Last Sunday in my sermon, I invited you to join me in a daily reading of the Canticle of Confidence AKA Canticle of Zechariah in the Gospel of Luke. If you missed worship (you can always go back and watch via our YouTube channel), I explained that the Canticle is read every morning as a part of the Liturgy of the Hours by many of our Christian cousins. If you are unfamiliar with this section of the Gospel, it's found in Luke 1:68-79. After Zechariah spent 9 months unable to speak, his voice returned following the birth of his son, John (later called the Baptist) and he declared this song of blessing to God. Every morning I’m finding such encouragement in the last two verses, “Such is the tender mercy of our God, Who from on high will bring the Rising Sun to visit us, to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Even as this is an Advent scripture, it’s written in a post-resurrection world. In my sermon, I teasingly said that I loved the play on words: Rising Sun... Jesus as the Risen Son. Get it?

Anyway, in these days that feel so dark and anxious to many; as we make plans for a different kind of holiday season and as we at Community have already recorded everything for Christmas Eve but the homily, the tender mercies of God are indeed given to us and every morning we are offered an illuminating way to live out our day in the way of peace - certainly reassuring as we try to navigate these days. I’m relishing these verses even as I wrote my own version, which several of you asked for. So, per your request…

Emmanuel. God with us, we are grateful that you come to dwell among us and draw us closer to you. You have acted in the world in ancient times and you are acting in the world today. We are confident in that promise so we serve you without fear.

Your compassion, O God, is so faithful that it can be as trusted as the sun coming up every day. This morning, we are reminded and again reassured that the sun brings its light without our help or effort. And it is with that promise of consistency that we know your light is always before us to guide us in your ways of peace. O Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Dear Ones, the Advent season is about grounding ourselves in the Light. Choosing to embody that Light and allow it to shine through us. Just as Mary did and as we hear her encouraging us to do as well in her Magnificat - just a few verses earlier in Luke 1:46-55. I’ll share my personal cliff notes of that song in worship on the December 22, but until then we are still together in prayer. Sharing in these ancient prayers. Zechariah’s in the morning. Mary’s in the evening. May our ancient foreparents inspire us as we seek to be co-creators of birthing Emmanuel into the world once again.

Rev. Shanna

Christmas Eve Services

Our Christmas Eve services will kick-off at 10 a.m. on December 24 with our Children and Family Service. Rev. Suzanne will guide our youngest members and their families in a short service based on her regular faith formation videos. This will be a 10-15 minute
time that can model for our families at home how to celebrate the evening together faithfully. It will be hard for our littles to sit for an hour-long worship service in their living room as they anxiously await their bedtime! Rev. Suzanne will gather her family around the Advent wreath to tell the Christmas story, and sing a carol or two. This will be ideal not just for our own littles but for any grandparent or auntie who might want to pass it along to a child with whom they often spend the season.

Our **4 p.m.** service will be **Christmas Eve with All that Jazz**. This service will feature the advent candle lighting and the traditional scriptures, but all the music will be led by some of Kansas City's favorite musicians, including our own Tim Whitmer. It will be a Kansas City Jazz service that swings the evening into high gear.

Our **7 p.m.** service will be our **Classic Christmas at Community**. It's a service of lessons and carols, with music led by our choir section leaders guiding us through the traditional hymns and featuring our beautiful organ. We'll enjoy a few magical moments with special guest musicians and you'll want to make sure you have a candle close at hand.

The main difference between these services will be the musical style, but of course, you are welcome to share in both. There will be special surprise moments brought to you through the magic of digital technology that we hope will add an element of holy magic to this very unusual experience. We look forward to celebrating Christmas Eve with you even in this new and unique way!

---

### Christmas Eve Offering

Christmas Eve is a story about a family that couldn't find a place to stay and was forced to depend on the generosity of strangers. This Christmas season we'll have the opportunity to share our generosity with folks in our own city who can't find "a room in the inn." Our lay leadership has worked with our staff to commit the entirety of our Christmas Eve offering to support our ministry partners at Artists Helping the Homeless. You'll hear more about their work during our Christmas Eve service from their founder and friend of Community, Kar Woo. We hope you will give generously to this important ministry.

