

# ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

January 07, 2024

The Festival of Epiphany

A Service of the Word and Holy Communion



## ***Adoration of the Magi***

2007, by Dr. James He Qi (b. 1950)

from Epiphany Art by James He Qi (China/USA) + prayers  
posted January 29, 2019 on the blog, Global Christian Worship.

<https://globalworship.tumblr.com/search/Epiphany>

Editorial Note: These faces may be related to masks used in the Peking Opera)



**January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**The Festival of Epiphany**  
**A Service of the Word and Holy Communion**

**WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY**

**“The well-known biblical story of the Magi who journey to find the Christ child and to bring gifts offers an emblematic story of knowing. They are not called wise men for nothing! Nor is it a meaningless accident that we use the word epiphany in referring to a moment of insight. Epiphany is the name of the church season in which we celebrate God's revealing himself to these Gentiles--and to us.”**  
**— Esther Lightcap Meek, A Little Manual for Knowing---**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**The Prelude – *Adam Petrosino***

**\*Call to Worship**

**One:** Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of God has risen upon you  
**Many:** **We have seen the star in the sky and have come to worship the Christ Child.**

**One:** Nations shall come to your light, and rulers to the brightness of your dawn.  
**Many:** **The star is resting over Bethlehem, and we come rejoicing, overwhelmed with joy.**

**All:** **Let us bring the gift of our hearts and the gift of our lives to worship our God of light and everlasting love.**

**\* Gathering Prayer**

**O God of Light and Love,  
who shines in our hearts  
as brightly as the Bethlehem star,  
we come together  
to give you praise.  
You have come to us  
in the form of a newborn babe,  
and our hearts are filled  
with awe and with joy.  
We rejoice in your love for us,  
and we are grateful.  
Amen.**

**\*Opening Hymn: NCH No. 159 - "As with Gladness Those of Old"**

## **A READING OF THE WORD**

### **First Reading: Isaiah 60:1-6**

*For Epiphany we begin with the glorious proclamation of the prophet sometimes referred to as Third Isaiah in chapter 60: "Arise, shine, for your light has come." The light of God's glory has risen upon the people, returning from exile. But in verse three, God promised the people that nations would be drawn to their light, because of what God had done for them. The people become a light for the nations, a witness for God in the world. They would be blessed by other nations, who would share with them their wealth—including gold and frankincense, brought in on the backs of camels!*

**60** 1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come!  
the glory of YHWH is rising upon you!  
2 Though darkness still covers the earth  
and dense clouds enshroud the peoples,  
upon you YHWH now dawns,  
and God's glory will be seen among you!  
3 The nations will come to your light  
and the leaders to your bright dawn!  
4 Lift up your eyes, and look around:  
they're all gathering and coming to you—  
your daughters and your sons  
journey from afar, escorted in safety;  
5 you'll see them and beam with joy,  
your heart will swell with pride.  
The riches of the sea will flow to you,  
and the wealth of the nations will come to you—  
6 camel caravans will cover your roads,  
the camels of Midian and Ephah;  
everyone in Sheba will come,  
bringing gold and incense  
and singing the praise of YHWH.

### **Psalm Response: Psalm 72:1-7,10-14 (Responsively)**

*These verses in Psalm 72 are a song of blessing for a new ruler. The psalmist asks for God to grant the new ruler wisdom and justice, and to judge with righteousness. The psalmist blesses the new ruler with long life as they listen to the poor and those in need, lifting them up. While the psalmist also calls upon other nations to bring tribute and to serve the ruler, the psalmist also calls for the new ruler to deliver the most vulnerable of the realm from oppression and violence, to be on the side of those who are poor and in need.*

**72** 1 O God, give your anointed one your judgment—  
and your justice.

**2 Teach your chosen one to govern your people rightly  
and bring justice to those who are oppressed.**

3 The mountains will bring the people peace  
and the hills justice!

**4 Your anointed will defend the oppressed among  
the people,  
save the children of those who are poor,  
and crush the oppressor.**

