



December 2025

## *A Message from Pastor Mathew*

*“But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” - Luke 2:19*

Do you remember that part in the Christmas story where the shepherds go crazy and start telling everyone what just happened? Do you remember what Mary was doing during all of this? The Bible says she treasured up all these things that had happened and pondered them in her heart.

I can't say I know the pain of childbirth nor do I want to risk getting myself into trouble by referring to it much but it sure was possible that Mary... was exhausted. Still, I don't think that is the reason she is silent in this nativity scene. I wonder if Mary's silence is a lesson for us in the experience of the Advent and birth of Christ. What might happen if we didn't quickly go tell it on the mountain? What if instead of celebrating on the hilltops we were to treasure all these things and ponder them in our hearts? What if, this Advent and Christmas season, it was not about the words from our mouths but rather the meditations within our hearts?

Could we do this? Should we do this? I can't make you experience Christmas in one particular way. All I can do is show you that the shepherds went around sharing the good news of Jesus' birth but Mary, in Luke 2, didn't. We put a great emphasis in what the shepherds did and we equate it with our Christian mission to tell others about Jesus, but does this make Mary's actions any less Christian? We must remember that Jesus came for us too. Perhaps in our desire that others experience the joy of Christmas this year we might set aside time for ourselves to experience it too. Just as we have a very personal moment with Jesus in Holy Communion, where His body and blood are given and shed “for you” in that moment and not the person to your right or left, maybe we should allow Christmas to be for us as well. Maybe you should give an opportunity for Jesus to be born “for you.” You've likely heard that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. What happens if you are that weak link? You could be ambitious in sharing Jesus with others but if you haven't taken time to strengthen yourself, what good is the message that you bring?

That all said, I offer to you the response that Mary had to the birth of Jesus. Meditation. Take time to experience Christmas for yourself, pray, read the scriptures, read through devotions, allow your faith to be strengthened as you treasure these things and ponder them in your hearts.

God's blessings to you this Advent and Christmas seasons.

Pastor Mathew

## OUR MISSION: WHY WE EXIST

To bring people into a covenantal relationship with the Lord (*Matthew 28:19-20*), and to equip them for personal growth and impact. *Ephesians 4:11-26*

## SENIOR CHRISTMAS BRUNCH REMINDER

Wednesday December 10 from 10:30 AM -1:00 PM

## ADVENT PRAYER SERVICE & STUDY – WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

### Advent Evening Prayer

7 PM in Heritage Chapel

### Advent Study: Signs in the Heavens

7:30 PM in Library

Just what was it that led the Magi to the infant Jesus?

Pastor Mathew will lead us through the scriptural account of Jesus' incarnation as it was revealed in Matthew Chapter 2. We'll talk about the significance of the star and its value to our faith.



### Advent Candles

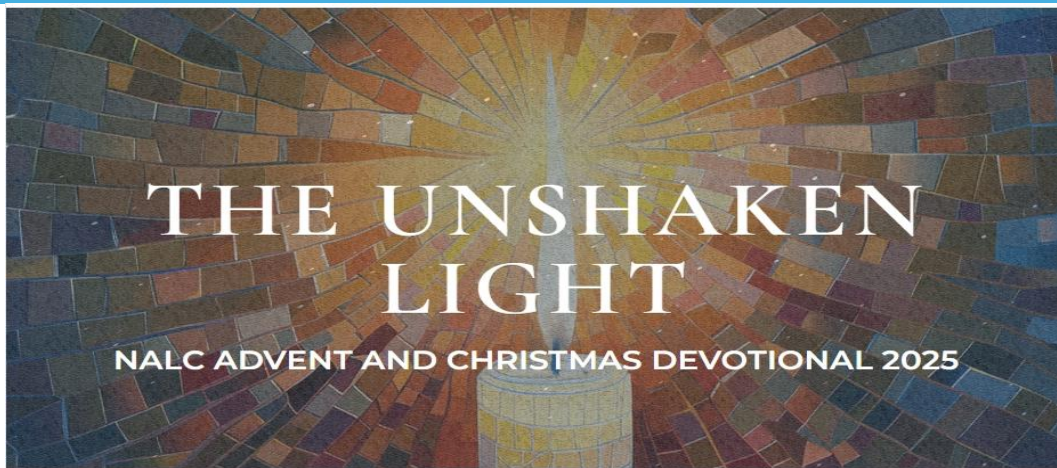
**First Sunday of Advent** (Blue) - Hope

