



Welcome to Zion UCC
"Risk and Restoration"

**Zion United Church of Christ
Honouring Our Veterans
Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
November 10, 2024**

*Stand in body or spirit.

*(Join in speaking aloud the **bolded** portions.)*

Prelude

Coming Together to Share the Light

Greeting & Proclamation

"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." ~ Pericles, 5th Century BCE

Welcome and Announcements

Litany of Sunday Celebration

On this day of memory, we gather to sing and to pray, **we remember the past and look to the future.**

On this day when the guns once fell silent, **we come before you God, seeking Your peace.**

On this day of hope in the face of terror, we come before you God, praying with all our hearts:

God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. Help us to find the path that leads to the Peaceable kingdom.

In this time of story, song, and prayer, may

we be re-committed to being people of Peace,
true peace.

**May we catch a vision of how the world
could live together.**

And so, we echo the old prayers,

Make us channels of your peace.

**Let there be Peace on Earth and let it
begin with us. AMEN.**

Prayer of Invocation

The Prayer of Jesus

*(All are invited to use whatever language and wording
are most comfortable.)*

**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 sins/debts/trespases*, as we
forgive *our debtors/those who sin/trespass
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.**

A Lesson for All Ages

*** Hymn of Celebration # 517**

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Prayer for Our Humanity

...We pay you the shortest of visits on
Sunday, and then we go home to other gods.

Loving God, we know that we break your heart. When we truly worship you, we will seek good and not evil. We will turn our back on evil and love You. Have mercy on us and renew our hearts within us. We are fallen, never to rise again unless You lift us up. For it is in your name when we pray. AMEN.

Silence for Reflection

Assurance of Pardon

...in the name of Christ. **Thanks be to God!**
Alleluia! AMEN.

Message in Music "*Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*"

First Scripture Lesson Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Psalter Lesson # 525 w/ R "*Song of Love*"

***Gospel Lesson** Mark 12: 38-44

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Meditation

Pastor Craig

An Act of Honoring Our Veterans

We pause to remember those who go to war in our name.

We give thanks for courage, for love of country, for those who work to bring peace to our world.

Remind us, Oh God, that the goal of any war need be justice and peace.

On this day, we pause in worship to give thanks to God for veterans.

And seek to bind up the wounds of those who served.

Enable us to know how to comfort, how to bind up their wounds.

And remind us, Dear God, that the widow, the orphan, the widower, and the veteran – all know the cost of war.

Challenge us to love the warrior but hate the cost of war.

And we pray for a time when peace will reign and swords will become plowshares once more, that war be known only in history books.

And we give thanks, Gracious God, that you remain with us as we celebrate the service of all who dared to go forth in our name.

Remind us that such service is not a movie, an adventure, nor something to be glorified.

Remind us that war is a failure by us to overcome hatred with love, injustice with righteousness, violence with peace.

We give thanks for those who protect us from such failures.

May we truly be Your people and be makers of peace. AMEN.

***Hymn of Reflection # 526**

"The Gift of Love"

Invitation to Joyful Giving

Offertory

***Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise him all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father Son, and Holy Ghost.*

***Prayer of Dedication** (sung to same tune as above)

*Praise God, the love we all may share;
Praise God, the beauty everywhere;
Praise God, the hope of good to be;
Praise God, the truth that makes us free. AMEN.*

Sharing Our Joys and Concerns

A Prayer for Sunday

***Closing Hymn # 677**

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"

Benediction

Bring Light out into the World

Postlude

We Focus on Our Life Together...

Thank you for choosing to worship with us this morning. No matter who or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here! Please join us downstairs in The Gathering Place for refreshments and fellowship following this morning's service.

Today's Bulletin is dedicated in loving memory of Greg Bantz on his birthday by wife, Mary Ann.

Leader: Pastor Craig Sparks
Music Director: Thad Paulhamus
Musician: Clinton Adams
Message in Music: Zion UCC Choir

In Our Thoughts and Prayers...

Bryan Barbalace, Kevin Barbalace, Charlene Berk, Cheryl Blackburn, June Bocek*, Les & Vivian Bowser*, Les Bowser Jr, Casey Brewer, Anna Denoe*, Anna Golden, Tom Hayman, Marie Kachinski, June Kinnear*, Henry & Gerri Krotee, Barbara Langenfelder*, John Langenfelder, Barbara Makin, Pete Mitchell, Joyce Murphy, Amanda O'Neil, Judith Panian*, John Pflugrad, John Reali, Shirley Ritter*, Elaine Roberts, Carol Shrader, Mary Sturm, Barbara Thompson, family of Victor Zwinklis, service men & women, the people of Appalachia, Florida, Israel, Palestine, & Ukraine. Peace on Earth.

This week at Zion...

- 11:** Busy Hands (10 am) Upper Hall
Turner Seniors (11 am) Lower Hall
Church Council (7 pm) Gathering Place
- 12:** Bible Study (6 pm) Gathering Place
Choir Rehearsal (7 pm) Sanctuary
N.A. "Stronger Ties" (7 pm) Lower Hall
- 13:** Deadline for 2024 Annual Meeting Reports
- 14:** Women's Guild (11 am) Lower Hall

Bible Study News...

Bible Study meets on Tuesday evenings from 6-7 p.m. in "The Gathering Place". Each week focuses on a different scripture, all are welcome to join us!

Sunday School News...