5 The reign of your anointed will endure  
as long as the sun and moon—  
throughout all generations.

**6 The rule of the chosen one will be  
like rain coming down on the meadow,  
like showers watering the earth.**

7 Justice will flower through the days, and profound  
peace,  
until the moon be no more.

**10 Tarshish and the Isles will offer gifts;  
Arabia and Sheba will bring tribute.**

11 All rulers will pay homage,  
and all the nations will serve your anointed.

**12 Your anointed will rescue those who are poor  
when they cry out,  
and those who are oppressed when there is no one  
to help them.**

13 Your chosen one  
will have compassion on those who are humble and those who are poor,  
and will save their lives.

**14 Your chosen one  
will rescue them all from violence and oppression,  
and will treat their blood as precious.**

### **Second Reading: Ephesians 3:1-12**

*While most scholars are uncertain if apostle Paul wrote Ephesians, in these verses in chapter 3, the writer, purporting to be Paul in prison, writes of how the mystery of God has been revealed now: Gentiles are also fellow heirs of God through Jesus Christ. Gentiles and Jews are members of the same body, and the church is what can bring them together on earth. Paul is the servant of God, called to deliver this message, even though he is “the least of all believers,” now in prison. God is using him to share the message: that through the church the wisdom of God may be made known to all people, even rulers, even powers in the heavens. Believers have access to God and confidence in faith because of Jesus Christ, who came for all people.*

**3** 1 For I, Paul—a prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—2 am sure that you have heard of God’s grace, of which I was made a steward on your behalf; 3 this mystery, as I have briefly described it, was given to me by revelation. 4 When you read this, you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was unknown to the people of former ages, but is now revealed by the Spirit to the holy apostles and prophets. 6 That mystery is that the Gentiles are heirs, as are we; members of the Body, as are we; and partakers of the promise of Jesus the Messiah through the Good News, as are we.

7 I became a minister of the Good News by the gift of divine grace given me through the working of God’s power. 8 To me, the least of all believers, was given the grace to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ 9 and to enlighten all people on the mysterious design which for ages was hidden in God, the Creator of all.

10 Now, therefore, through the church, God’s manifold wisdom is made known to the rulers and powers of heaven, 11 in accord with the age-old design, carried out in Christ Jesus our Savior, 12 in whom we have boldness and confident access to God through our faith in Christ.

### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 2:1-12**

*These verses in Matthew 2 contain the story of the visit of the Magi. While sometimes this passage is included at Christmas with Luke’s story of the Nativity, and the Magi are often included with Shepherds and Angels in our nativity crèches, they are quite different stories. The Magi, also known as astrologers, probably from Persia though it is uncertain where they came from, arrived in Jerusalem expecting to find a ruler there since that was where the royal palace was located. Instead, they found Herod, a puppet king for Rome. The scribes found a passage in Micah 5:2 about a new Ruler coming from Bethlehem, the city of David, to shepherd Israel. Micah was writing about Hezekiah, the new king of Judah in his time, who would prevent the Assyrian Empire from taking control of Judah. But here, the scribes have interpreted Micah to be about a Davidic king for their time. Herod sends the Magi to go to Bethlehem, with the orders to return to Jerusalem and tell him where the new Ruler is, so he can go visit him. The Magi do go and find the child in Bethlehem with Mary his mother (Joseph is not mentioned in this visit of the Magi!). They pay him homage, offering him their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. However, they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod (as an angel warns Joseph in a dream right after this story about Herod’s intentions), and return home another way. Note that in verse 2, in most translations the Magi ask, “Where is the newborn ruler of the Jews?” Rev. Dr. Wil Gafney, in “A Women’s Lectionary for the Whole Church: A Multi Gospel Single-Year Lectionary, Year W” in her translation on page 35 uses the term Judeans instead of Jews. This is a better translation because Herod was in charge of the Roman province of Judea, and it would make sense to be frightened of a new ruler of your province, rather than a new ruler of a people who are scattered throughout the Roman empire.*

**2** 1 After Jesus’ birth—which happened in Bethlehem of Judea, during the reign of Herod—Magi (*astrologers*) from the East arrived in Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the newborn ruler of the Judeans? We observed his star at its rising and have come to pay homage.” 3 At this news Herod became greatly disturbed, as did all of Jerusalem. 4 Summoning all the chief priests and religious scholars of the people, Herod asked them where the Messiah was to be born.

