

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Third and Jackson Streets

Decatur, Indiana

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(*) Please stand, either in body or in spirit

December 21, 2025

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT -

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

Matthew 1:18—25

“How do we prepare for and handle what comes to us during the immediacy of waiting for an impending moment?”

Gathering Music: “A Charlie Brown Christmas Medley”

The Welcome and Announcements: Liturgist: Janet Smith

(Visitors: Please sign the Friendship Folder)

Prelude: “Ding Dong! Merrily On High”

*Please take a moment and quiet your minds and open your hearts
as we enter this time of worship.*

The Light Appears:

The Church Bell Rings:

*The Call To Worship: Liturgist

To love is the greatest gift bestowed upon us. It is a surrender to
God’s holy power.

**God loves us, despite all our mistakes, so we pray for the
patience of hope!**

To be loved by God is the right of every living thing. This love is the
sun and the rain, it is the beginning and end of all.

**God loves us even when we neglect our neighbors, so we pray
for the strength to bring peace.**

God’s love is always a promise and a responsibility, and we are given
this love freely. God demands nothing from us, yet knows we are
capable of greatness.

**God loves us in the midst of destruction and despair, so we pray
to share a vision of joy.**

God loves us just as we are, and we gives thank and whisper amen.

***The Invocation (In Unison):** Liturgist

*Passing the Peace of Christ: Liturgist

The peace of the Lord be with you.

Prayer for Transformation and New Life: Rev. Kahler

We doubt, even as we retell the old stories. We are like Joseph – shamed, questioning, fearful of the truth of Mary’s dream – not wanting to be taken as fools for believing in something that seems too precious to be true. We are as afraid as the shepherds in their fields, sometimes as cowardly and cruel as Herod. You have given us the most sacred gift, yet we often lack the faith to accept it.

Scripture reading: Isaiah 7:10—16 Liturgist
Pew Bible, Pg 591

The Choir Anthem: “Amen, Go Tell It On the Mountain” Chancel Choir

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath: “The Advent of Love”

by Andrew Kooman

Jayce Neuenschwander, Anson Shaffer

Prayers of the People: (In remembrance, gladness, gratitude & need)

Pastoral Prayer:

Prayer Response: Chancel Choir

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1:18—25 Rev. Kahler

Pew Bible, Pg. 835

The Word of God for the People of God:

The Response: **Thanks be to God.**

*The Sermon Hymn: "It Came Upon A Midnight Clear" No. 128

The Sermon: " Don't Drop the Baby "

The Offering: Liturgist

Invitation to the Offering:

Prayer of Dedication: (Unison)

Love and Light of the world, we give you thanks for these gifts. We give you thanks for the privilege of generosity. We give you thanks for the ability to share your divine love in a tangible form with our siblings around the world. Help us to remember, as we await Christ's birth, to give more generously than we receive, knowing we will always be rich in your abundant love. Amen

The Moment of Offering: Ushers Serve

The Offertory Music: “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”
“Hallelujah” Kennedy Ballard

*The Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen.**

(Please be seated)

The Holy Communion

Words of Institution:

Prayer of Communion:

The Prayer of our Savior:

Our Father 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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

The Distribution:

Prayer Of Thanksgiving : (Unison)

Eternal God, you have called your people from East and West and North and South to feast at the table of Jesus Christ. We thank you for Christ's presence and for the spiritual food of Christ's body and blood. By the power of your Holy Spirit, keep us faithful to your will. Go with us to the streets, to our homes and to Christmas gatherings and celebrations, that whether we go, we may be the servant church of the servant Christ, in whose name we rejoice to pray. Amen

*The Closing Carol: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" No.145

*The Benediction:

Let It Be Deep: Service Prayers for the Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A was written by Maria Mankin.

*The Song of Departing Friends: “As With Gladness Men Of Old”

**As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious Lord,
May we evermore be led to Thee.**

*The Light is carried forth Acolytes serve

*The Worship Leaders exit

*The Moment for Silent Prayers Chimes

*The Postlude “Good King Wenceslaus” Organist

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Each of Us	Minister of Christ
Barb Engle	Congregation President
Jan Miller	Board Secretary
Maggie Bolinger	Office Secretary
Stacey Smith	Church Treasurer
Lisa Krueckeberg	Financial Secretary
Shelly Nussbaum	Music Director/Church Organist
Kacie Shaffer	Custodian
Justin Shaffer	Building Manager

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Scott Heller, Jan Miller	Door Greeters
Scott & Brenda Strickler	Ushers
Ushers	Acolytes
Myra Gaunt	Money Counter

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We welcome all members, visitors, and guests to our worship service this morning. Visitors: Please sign our Friendship Folder located in each pew so that we may acknowledge your presence.

Please join us in the dining room after worship for a time of fellowship and cookies, coffee, and punch.

Today’s flowers are sponsored by Mike and Carol Fuelling in memory of LeRoy & Ruth Hoagland and Hubert & Bernice Fuelling.

Flower and Bulletin Charts are now available for 2026 in the West Vestibule. Flowers remain at \$30 and bulletins are \$10.

Organizational and committee reports to be included in the 2025 Annual Report are due in the church office by **January 15th**. Please submit any address changes as well for the directory. The Lenten mailing will go out in mid-February.

Christmas Week services begin today with Holy Communion. This evening our Blue Christmas Service will be at 6:00 p.m. Our Candlelight Christmas Eve service will begin Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m.

We invite you to join us next Sunday morning at 10 a.m. in the dining room for an Ugly Christmas Sweater/Christmas Carol service. We will enjoy a casual service of cookies and coffee and a variety of Christmas Carols. You are welcome to wear your Christmas sweaters or Christmas pajamas.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, January 18th. Pastor's report, final 2025 financial reports, trustee report, and other organizational reports will be presented. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

Looking Ahead

Today, Dec. 21: "Blue Christmas" service 6:00 p.m.

Wed. Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 p.m.

Thurs., Dec. 25: **MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!**

Sunday, Dec. 28: Ugly Christmas Sweater Service 10:00 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 4: Installation of 2026 Official Board

Church website: www.zion-ucc-decatur.org

Church e-mail: office@zionuccdecatur.org

Pastor email: arkinpastor59@gmail.com

Last Sunday: Worship Attendance: 49

Offering: \$ 3436.87 (Incl. \$1140 Mary Strickler Memorials, \$25 Christmas Fund)

Needed each week: \$4045.87