**Second Sunday of Advent** (Blue) - Peace

**Third Sunday of Advent** (Pink) - Joy

**Fourth Sunday of Advent** (Blue) - Love

**Christmas Eve** (White) - Christ is born



This devotional traces the moment of grace from Advent to Epiphany from waiting in hope, to rejoicing in God with us, the bearing His Light into the world. May it deepen your spiritual journey in this season of preparation and joy.



## **CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP**

**Family Service – 5:00 PM**

**Traditional Candlelight Service – 8:00 PM**

**THANKS FOR SETTING UP ZION'S NATIVITY**



## IN OUR PRAYERS

† Joshua Alukonis  
† Bob Ammon  
† Kevin Barrett  
† Lynn Broman  
† Joe Coreno  
† David Detwiler  
† Mary Ann Dunlap  
† Corey Fisher  
† Jon Galland  
† Marshawna Hill  
† Casey Hirsh  
† George Langford  
† Glenn Ribblett  
† Suzanne Roberts  
† Dave Sheridan

## DECEMBER BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

Seth Luy December 2, 2012

Matthew Pierce December 6, 2009

Aidan Banahasky December 18, 2022



## ALTAR GUILD

We serve the Lord and Zion by preparing the Altar Each week for communion. We are praying that a heart or 2 will be stirred to join us in the new year. We work in teams of two. If you would like to serve with us, contact Cheryl Squier at 412-913-8085 or the church office.

## FOSTER LOVE PROJECT

The Youth Ministry is raising funds to shop for and give Move-in-Bags to the Foster Love Project. There is a giving board set up near the entrance to Fellowship Hall. Please support Zion's youth by selecting an envelope and donating the amount on the envelope. The Youth Ministry will do the shopping. Thanks!

To learn more about this project see:  
[Fosterloveproject.org](http://Fosterloveproject.org)

## DECEMBER ADULT EDUCATION

The Lord's Prayer led by Jack Reck is based on the teaching series by Dr. Robert Mohler, Jr. Prayer is central to our fellowship with God. Below is a list of December's classes.

Session 6: December 7 – The Word Be Done

Session 7: December 14 – The Presence of the Kingdom

Session 8: December 21 – Daily Dependence

## YOUTH QUAKE 2026 – January 23-25

Youth Quake, a regional youth gathering, will be held in Pittsburgh this year at the Marriott Pittsburgh Airport. There will be worship, a speaker, breakout sessions, games, and a dance. Zion is looking for interested youth and chaperones. See Pastor Mathew for more information?



## *Amen to ACTION* *November 15<sup>th</sup>*

Zion members helped to pack food for our neighbors who are food insecure.



## **Quilting Ministry**

There are two quilts crafted by the quilting ministry on display; one is located outside of the Heritage Room, and the other is in the Narthex. The quilting ministry is looking for helpful hands; no experience is needed. You can stop by and help for an hour, a day or longer, or you can help from home. The ministry meets on Thursdays. If you are interested in serving, please contact Betty Jane Szydowski at 412-885-1042 or [szydlowski@comcast.net](mailto:szydlowski@comcast.net).

## THANKFUL FOR PIE

Thanks to Zion Members for donating 95 pies to Light of Life Mission. Following Thanksgiving service, Zion Members enjoyed a delicious piece of pie and fellowship.



## WELCOME CAITLIN NOBILE' AS OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION COORDINATOR

Zion is pleased to announce a new part-time staff member whose aim is to aid Zion's internal and external communications and outreach efforts. Caitlin is a student at NALS in Ambridge and comes to us with a background in studio art, graphic design, and has experience working with the NALC in their communications department. She will be installed in the coming weeks.

***May the miracle of Christmas bring you renewed hope,  
faith, and love. May you experience the presence of  
Jesus in your heart and home.***