5 "In Bethlehem of Judea," they informed him. "Here is what the prophet has written:

6 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,  
since from you will come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

7 Herod called the Magi aside and found out from them the exact time of the star's appearance. 8 Then he sent them to Bethlehem, after having instructed them, "Go and get detailed information about the child. When you have found him, report back to me—so that I may go and offer homage, too."

9 After their audience with the ruler, they set out. The star which they had observed at its rising went ahead of them until it came to a standstill over the place where the child lay. 10 They were overjoyed at seeing the star and, 11 upon entering the house, found the child with Mary, his mother. They prostrated themselves and paid homage. Then they opened their coffers and presented the child with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

12 They were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so they went back to their own country by another route.

**Reflection – "God is Here, Whether or Not We Notice the Signs" - Rev. Scott Rosenstein**

### **WE RESPOND**

#### **\*Prayer of Response**

**Creator of the Stars, when we look up at the heavens, we know how small we really are, how incredibly insignificant to the rest of the entire universe. We are one tiny speck of dust in a grand universe, precious and fragile. Yet you hold us carefully in your hands. In our fragility, we sometimes lash out at you and others. Remind us how incredibly significant each and every one of us is to you, O God, and to each other. We are precious and awesome and fearfully and wonderfully made by you, our Wondrous Creator. Call us to love one another, to remember how much we are loved, and to build upon the foundation of love that you are creating your kin-dom upon. Amen.**

#### **\*Hymn of Response: Pilgrim Hymnal No. 143 – "We Three Kings of Orient Are"**

#### **Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings**

As the Magi of old, guided by a star in the night sky,  
brought gifts of homage and gratitude,  
so we bring our gifts today.  
May these gifts scatter the shadows of those in need.

#### **The Offertory – *Adam Petrosino***

**\*Presentation of Offerings – Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*Blessing of the Gifts**

**O God, we come to you  
seeking to be as wise  
as the Magi,  
who gave of their  
most precious treasures —  
symbols of the giving  
of themselves  
to the Christ Child.  
May these gifts  
be a source of light  
in places where your light  
and love are needed most.  
Amen.**

**\*Call to Reconciliation**

Why do we huddle in the shadowed corners of life, rather than running to the Light of life? Why do we love the wrong we do rather than grasping the good news offered to us? As we struggle with such questions, let us speak to God of all we have failed to do, seeking hope and grace as we pray,

**\*Responsive Prayer for Forgiveness**

**We search for your light, Star Caster, but too often end up settling for the dimness of temptation. Our motives for seeking to find Christ are not always pure, for we expect him to fulfill our desires, rather than your hopes for us. We want the gifts of wealth, health, success, fulfillment, rather than those of servanthood, of compassion, of peace. Forgive us, Shaper of our lives, that we are so foolish to put our needs ahead of your grace. Help us to be like those wise people of so long ago, who found hope, instead of a destination; who found grace, instead of gratitude; who found salvation, instead of a sign. As we journey with your Only-Begotten, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, fill us with the light of your joy and love.**

*Silence is kept*

**\*Assurance of Forgiveness**

One: Up, on your feet! Grace has been poured into our hearts, love has flooded our souls, the light of hope shines in us.

**All: This is the light which has come to all, the light we will carry and give to everyone we meet.**

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## **HOLY COMMUNION FOR EPIPHANY**

*(We pause to invite those at home who have not already prepared elements to do so. Even an English muffin can become a sacrament, even a cup of water or tea can become a remembrance of God's redeeming love)*

### **Invitation**

One: By the light of the star,  
God led travelers to the Christ child.  
When they saw the child  
they were overwhelmed with joy.

**Many: By the light of divine love,  
God leads us to this holy meal.  
Gathered together,  
we encounter the living Christ  
and taste the deepest joy.**

### **Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

One: People of Advent: God be with you!

**All: And also with you!**

One: People of Christmas, lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift our hearts overwhelmed with grace to the One who was born for us.**

One: People of the Star, offer your joy and thanksgiving to God.