Sunday School meets downstairs during worship in the Nursery/Sunday School Room (located behind the Gathering Place) on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of each month. Children are invited to make a small craft, listen to a bible story, and have some little people fellowship. Please join us next Sunday!

Mission Committee News...

The Mission Committee is currently collecting new coats, gloves and hats for several schools in our area. We need boys' and girls' coats in sizes from 5-18. If you wish to make a monetary donation, special envelopes are available. We will continue this project through January 5, 2025. If you have any questions, please see Jo-Ann Taylor, Cissy Sparks or Lois Randall. Thanks for your support!

Zion Women's Guild Fundraiser!

The Women's Guild is selling custom reusable tote bags that fold into a 4-1/2" x 5-1/2" interior pocket for storage. The bags fit over supermarket checkout frames, making it easier to load your groceries and they also make great gifts. Bags are \$5.00 each in the Narthex. See Terry Reed or any Guild member!

Busy Hands Craft Sale...

Busy Hands is having a craft sale right after this morning's service in the Gathering Place. Come downstairs for fellowship and refreshments and do some holiday shopping at the same time!

Annual Congregational Meeting...

The Annual meeting of Zion United Church of Christ will be held on Sunday, November 24th in the Hall Dining Room. A potluck luncheon will begin promptly at 12:00 noon with the business meeting immediately following lunch. At this meeting we will receive annual reports from the various committees and groups within the church, as well as from the Pastor and Council President. We will also elect the 2025 Church Council, receive the 2024 Treasurer's Report, conduct old and new business of the congregation, and vote on the proposed 2025 budget. Reports will be available in the narthex on Sunday, November 17th. Please plan to attend this important event in the life of our church. Remote attendance via Zoom will also be available for those unable to attend in person.

Christmas Memorials & Poinsettias...

Poinsettias will once again adorn Zion's chancel on Christmas Eve through Epiphany. The cost per plant will remain at \$18 this year and the deadline to order poinsettias is Sunday, December 15th. The deadline for monetary memorials and honorariums will be December 18, 2022. Payment is due when your request is submitted. Forms are available in the Narthex & Gathering Place. Linda Kirstein will be downstairs on Sunday mornings to assist you. You may also call Linda at 410-652-9990 or send an email to info@zionuccmd.com. Poinsettia and Monetary memorials & honorariums will appear in Christmas Eve Bulletins and the January Messenger.

UCC MISSION MOMENT

Twenty Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17 Risk and Restoration

A seminary student was struggling to prepare a youth Bible study on how Ruth, a widowed Moabite gleaning fields in Bethlehem, cozies up one night to the owner of the land, Boaz, on the threshing room floor in the dark of night. Yikes!

The pastor-in-training had no idea what to do with a text that seemed so racy for teens. And there lies the problem. Many times, ancient texts like this are read through modern lenses that sully a story pure with hope and redemption.

Ruth's and Boaz's story isn't R-rated. It's more H-rated. "H" for the Hebrew word "hesed," which is defined as a love that is merciful, steadfast, loyal and charitable. It is a story of love that transcends the physical. It is a story of love that illustrates God's love towards us.

When read through the lens of hesed, we see Boaz's charitable love that permitted Ruth to glean his fields. We see the caring love of Naomi when she tells her daughter-in-law to wash and anoint herself and then present herself to Boaz.

This isn't advice on how to snag a husband.

Rather, the act of washing and anointing symbolized that the time of mourning was over.

Out of love and concern, Naomi is telling Ruth it's time to live again. It's time to think about securing a more sustainable future. Remember, widows in

ancient times were vulnerable. Marriage was viewed as security.

Ruth listens to her mother-in-law and goes to the granary at night to see Boaz, putting her reputation on the line. The granary was a man's place. Reputable women didn't go there alone nor at night. There on the threshing room floor, Boaz, who is a kinsman of Naomi's, gets past his initial shock of this young woman before him and looks upon her with eyes full of merciful love. Ruth's risk was worth taking. They marry and have a son, Obed.

It's amazing to think what a love that is merciful, steadfast, loyal and charitable can do in our lives. It is awe-inspiring to see just how a risk-taking love led to not only the restoration of Ruth's and Naomi's lives, but the restoration of all humankind. For in the genealogical opening of the Gospel of Matthew, among all the "begots," there is the name of Ruth and her son as the noteworthy ancestors of Jesus the Christ

And that's the Bible study the seminary student presented to the teens that day, as together they explored the story of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz, through the ancient lens of hesed — God's powerful and restoring love.

Merciful God, may today we be open to the transformative power of Your love — love that is charitable, kind, loyal and steadfast. May this love restore Your world. Amen.

Zion UCC Church Staff

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Thad Paulhamus	Music Director	443-610-7844
Clinton Adams	Musician	
The Rev. Hugh Nash	Pastor Emeritus	

Administrative Office: 410-687-0980

- * Press 1 to leave voicemail message
- * Press 3 to contact Council President
- * Press 4 to contact Cemetery

Pastor Craig will be in the office on Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30 to 4:00 pm. The phone and email continue to be monitored, and all incoming mail is processed daily. For your convenience, you may leave your offering envelopes in the locked mailbox on the office side porch. Messengers, Bulletins, and Upper Room Devotionals are also available.

If you require pastoral services, please call Pastor Craig Sparks at 443-896-6815 or send an email to *craigssparks@gmail.com*.

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