's streets again;
Till all the world shall learn your love, and follow where your feet have trod;
till glorious from your heaven above shall come the city of our God.*

OUR OFFERING TO GOD

The Doxology

**To God, all glorious heavenly Light,
To Christ revealed in earthly night,
To God the Spirit now we raise
Our joyful songs of thankful praise.**

CLOSING HYMN NO. 133 “O Little Town of Bethlehem” (bulletin page 5)

THE BENEDICTION

TAKING THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD

THE POSTLUDE “Go Tell It On The Mountain” Traditional American Spiritual

MEDITATION: Dan B. Allender *God is not bound by time, nor is our story. We desperately want our situation to be solved. We want resolution. But, God unfolds the plot in His own time. It is in our months or years of waiting that our story comes to maturity.*



*O Come, All Ye Faithful

Latin: John F. Wade, 1751
Tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1841, and others

ADESTE FIDELES Irregular
John F. Wade's Cantus Diversi, 1751

1. O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2. Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
3. Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py morn - ing,

come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem;
Sing, all ye cit - i - zens of heaven a - bove!
Je - sus, to thee be all glo - ry given;

Come and be - hold him, born the King of an - gels;
Glo - ry to God, all glo - ry in the high - est;
Word of the Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;

O come, let us a - dore him, O come, let us a - dore him,

O come, let us a - dore him, Christ, the Lord!

CHRISTMAS

133

O Little Town of Bethlehem

*Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:4-7**Phillips Brooks, 1868; alt.*

1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see you lie!
 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and gath - ered all a - bove,
 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly, the won - drous gift is given!
 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;

A - bove your deep and dream - less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
 While mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - dering love.
 So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the glo - rious love of heaven.
 Cast out our sin and en - ter in; be born in us to - day.

Yet in your dark streets shines forth the ev - er - last - ing light,
 O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth!
 No one dis - cerns God's com - ing, but in this world of sin,
 We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad tid - ings tell;

The hopes and fears of all the years are met in you to - night.
 And prais - es sing, and voic - es ring with peace to all on earth.
 Where yearn - ing souls long to be whole, the dear Christ en - ters in.
 O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Em - man - u - el!