

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Third and Jackson Streets
Decatur, Indiana

(*)Please stand either in body or in spirit

Baptism of Jesus

January 11, 2026

Matthew 3:13—17

“How do communities embody the vows offered in baptism?”

The Prelude: “To God Be The Glory”

The Prelude calls us together. It is a time of quiet reflection to focus ourselves in preparation for worshipping God.

The Light appears: The Acolytes serve
The Church Bell rings:

*Call to Worship: Liturgist

Come, you who are weary, you who have been bruised by life,
you whose flame has flickered in the winds of the world.

We come, longing to be renewed.

The Holy One who *stretches out the heavens* is stretching us now — stretching our hearts toward courage, our hands toward compassion, our lives toward gentle justice.

We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

A voice from heaven says to us, as it said to Jesus: *You are my beloved.* This Spirit rests upon us, too.

We are God's Beloved, called to bring gentle justice.

Come, let us remember who we are.

Let us worship God with joy.

*The Hymn of Praise: “I Sing The Mighty Power Of God” No.59

*The Invocation: (In Unison) Liturgist

Holy One, Breath of Creation, You stretched out the heavens and set the earth dancing with life. You whispered belovedness over Jesus rising from the Jordan, and your Spirit rested upon him like a gentle dove. Rest your Spirit upon us now. Stretch our hearts where they have grown tight. Soften the places that have been hardened by fear or disappointment. Wake the embers of joy that still glow beneath the ash. Remind us that we are your Beloved, not because of what we have done, but because of who You are and the love that holds us. As we gather at the water today, let us remember who we are, and who we are becoming together— your people of compassion, courage, and gentle justice. In the name of Christ, the One who shows us how to be human, we pray. Amen.

*Passing the Peace of Christ: Liturgist

Jesus is our peace. He has reconciled us to God; born in a manger and died on the cross. We meet in the name of Jesus and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be with you.

And also with you.

*The Apostles’ Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church*, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Scripture Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9 Liturgist
Pew Bible, Pg. 622

The Special Music: Lisa Krueckberg

Time With The Youth:

Prayers of the People:

The Morning Prayer: Spoken and Silent

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 Prayer Response: “Hear Our Prayer, O Lord”
Hear our prayer, O Lord
Hear our prayer, O Lord.
Incline Thine ear to us,
And grant us Thy peace. Amen

The Scripture Reading: Matthew 3:13—17 Rev. Kahler
Pew Bible, Pg. 835

The word of God for the People of God.
The Response: **Thanks be to God.**

The Sermon Hymn: "Shall We Gather At The River" See Insert

The Sermon:

“The Gift of Committed Community”

The Moment of Offering:

Liturgist

Invitation to Generosity:

Yes—we will join Christ in the work of healing. Let us, then, bring our gifts—our time, our treasure, our commitments, our lives—with joy.

We give because we are God’s Beloved, and we belong to one another.

Prayer Of Thanksgiving: (Unison)

You have gathered us in, washed us in grace, and reminded us that we are your Beloved. As water flows from its source to nourish field and forest, so let our giving flow outward—to nourish hope, to tend to healing, to join the slow and sacred work of renewing the world. Bless these gifts, and bless the lives from which they come. May they ripple outward in acts of compassion, in courage where it is needed, in justice that is gentle and strong. Just as the river does not hold itself, teach us not to hold back our love. We offer what we have and who we are, with joy and trust, for the sake of your dream of flourishing. Amen.

The Offering:

Ushers Serve

Offertory:

* 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.**

Baptismal Renewal:

Acknowledging Our Need For Renewal:

We have known bruising. We have known moments we wish we could live again. We have known times when our flame burned low.

We long to begin again.

The One who *stretches out the heavens* is still stretching us—stretching our courage, stretching our compassion, stretching our capacity to love and to be loved.

We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

Hear the good news: Nothing is sealed. Nothing is beyond mending. The story is not over. It has only just begun.

All is forgiven. All is being made new.

Can we begin again?

Yes. By the grace of God, we will begin again.

Blessing the Water:

The Renewal:

Affirmation of Calling:

We are the Body of Christ—not alone, but together.

We are God's beloved.

The Spirit that was in Christ is in us.

We are called to bring gentle justice.

We will not break the bruised reed. We will not extinguish the smoldering flame.

We will walk in compassion, courage, and joy.

This is our covenant. This is our life together.

Amen.

*The Hymn of Commitment: “Sweet, Sweet Spirit” No.252

*The Benediction:

Service Prayers for The Baptism of Christ/Epiphany 1A was written by Rev. Michael Anthony Howard who serves as Minister of Faith in Action for Living Water Association, Ohio North East.

*Song Of Departing Friends: “God Be With You”

**God be with you till we meet again;
By His counsels guide, uphold you,
With His sheep securely fold you;
God be with you till we meet again.**

- *The Light is carried forth Acolytes serve
- *The Worship Leaders exit
- *The Moment for Silent Prayers Chimes
- *The Postlude: “Every Time I Feel The Spirit”

Each of Us	A Minister of Christ
Rev. Allen Kahler	Minister
Barb Engle	Congregation President
Jan Miller	Board Secretary
Maggie Bolinger	Office Secretary
Stacey Smith	Church Treasurer
Makayla Smith	Financial Secretary
Shelly Nussbaum	Music Director/Church Organist
Kacie Shaffer	Custodian
Justin Shaffer	Building Manager
+++++	+++++
Tim & Maggie Bolinger	Door Greeters
Bill Carpenter, Aithen Shaffer	Ushers
Myra Gaunt	Money Counter
Ushers	Acolytes

We welcome all members, visitors, and guests to our worship service this morning. Visitors: Please sign our Friendship Folder located in each pew.

Today's altar flowers are presented today by Dave and Myra Gaunt in memory of Bernice Miller. Bulletins are presented in honor of Wanda Miller's birthday.

Bible Study will resume this Thursday, January 15th with a series on the book of Ecclesiastes. Please meet in the lounge at 10:30 a.m.

Our Operation Help products for January will be **canned meat and peanut butter**. Please place your donations of non-perishable items or canned goods in the bins in the dining room and West vestibule. Demand at Operation Help has increased considerably and any donations are much appreciated.

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.

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.

Barb Engle has the information for the Lenten Devotionals for those willing to help with this project. They are due back to Barb no later than January 25th so they may be included in the Lenten mailing in early February.

Looking Ahead

Wednesday, Jan. 14 Handbell Choir Practice 6 p.m.
Chancel Choir Practice 7 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 15: Bible Study, Lounge, 10:30 a.m.

Sunday, Jan. 18: Annual Congregational Meeting, 11 a.m.

Monday, Jan. 19: Official Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

www.zionuccdecatur.org

Last week's attendance: 51

Christmas Eve attendance: 65

Needed each week: \$4045.87

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pastor: arkinpastor59@gmail.com

Offering: \$