



Sunday, December 13, 2020

Online Worship

“Raise your voice... do not be afraid.” —

The Messenger

Advent 3

I Believe in God: Ode to Joy

GUESTS, Welcome to worship. To learn more about us, please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unionneffs . If you would like us to follow up with you contact Pastor Kris at 610-767-6961, pastorkris@unionucc.org

NEW MEMBERS: For more information email Pastor Kris. pastorkris@unionucc.org or call the church office to speak to her.

We believe in extravagant welcome. We believe in God’s inclusive love. We start worship with a greeting that reflects that welcome and love.

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PRELUDE

Joy to the World
Minnich family

Send us videos of you and your loved ones singing your favorite Christmas songs.

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

L No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey and faith's journey

C You are welcome here.

CALL TO WORSHIP I Believe Mark A. Miller

L This week, we turn to Luke's writing, which is an account in two acts: the Gospel biography of Jesus and then the story of the early church—the "Jesus community." Whether you were a Jew or Gentile in those days, deciding to become a part of this illegal early Christian movement could bring punishment for your allegiance. Surely the message in both Luke and Isaiah that the downcast, lowly, and oppressed would rise up is a welcome and inspirational account. Like the Jewish exiled people of Isaiah's time and like the early Christians, we also sometimes wonder where God is in our suffering. We long to hear the promise that a reason for joyful praise is the good news on the way!

SOLO: Abby Hill

I believe in God, I believe in God,
even when, even when God is silent.

SOLO/CHOIR: I believe in God, I believe in God,
even when, even when God is silent.

Reader 1 : The loneliness of fear

Reader 2: The loneliness of fear

Reader 1: The invisibility of the next step

Reader 2: The invisibility of the next step

Reader 1: The yearning for presence

Reader 2: The yearning for presence

PRAYER

Holy One,

we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of the depths of joy.

Even in the midst of fear,
of challenge, of struggle—
even when we are not sure
of your presence,
ignite the flame of joy within us,

**ALL: ... that we might glow with its brilliance
from the inside out.**

ALL (SUNG):

I believe in God,

I believe in God,

even when... even when...

God is silent.

D Help us face the silence of unknowing
and embrace it as the pregnant pause before joyful new
beginnings.

Amen.

If you have an advent wreath at home, or a candle, you are
invited to light your candle of **JOY** at this time.

***Hymn** Angels We Have Heard on High
Hymns for the Family of God - Gold Hymnal 192

**1. Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly swinging o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains**

[Chorus]
Gloria In Excelsis Deo
Gloria In Excelsis Deo

2. Shepherds why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

[Chorus]

3. Come to Bethlehem and see
Him Whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King

[Chorus]

Passing the Peace

You are invited to turn toward those who are with you or to face toward your screen and bow, offer the peace sign, or use sign language for “peace.”

Children’s Time to Shine

This Little Light of Mine with Mrs. Maryann Puia

This Little Light of Mine is a song that turns 100 years old this year! A woman named Fannie Lou Hamer sang it on a bus one day that had been stopped by police and it became a very important song that was sung a lot during the Civil Rights movement when some people wanted to dim the light of African Americans by not letting them vote in elections. As we all learn more about the importance of music in making the world a better place, we are going to highlight this song! There are four verses and we are going to learn one each week.

Isaiah Scripture Reading

Isaiah 57: 14-19 (CEB)

It will be said: “Survey, survey; build a road!

Remove barriers from my people's road!"
The one who is high and lifted up,
who lives forever, whose name is holy, says:
I live on high, in holiness,
and also with the crushed and the lowly,
reviving the spirit of the lowly,
reviving the heart of those who have been crushed.

I won't always accuse,
nor will I be enraged forever.
It is my own doing that their spirit is exhausted—
I gave them breath!
I was enraged about their illegal profits;
I struck them; in rage I withdrew from them.
Yet they went on wandering wherever they wanted.
I have seen their ways, but I will heal them.
I will guide them,
and reward them with comfort.