---

### Wish Upon a Star Gift Return

If you signed up to sponsor a child through Cornerstones of Care's Wish Upon A Star program, the last chance to return gifts is this Saturday! All gifts should be unwrapped with tags attached to each item that lists the child's name and ID number. Gifts can be delivered directly to Cornerstones’ Holiday Hub (9038 Metcalf Ave, Overland Park, KS 66212) today, December 10 from 4 to 7 p.m., or Saturday, December 12 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you need help getting gifts to the Holiday Hub let us know ASAP. Thank you to everyone who generously signed up to make Christmas wishes come true for KC area children in foster care!

---

### Not So Silent Night Christmas Concert

Community's "Not So Silent Night" Christmas concert is coming up next Friday, December 18, at 7 p.m. on Facebook and YouTube! We're producing this special virtual concert featuring the talents of our musical friends the Justin Binek Trio, Three Trails West, Havilah Bruders, as well as Community’s own Tim Whitmer, Aden Eilts, Bill Langley and Beth Bohon, and other favorite KC musicians performing the songs of the season. You can watch the concert premiere live with us and then go back and enjoy the music in your own home throughout the week as you prepare for Christmas Day. Check out a special sneak peak of the concert in the video below!
Community's Christmas Variety Show

Rev. Suzanne is working with our children and families to put together a variety show to celebrate and retell the story of Jesus' birth! Everyone is encouraged to participate by submitting a video that's under four minutes long. Videos can include artwork, music, reenacting the Christmas story, or sharing poems or carols. Be as creative as you want! For those participating please submit your videos here by December 17. We will edit them to make one amazing Community Christmas Variety Show and premiere it in a Zoom watch party that all are invited to on December 22 at 5:30 p.m. If you have questions or need help coming up with video ideas reach out to Rev. Suzanne!

Join us for the "Longest Night"

As we continue to journey through an Advent season more laden with grief than we could hope, we recognize that opportunities to spend time in worship holding our pain are important. Recently our clergy staff have befriended a group called “The Many,” a progressive liturgical collective that holds special worship opportunities online for people all over the world. On Wednesday, December 16, we are sponsoring a “Longest Night” worship service, which they will lead at 8 p.m. on Zoom. We invite you to join your spirit with our pastoral staff as we watch and pray together during that time. If you’d like to participate in the service, you will need to register by clicking here. Let Rev. Shanna or Rev. Ryan know that you’ll be there so we can be on the lookout for you.

This Sunday at Community

This Sunday, December 13, we will join together in worship looking at scripture from Matthew 1.

Online Giving

If you'd like to give offering donations to the church during this time, you can mail donations to the church. Mail is still being checked daily and your gifts are gratefully
received. If you’d like to give online, you may do so in one of two ways:

- Visit bit.ly/c4kcgive
- Text the word "Give" to 816-484-3433 and follow the instructions that are sent to you. The first time you text to give you'll have to set up an account, but from there on out your information will be stored so you can easily text to give.

There will also be a QR code shown during livestreamed worship that will take you directly to the website listed above to donate. Links can also be found in the livestreamed worship comments and on our website.

---

**Connect with us online throughout the week!**

**Sunday**

- 9 a.m. Sunday School for all ages on Zoom
  - bit.ly/steitzss
- 10 a.m. Piano prelude with Jonathon Antle on Facebook and YouTube
- 10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook and YouTube

**Thursday**

- Newsletter email sent

**Saturday**

- 8 a.m. Saturday Sit with Shanna on Zoom
  - bit.ly/saturdaysit

Sign up times are available to walk the labyrinth and spend private or family time in the chapel almost every day. Click here to sign up or call 816-718-7327 to check availability for same day sign ups.

---

**Prayers of Sorrow and Thanksgiving**

Please hold the following members of our Community in your prayers:

- Marce Ireland;
- Virgil Freeman, cousin of Kevin Freeman;
- Katie Freeman, aunt of Kevin Freeman;
- Lyn Yzaguirre, sister of Lura Cayton;
- Marilyn and Milton Gray;
- David Anderson;
- Peter Voss, great-nephew of Donna and Scott Duschen;
- Carol Dollar

**Congratulations to Will Evans on the birth of his son Lucas Adonis Zion Evans!**  
Baby Lucas was born on November 25, weighing 7 pounds 5 ounces. We’re happy to celebrate with the Evans family during this exciting time.

---

**Kara Strickler**

*Communications Coordinator | Community Christian Church*

kara@community-christian.org | www.community-christian.org

4601 Main Street, KCMO 64112 | (816) 561-6531