**All: We will offer our praises to the One  
who has revealed glory and hope in the Babe of Bethlehem.**

One:

In that first moment, you spoke,  
Radiant God,  
and the light of creation  
dispelled the thick darkness of chaos.

You whispered,  
and your glory filled the skies.

You sang,  
and the dust of the earth  
was shaped into your image,  
as you breathed life into us.

We could have lived  
in grace and peace with you  
for as long as the sun endures,  
for as long as the moon hangs in the night sky.

But we were tempted



by the sweet taste of sin,  
and overwhelmed with temptation's  
wealth of cheap gifts and thrills.

The prophets were sent  
to tell of your gifts of joy and peace,  
but we listened to the world's news  
of success, power, achievement.  
Finally, in that bleak time of despair,  
you sent Jesus,  
your servant of salvation.

Therefore, we will join our voices  
with the wise ones, as well as the foolish,  
of every time and place  
who forever proclaim your grace:

### **Sanctus**

**Holy, holy, holy, God of bright dawns!  
All creation offers tributes of praise to you.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One who saves the lives of those in need.  
Hosanna in the highest!**

### **Memorial**

One: So, as we remember Christ's birth,  
as we prepare to journey with Christ this year,  
we speak of that mystery called faith,  
which is revealed to us through Christ:

**Many: Christ came, the morning star of love;  
Christ died, the night star of salvation;  
Christ arose, the radiant star of resurrection;  
Christ will come again, the constellation of hope**

### **Words of Remembrance**

#### **Our Table Prayer**

**Holy One of stars and sinners,  
send down your Spirit of hope  
upon those gathered around this Table,  
and on the gifts of the bread and the cup,  
that they might make us  
your faithful and loving children.  
Feed us with the bread of hope,**

so when we leave,  
we will travel another road,  
to defend those who are weak,  
to speak for those who are voiceless,  
to assist those who are cast aside.  
Refresh us with the sweet nectar of grace,  
so we, overwhelmed with joy,  
would go forth  
to enter the houses  
of the strangers in our midst;  
to enter the despair  
of those who are lonely and forgotten;  
to enter the hearts  
of everyone we meet.

And when eternity's time begins  
and we are gathered around your Table,  
with friends and family we loved,  
with those we ignored and mistreated,  
with all our sisters and brothers of grace,  
we will lift our songs of glad joy to you,  
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen

*And now, as beloved children of a loving Parent, we pray:*

**The Lord's Prayer** (*using "debts" and "debtors"*)

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 debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
forever.  
Amen.

**Sharing the Feast of Love**

**The Pouring and Breaking and Serving**

One: The Bread we break is the Bread of Life  
The Cup we Share is the cup of Promise.  
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

**Many: Thanks be to God**

One: Come, for all things are now ready.

**\*Sharing of the Elements**

One: Let us receive the gifts of God, the Bread of Heaven

**Many: We are one in Christ in the bread we share.**

One: Let us receive the gift of the cup of Blessing

**Many: We are one in Christ in the cup we share.**

**\*Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**God of pregnant expectations, God of Christmas promise, God of dawning light, we ate and drank from your table. May the eating and the drinking fill us with hope in a world of despair. May we be beacons of hope as we wait for the day when the world will be changed. Grant that this taste of your banquet which is to come would give us the hunger for peace and justice in our community and around the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

**GOING FORTH**

**\*Closing Hymn: NCH No. 128 – "Brightest and Best"**

**\*Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Now, God sends us out by a different road.

**All: So we may find those who have been left by the side of the world.**

One: Now, Jesus walks with us down a different road.

**All: So we may serve those who are lonely and frightened.**

One: Now, the Spirit illumines a different road.

**All: So we may take our sisters and brothers by the hand  
to walk in wonder and grace. Amen.**

**The Postlude - Adam Petrosino (please be seated for the Postlude)**

\* \* \* \* \*

**Credits**

- (1) The Call to Worship, Invocation, Invitation to Share our Tithes and Offerings, and the Blessing of the Gifts, are adapted from *The Gift of Light from Service Prayers for the Festival of Epiphany - January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022*, written by Debbie Gline Allen Commissioned minister of church formation who serves as Minister of Faith Formation for

Southern New England Conference UCC and Director of the Faith Formation Leadership program.

