



"We are thankful, For our food,
And our many blessings,
Thank you Lord."

Amen

Wishing you a blessed
Thanksgiving!

Tending God's Light

Zion United Church of Christ
Twenty-Fifth Sunday after Pentecost
November 19, 2023

*Stand in body or spirit.

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

Prelude

Coming Together to Share the Light

Greeting & Proclamation

"A life lived in fear is a life half-lived."

~ Baz Luhrmann, 21st Century

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Sunday Celebration

The time for harvest is close at hand. What have you done with the gifts God has given you?

We have brought our gifts to the house of the Lord.

Praise God for the gifts and for opportunities for service that they represent.

We praise God for all the ways in which our lives have been blessed.

Generous God, accept our gifts and our lives this day.

Loving God, accept our praise and gratitude.

Morning Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

(All are invited to use whatever language and wording is 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 Worship # 276**

"We Gather Together"

Prayer for Our Humanity

... we don't believe that we are capable of helping in this world.

O God, forgive us. Help us to trust in the gifts you have given to us and to trust in your guidance in using them. Forgive us when we are fearful, stubborn, apathetic, indifferent to the needs around us. Give us hearts for serving you all our days. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

Silence for Reflection

Assurance of Pardon

In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God! Alleluia! AMEN.

Message in Music *"Come with Thanksgiving"*

First Scripture Lesson 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Psalter # 746

"Psalm 90"

***Gospel Lesson**

Matthew 25:14-30

Meditation

Pastor Craig

***Hymn of Reflection # 717**

"Let All Things Now Living"

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.*

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

*Great God of Love, Your call comes clear;
to care for all, both far and near.
So may these gifts which now we give;
bring healing hope to all who live. Amen.*

Sharing Our Joys & Concerns

A Prayer for Sunday

***Closing Hymn # 715**

"Now Thank We All Our God"

Benediction

Bring Light out into the World

Postlude

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 after this morning's service.

Leader: Pastor Craig Sparks

Musicians: Thaddeus Paulhamus & Clinton Adams

Message in Music: Zion UCC Choir

In Our Thoughts and Prayers...

Bryan Barbalace, Kevin Barbalace, Charlene Berk, June Bocek*#, Les & Vivian Bowser, Les Bowser Jr, Casey Brewer, Jody Cirigliano#, Walt Clawson, Betty Cornes, Shirley Dalgo, Anna Denoe*#, Al Dufour, Joan Edwards*, Anna Golden, Gloria Jean Golden, family of Jay Griffin, Kim Grimes, Marie Kachinski, Henry & Gerri Krotee, Janice Lane, Barbara Langenfelder*, John Langenfelder, Barbara Makin, Henrietta Loveland, Patricia Moxham, Joyce Murphy, Mary Murphy, Gloria Nethkin, Betty Nolte*#, Judith Panian*#, Barbara Ridenour, Joann Ringsdorf, Shirley Ritter*, Sandy Robinson, Jim Roeder, Ken Rubright#, Audrey Ruby, Carol Shrader, Bruce Simon, Chip Swayne#, Dina Thomakos, Doris Wengler, Nancy Zaharis, service men & women, Ukraine, Peace on Earth. (*Shut-ins #Kelso)

Looking ahead at Zion...

Today: Sunday School during Worship (downstairs)

Messenger Deadline for December

20: Busy Hands Crafters (10 am) Upper Hall

Turner Seniors (11 am) Lower Hal

21: Bible Study (6 pm) Gathering Place

Choir Rehearsal (7 pm) Sanctuary

N.A. "Stronger Ties" (7 pm) Lower Hall

22: N.A. "Sink or Swim" (7 pm) Lower Hall

26: Totenfest Worship with Pastor Craig (10 am)

Totenfest is November 26th...

Next Sunday is the last Sunday of the liturgical year, and we will celebrate Totenfest during the morning worship. This is a long-standing tradition here at Zion Golden Ring. It is a time for remembering those loved ones and friends who have died during the past year. During this beautiful ceremony, we will lift up each name and give thanks for his or her witness among us through the lighting of a candle and the ringing of a bell. We will thank God for their new life that is found in Christ and recommit our own lives towards faithful service. The names of all departed members as well as all those whose service was held at Zion or have been buried in our cemetery since last Totenfest have already been included. If you would like to add the name of a relative or friend who was not a member of either congregation and passed within the last year, please send an email to info@zionuccmd.com or call Jane Anderson at 410-598-2110 or Tim Dalgo at 410-608-1670.

Christmas Memorials & Poinsettias...

Poinsettias will once again adorn Zion's chancel on Christmas Eve and remain until Epiphany. The cost per plant will remain at \$18 this year and the deadline to order poinsettias is December 10, 2023. The deadline for monetary memorials and honorariums will be December 18, 2022. Payment for all memorials and honorariums must be turned in at the time of submission. Forms are available in the narthex. You may also send an email to info@zionuccmd.com or call Jane Anderson at (410) 598-2110. All Christmas

Memorials will be printed in the Christmas Eve Bulletin and the January Messenger.