And for those who mourn,
I will create reason for praise:
utter prosperity to those far and near,
and I will heal them, says the Lord.

Gospel Scripture Reading

Luke 1: 1-4; 26-56 (CEB)

Many people have already applied themselves to the task of compiling an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used what the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed down to us. Now, after having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, I have also decided to write a carefully ordered account for you, most honorable Theophilus. I want you to have confidence in the soundness of the instruction you have received...

When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David's house. The virgin's name was Mary. When the angel

came to her, he said, "Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!" She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, "Don't be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob's house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen since I haven't had sexual relations with a man?"

The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God's Son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled 'unable to conceive' is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God."

Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Mary got up and hurried to a city in the Judean highlands. She entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. With a loud voice she blurted out, "God has blessed you above all women, and he has blessed the child you carry. Why do I have this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. Happy is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill the promises he made to her."

Mary said,
"With all my heart I glorify the Lord!
In the depths of who I am I rejoice in God my savior.
He has looked with favor on the low status of his servant.

Look! From now on, everyone will consider me highly favored because the mighty one has done great things for me.

Holy is his name. He shows mercy to everyone, from one generation to the next, who honors him as God. He has shown strength with his arm. He has scattered those with arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.

He has pulled the powerful down from their thrones and lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty-handed.

He has come to the aid of his servant Israel, remembering his mercy, just as he promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and to Abraham's descendants forever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her home.

Reflection I Believe in God: Ode to Joy

Pastor Kris Snyder-Samuels

FILM FESTIVAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

(See the details of reflections, activities and prayers in the care package you received from the Pastors and Staff.)

Family Film Festival: Frosty the Snowman

Adult Film Festival: [Following The Ninth: In](#) The Footsteps of Beethoven's Final Symphony

Watch the trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_FWoRn4xrM

Filmed on four continents, this documentary film looks at the global impact of Beethoven's hymn to humanity, his battle cry of freedom, his Ninth Symphony. The Ninth was at Tianamen Square in the Spring of 1989 during the student revolt. The same year, when the Berlin Wall came down, the Ninth was

there to amplify the celebrations. Under the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, women marched on torture prisons with the Ode To Joy as inspiration. And in Japan, the Ninth was there to repair and heal after the devastating Tsunami of 2011. Following The Ninth is both inspirational and hard-hitting, and a testament of hope.

A Litany of Belief

In times when humanity disappoints, perhaps when even our own thoughts and behaviors disappoint, it is an important act to call out, name and claim, the consequences of our wrongs. And in times of distress it is a prophetic act to call out, name and claim, our belief in the hope for tomorrow. What are your statements of belief in this time and place?

Leader: I believe that we have sometimes been silent in the face of injustice AND

People: I believe that we are capable of raising our voices and insisting on goodness for all.

Leader: I believe that we have been afraid of feeling deeply, making our joy small AND

People: I believe that the deep joy of community can always be present, even in hard times.

Leader: I believe that sometimes we wonder if we can make a difference AND

People: I believe that small acts of kindness and help do make a real difference.

Leader: We believe, even when we are discouraged.

People: We believe, that when we are discouraged, raising our voices for justice will offer us joy!

Prayers in the Stillness

In the Stillness Lindy Thompson, Mark Miller

Soloist: **Abby Hill**

Leader: I invite you to get in a comfortable position of rest. I invite you to get as quiet and still as you can. I invite you to a deep breath and a deep listening posture—perhaps eyes closed or fixed on a candle—as we prepare for a time of prayer.

SOLO: The gentle pull of God
is often lost amidst the rush
of all the obligations which lay a claim on us.

Yet just beyond the frantic pace
our restless feet have trod
lie deep still pools of quietness—
the dwelling place of God.

Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive

O take me to that secret place
where lost in wonder and in awe,
the moment comes and I rejoice
to be and be with God.

Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive

ALL Sung Coda:

**Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive,
to receive.**

Offering Announcement and Opportunities to “Fill the Night” with Hope

Donate to God’s Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC

OFFERING ENVELOPES you can mail your envelopes to the church. The church address is on one side, just add a stamp.

ELECTRONIC GIVING This is a great time to try e-giving! Choose a weekly, semi-monthly or monthly donation to be transferred electronically. Fill out the form at <http://www.unionucc.org/egive.pdf> and return it to the church office. financialmanager@unionucc.org

DONATE ONLINE with your Credit or Debit Card
Go to <http://www.unionucc.org/resources/giving-and-sponsorship/ways-to-give/> and click **GIVE ONLINE**.

AMAZON SMILE Donate to Union UCC, Neffs (Search by zip code 18065) while you shop at Amazon. <https://smile.amazon.com>.

MUSIC OFFERING

Thankful David Foster, Carole Bayer Sager & Richard Page
Julie Wehr

WE GO FORTH

Carol of Resistance

📍 As you will witness in our documentary this week, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, which is the basis of the tune for our hymn “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee,” has been a powerful witness to the human spirit to overcome adversity in many instances around the globe. British punk rock star, Billy Bragg, once wrote an alternative translation of the original German choral score for a school teacher to teach the children in her classroom, and it soon became a popular anthem, even being performed for the Queen. In these words you can hear the call to resist division, to raise our voices, to “furnish every heart with joy and banish all hatred for good.”

*“See now like a Phoenix rising
from the rubble of the war
hope of ages manifested
peace and freedom evermore.
Brothers, sisters stand together,
raise your voices now as one.
Though by history divided,
reconciled in unison.*

*Throw off now the chains of ancient
bitterness and enmity.
And in hand let’s walk together
on the path of liberty.
Hark...a new dawn is breaking;
raise your voices now as one.
Though by history divided,
reconciled in unison.*

*What’s to be then all my brothers,
sisters; what is in your hearts?
Tell me now the hopes you harbour,
What’s the task and where to start.
... Those speak ten million voices;
every word is understood.
Furnish every heart with joy
and banish all hatred for good.”*

**Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You
4 New Century Hymnal - Black**

**Joyful, joyful, we adore you,
God of glory, God of love;
Hearts unfold like flow’rs before you,
Op’ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness,
Fill us with the light of day!**

**All your works with joy surround you,
Earth and heav'n reflect your rays,
Stars and angels sing around you,
Center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,
Singing bird and flowing fountain
Teach us what our praise should be.**

**You are giving and forgiving,
Ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living,
Ocean depth of happy rest!
Loving Spirit, Father, Mother,
All who love belong to you;
Teach us how to love each other,
by that love our joy renew.**

Benediction

Leader: We wait for justice
but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health
but we do not wait to work to heal;

We wait for wholeness
but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;

We wait for peace
but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news
that God is ever-present with us, fill the night left by
sadness with messages of joy.

Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that joy
alive in you and that spur you on in your work of justice and
reconciliation. Raise your voices and repeat after me...

“do not be afraid!”

ALL: “do not be afraid!”

Amen!

Postlude

I Believe Handchime Benediction Mark A. Miller/
Stephanie Rhoades

Chimers: Sandy Daumer, Veronica Fabian, Susan Glosan, Dan Haftl, Bonnie Herzog, Carol Pope, Ron Pope, Debbie Romig and Tami Wassum.

Director: Edie Fella

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EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)	
Last Week	\$6,895
Calendar 2020 (Jan-Nov.)	\$327,195
Calendar 2019 (Jan-Nov)	\$343,061
Change from Last Year	-4.6%
Budget (July-Nov)	\$159,210
Actual (July-Nov)	\$144,178
Giving vs. Budget	-9.4%
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

2020 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food	
Last Week:	1,470lbs
Total YTD:	7,666 lbs, \$3,490

Christmas Mission
\$372

SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS SPONSORS:

Your support is especially important now as we work to provide spiritual care and connection for members and the community through Facebook posts, ads, and online worship.

Be a sponsor for \$20, send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News.

Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.