- (2) The Invitation to Communion is adapted from *Worship Elements: Epiphany Sunday (Option 1)*, by the Rev. Mary Petrina Boyd, pastor of Langley United Methodist Church on Whidbey Island, Washington; From *The Abingdon Worship Annual* edited by Mary J. Scifres and B.J. Beu, Copyright Abingdon Press. Posted December 1, 2018 on the website, *Ministry Matters*. <https://www.ministrymatters.com/>.
- (3) The Preface and Thanksgiving, Sanctus, Memorial, and the Table Prayer are adapted from *Day of Epiphany - ABC*, written by the Rev. Thom M. Shuman, and posted December 29, 2019, on the website, *Lectionary Liturgies*, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com>.
- (4) The Prayer of Thanksgiving is adapted from *The Banquet of Hopeful Expectation – Advent Communion*, written by the Rev. Gord Waldie, Pastor of St. Paul's United Church (of Canada) in Grande Prairie, Alberta, Canada, and posted January 20th, 2008, on the website, *Worship Offerings*, <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.com>
- (5) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Sunday Worship Resources for January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024*, written by the Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, posted December 28th, 2023, on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*, <http://revo-lu-tion.org/>
- (6) The Commissioning and Benediction are adapted from *Liturgy and Communion from January 7th, 2024*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, on the blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (7) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE License #A-736636. All rights reserved

**Ministers: All of Us**  
**Scott Rosenstein, Pastor**  
**Adam Petrosino, Music Director and Pianist**  
**Keith Konet, Council President**  
**Beverly Wurm, Administrative Assistant**



**NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**  
**God is Still Speaking...**

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

**Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont** is committed to reaching out to all people with the saving "Good News" of God's Love. To do this, we strive to attain a covenant relationship with people of all races, colors, ethnic origins, ages, sexual orientations and gender identity. We are also committed to grace-filled inclusivity in our worship, programs, membership, mission and social activities. We very strongly believe in outreach and community involvement, as well as ecumenical spiritual involvement within the surrounding community. We are committed to listening to history while joining with the future.

**Tithes and Offerings** - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ  
c/o Keith Konet  
1039 Bridlewood Drive  
Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

**Music Director/Pianist, Adam D. Petrosino**

Adam can be reached by e-mail at [A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com](mailto:A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com) and by phone at 234.205.9397.

**Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm**

Beverly is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W. 14<sup>th</sup>)/home. The days and hours are:

**Winter Schedule:**

Tuesday– 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: [zionchurchtremont@gmail.com](mailto:zionchurchtremont@gmail.com) or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).

## The Festival of Epiphany and the season that follows...



The Festival of Epiphany is not only marked by a single historical event but also by a series of events tied together by a theme. "Epiphany" means "revelation" or "new understanding," and the biblical stories associated with Epiphany and the season that follows share a common "aha" quality.

The passages include the epiphany of the Magi who come to know the significance of the Messiah's birth, the epiphany of Jesus who embraces his baptism and his life's unique identity and mission, the epiphany of John the Baptizer who identifies Jesus as the

Lamb of God, and the epiphany of the first disciples who leave behind the familiar to explore the radically new. These are all significant personal events of powerful discovery, self-realization, and transformation.

The United Church of Christ, along with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Methodist Church, celebrates on the day of Epiphany, January 6th, (or the Sunday closest) the revelation of Christ to all nations as represented by the Magi who come to worship Jesus. The church calendar recognizes the season of Epiphany from January 6<sup>th</sup> until the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday which is celebrated as the Transfiguration of Christ/Transfiguration of our Lord. The length of the season of Epiphany varies and is determined by working backwards through the season of Lent from the moveable date for the celebration of Easter.

Among the principal themes are: the revelation of Christ to all nations, Jesus' baptism in the River Jordan, and Christ as the light of the world. The colors of the season are white (a color associated with the festivals of Christ and suggesting gladness, joy and light for the day of Epiphany), used the first week after the Epiphany when the Baptism of Christ/Baptism of our Lord is celebrated, and the last week of the season of Epiphany when the Transfiguration of Christ/our Lord is celebrated; and green, reminiscent of living plants and suggests spiritual growth. Green is used in the season of Epiphany beginning with the second week after the Epiphany until the week before the Transfiguration of Christ/Transfiguration of our Lord is celebrated.