Advent Party & Church Decorating...

Be sure to mark Saturday, December 2nd on your calendar for our Advent Party (for all ages) from 10 am to 2 pm at the church. We will begin the morning by decorating the sanctuary and Gathering Place, break for an informal lunch, and then enjoy time making a few advent and holiday items. Hope to see you there!

Women's Guild Christmas Luncheon...

The annual Zion Women's Guild Christmas luncheon is being planned for Thursday, December 14th in the lower hall. If you would like to attend the event, please contact Terry Reed at (443) 596-7496 by December 3rd. More details to follow.

Christmas Eve Services...

Since Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, we will observe the 4th Sunday of Advent at our 10 am service and hold 2 Christmas Eve services later that day. A family service will be held at 3:00 pm and a traditional service will follow at 9 pm. Both services will include candlelight and communion. Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join us in celebrating Christ's birth!

Mission Committee Update...

The mission committee is collecting new coats, gloves, and hats for several schools in our area. We will be collecting boys' and girls' coats in sizes from 5-18. If you wish to make a monetary donation instead of purchasing items, we will be happy to do the shopping for you. This mission project runs until Sunday, January 7, 2024. If you are making a monetary donation, specially marked envelopes will be available in the

Narthex for your use. If you have any questions, please see Jo-Ann Taylor or Cissy Sparks.

Sunday School News...

Sunday School continues to be held in the newly renovated Church Nursery/Sunday School Room (behind the Gathering Place) during worship. Children are invited come join us to make a small craft, listen to a bible story, and have some little people fellowship. Adjusted dates for the remainder of 2023 will be 11/26, 12/3, 12/10, and 12/17.

UCC MISSION MOMENT

Matthew 25:14-30 Extravagant Opportunity *Thanksgiving Sunday*

What if Jesus were telling this story now? Might it sound a little like this?

So, the reign of God is like a businesswoman, preparing to leave for the airport on a business trip, who called three of her employees into the conference office. The employees sat somewhat nervously around the conference table, not sure what to expect. The businesswoman arrived in a hurry and took her customary place at the head of the table. Only then did they notice the large box that sat in front of her on the table.

Then, one by one, she pulled three items out of the box. To the first employee, she gave a small but powerful video camera. That employee immediately left the conference room and began conducting interviews with her coworkers, asking them what had brought them to work at that company. She was amazed about what she learned about people she worked with every

day. This employee uploaded the videos onto social media and a couple of them even went viral.

To the second employee, the boss gave a compact typewriter in a carrying case. The next day, during lunch, he offered to type a poem about any subject his coworkers might choose. One by one, his coworkers told him stories about the people they loved, the animals that made them laugh, the mountains that inspired them. And this second employee wrote poems for them all. They shared the poems with each other, delighted to get to know each other in this new way.

To the third employee, the businesswoman gave a pencil. But the third employee didn't know what to do. She stayed in her office alone many nights, just looking at that pencil and wondering what the boss could have meant by giving her such a small and worthless gift.

When the boss came back, she praised the social media campaign of the first employee and thanked the second employee for the increase in morale and sense of comradeship in the office. But with the third employee, who, with a sheepish expression, tried to give her back the pencil, the boss was visibly disappointed. "There are so many ways you could have used this tool, but you chose to do nothing. This is a place for people to take risks and express their creativity, but you have twiddled your thumbs. Next time, the gift will go to someone else altogether."

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Zion UCC Church Staff

Ministers	All members of Zion UCC	
Craig S. Sparks	Pastor	443-896-6815 Email: <i>pastor@zionuccmd.com</i>
Tim Dalgo, Sr.	Administrator	410-608-1670 Email: <i>info@zionuccmd.com</i>
Joan Jordan	President (Golden Ring)	443-791-7344 Email: <i>doosmom2@gmail.com</i>
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Jane Anderson	Congregational Care	410-598-2110 Email: <i>janeanderson8@comcast.net</i>
Thad Paulhamus	Music Director	443-610-7844
Clinton Adams	Musician	
Rev. C. Larry Fisher, Rev. Hugh Nash	Pastor Emeriti	

Administrative Office: 410-687-0980

- * Press 1 to leave voicemail message
- * Press 2 for Pastoral Services
- * Press 3 to contact Council President
- * Press 4 to contact Cemetery
- * Press 6 to contact Congregational Care

Pastor Craig will be in the office on Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The phone and email continue to be monitored, and all incoming mail is processed daily. For your convenience, you may leave envelopes or correspondence in the locked mailbox on the office porch. Messengers, Bulletins, and Upper Room Devotionals are also available.

If you require pastoral services, please call the church office, and press #2; email to *pastor@zionuccmd.com* or call Pastor Craig directly at 443-896-6815.

Zion United Church of Christ
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