These churches use the terms "Time after Epiphany" to describe this period. The expression with "after" has been interpreted as making the period in question correspond to that of Ordinary Time.\*\*

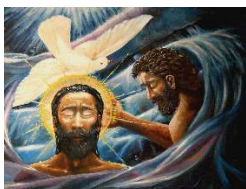
\*\*Ordinary Time refers to two periods of time in the Christian liturgical year that are found in the calendar of the ordinary form of the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, as well as some other churches of Western Christianity, including the Anglican Communion, Methodist churches, Lutheran churches, Old Catholic churches and Reformed churches. In Latin, the name of this time is *Tempus per annum* translated as *time during the year*.

Ordinary Time comprises two periods: the first period begins on Epiphany Day (in the Anglican Communion and Methodist churches) or the day after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (in the Roman Catholic Church) and ends on the day before Ash Wednesday; the second period begins on the Monday after Pentecost, the conclusion of the Easter season, and continues until the Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent.

In some traditions, the first period is celebrated as the Season after Epiphany, and the latter of these periods is observed as the Season after Pentecost. Both of these periods of time, combined, are the longest time in the liturgical year. The weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered. Several Sundays bear the name of feasts or solemnities celebrated on those days, including Trinity Sunday and the Feast of Christ the King/Reign of Christ. The liturgical color normally assigned to Ordinary Time is green.\*\*

### **Upcoming Worship Services:**

- **Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany of Our Lord – Retelling the story of the visit of the Magi – Holy Communion; Following Worship: Taking Down & Packing Up the Advent & Christmas decorations**
- **Sunday, January 14<sup>th</sup>– The Baptism of Christ — Renewal of Baptism**





## Tremont-Duck Island-Irishtown Bend Holiday Food Drive 2023-2024

Running now through January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024

lend a helping hand to neighbors - families and children - in need  
in Tremont, Duck Island, and Irishtown Bend  
and provide help to the 12 local Cleveland food pantries - ministries.

In Round 1 - 259 canned goods/paper products were distributed to several food pantries along with \$16,430 in cash & checks sent to 11 food pantries before the Christmas & New Year's holidays.

Round 2- runs now through Monday, January 15th, 2024 - to re-stock the food pantries following the holidays.

### Three Ways to Donate:

- 1) **Give canned goods & paper products** – deliver to Zion Chapel (2700 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street).
- 2) **Donate online by Credit or Debit Card, Venmo, or PayPal** – visit:  
<https://givebutter.com/HolidayFoodDrive-TRE-DI-IB>  
select the Holmden-Buhrer-Rowley/Mentor-Castle-Clark block clubs or the Auburn-Lincoln Park block club and the food pantry/hunger center you would like your donation to go to
- 3) **Donate by Check** – make payable to the food pantry/hunger center of your choice **\*\***(see list below**\*\***) – for verification purposes, deliver check to Zion Chapel and Pastor Scott will see that it gets to the food pantry you designate.

**Total Collected as of Friday, January , 2024 - \$21,780**

**Goal in Cash/Checks for this food drive: \$25,000**

### Food Pantries – Hunger Center Ministries:

- Immanuel Lutheran Church Food Pantry
- Pilgrim Church Food Pantry
- St. Augustine Hunger Center hot meals program
- St. Malachi Church Back Door Ministry
- The Greater Cleveland Food Bank
- Westside Catholic Center
- St. Augustine Parish food pantry services
- Iglesia Nueva Vida Food Pantry - Comedor comunitario
- Mega Church Resource Center Food Pantry
- Hunger Action Network of Greater Cleveland
- Scranton Road Bible Church Food Pantry
- St. Michael the Archangel Food Pantry - Reparto de Compras

Any questions regarding the Holiday Food Drive contact Scott Rosenstein  
([tremont701@gmail.com](mailto:tremont701@gmail.com) – or call Scott at 216.577.1514 (mobile).

## Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community.
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. We also pray for our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- An armed conflict between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups has been taking place chiefly in and around the Gaza Strip since October 7, 2023, with clashes also taking place in the West Bank and on the Israel–Lebanon border. On that day, militant groups launched a



surprise attack on southern Israel from the Gaza Strip, marking the start of the most significant military escalation in the region since the Yom Kippur War exactly fifty years prior. After clearing Hamas militants from its territory, the Israeli military embarked on an extensive aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip followed by a large-scale ground invasion. The current hostilities constitute the fifth war of the Gaza–Israel conflict, which is part of the broader Israeli–Palestinian conflict and Iran–Israel proxy conflict.

The war began when Hamas-led Palestinian militant groups targeted Israel in an operation they called "Al-Aqsa Flood" with a barrage of rockets, while around 3,000 militants breached the Gaza–Israel barrier and attacked neighboring Israeli communities and military bases. 1,139 people—695 Israeli civilians, 373 soldiers and 71 foreigner nationals —were killed, including an unknown number from friendly fire. Hamas said its attack was in response to "desecration" of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the growth of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and recent violence and clashes there, the blockade of the Gaza Strip, and the plight of Palestinian refugees and prisoners, the latter of whom it sought to free by taking an estimated 250 Israeli and foreign nationals as captives into Gaza as leverage. In response, Israel tightened its blockade, ordered the evacuation of the northern Gaza Strip, and fired over 29,000 munitions at targets in Gaza before and during its ground offensive, with the stated goal of dismantling Hamas's "military and governance capabilities", freeing the hostages, and establishing security control over Gaza.



Over 22,000 Palestinians have been killed, a majority of them civilians, and thousands more are considered missing under the rubble of destroyed buildings. The scale, extent, and pace of this destruction ranks among the most severe in the history of modern warfare. A severe humanitarian crisis has resulted, with the most hospitals out of service, shortages of food and medicine, communications blackouts, and people forced to drink contaminated water. It was widely reported that there was "no safe place in Gaza" as Israel struck areas which it had previously suggested were safer. Israel contends that Hamas, operating in tunnels dug beneath Gaza, uses the civilian population as human shields and diverts humanitarian supplies for military purposes. The widespread civilian deaths have led to both Israel and Hamas being accused of war crimes. Nearly all of Gaza's 2.3 million population and around 500,000 Israelis have been internally displaced, while thousands of Palestinians have been detained by Israel.

- On January 1 2024, an earthquake of magnitude 7.6 on the Richter scale on the Noto Peninsula, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan, caused an intensity 7 (JMA) in Shiga Town, and intensity 6+ and 6- in many municipalities in the Noto Peninsula. Also, a tsunami of almost 4' was observed. There have been numerous aftershocks. The earthquake caused many deaths, injuries, collapsed houses, spreading fires and landslides.

- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 5 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the U.S. as of January 4, 2024

Mass shooting incidents in the U.S.:

2023: 656 (while the number of incidents increased over 2022 - 2023 has shown an 8-10% overall DECREASE in deaths and injuries from gun violence. Some cities are seeing 20%+ decreases).

2022: 646

2021: 689

2020: 610

2019: 414

2018:335

While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit—and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States – We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.

- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health and for wholeness.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments.
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
  - Patti Augustine (*health concerns*) and family. Patti's brother Dave is recovering from recent open-heart surgery.

- Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing at Mapleridge Senior Living Willoughby, OH. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
- The family, loved ones, and friends of Betty Funk.
- Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob – health concerns*)
- Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara Reed, Nancy Moore's sister has passed away and prayer for Nancy's neighbor for healing.
- Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet - prayers for recovery.
- Keith Konet and family.
- Marcia Leslie (*friend – health concerns*)
- The family, loved ones, and friends of Elaine Lukacs.
- Patricia Matheny and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*).
- Our new Music Director/Pianist, Adam Petrosino, and his partner, Kiel.
- Barbara Rossington (*Prayers for Barb for recovery of procedure - & Prayers for Barb's cousin, Robert, for tests and procedures*).
- The family, loved ones, and friends of Henry Senyak.
- Debbie Webb (*continued prayers*)
- Beverly Wurm (*prayers for family*)