



**Christmas Eve Week
Worship in the Sanctuary
December 20 at 1pm
December 22 at 7pm
December 23 at 7pm**

*“Raise your voice... do not be afraid.”
— The Messenger
We Believe...*

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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C = Congregation L = Leader P = Pastor
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Thank you for wearing a mask and practicing at least 6 feet of social distancing.

As you arrive, please visit the welcome tables to:

- 1. Sign In – we will verify your name and phone number.**
- 2. Get a paper bulletin of the service or you can view it on your phone at :**



3. Share your offerings. We will not be collecting your offerings during the service. Please plan to share them at the welcome table as you arrive. Thank you for being the church wherever you are.

4. Pick up a candle and a bag of communion elements. 1 for each person.

PRELUDE

What Child Is This (Greensleeves) Traditional
Blake Hoppes

WELCOME and ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

🕒 You are welcome here.

Directions for Communion: Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.

In the sanctuary: Please pick up your bag of Communion elements at the sign in tables.

At Home: Since we are worshipping virtually we invite you to take communion virtually.

Please find a cracker, piece of bread or something to

represent the body of Christ. And please find some juice, wine or water to represent the blood of Christ.

CALL TO WORSHIP

L Throughout Advent we have proclaimed hope, love, joy, and peace in the midst of difficulty. This is the church’s gift to the world—that our faith story is grounded in the presence of God that came and dwelt among us in the midst of hardship.

The music theme for this series features the poetry of an anonymous Jewish person during the Holocaust. These words were found scrawled on a wall and have now been shared with the world, reminding us of the resilience of hope. May we never forget what can happen when evil is allowed to go unchecked and may we always use our music, our art, our poetry, even our simple acts of kindness, as inspiration to create goodness, not evil, in this world.

- December 20 at 1pm **Jason Klinger**
- December 22 at 7pm **Jacob Roth**
- December 23 at 7pm **Abby Kern**

Solo: I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it’s not shining.

I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it’s not shining.

- Leader: Even when the sun is hidden from sight
- Leader: Even when the sun is hidden from sight
- Leader: Even when love feels so remote
- Leader: Even when love feels so remote
- Leader: Even when God is silent
- Leader: Even when God is silent
- Leader: Even then...
- Leader: Even then...

Leader: We believe
Leader: We believe

Leader: We believe in the presence of Emmanuel—God with us.

This is when we celebrate that the Holy came in human form to be light in our lives...
to speak to us, touch us, comfort us, and call us.

ALL (SUNG):

**I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it's not shining.**

PRAYER

Leader:
Holy One,
we thank you for the glimpse of heaven on earth
In the faces and the light of those around us.
Even in the midst of fear,
of challenge, of struggle—
even when our view is obscured
by clouds of doubt,
You have ignited the flame of hope, love, joy, and peace
within us.

**ALL: Let us glow with its brilliance
from the inside out. Amen.**

O Come All Ye Faithful (recording)

Jacob Roth, Organ

Mitchell Roth, Trumpet

Ⓛ As we head into the longest nights of the year, we gather, mindful of the losses that have multiplied throughout the year.

As we look back at it all at once, we are in danger of being overwhelmed by its tragedies—
sickness, violence, fire, hurricane, earthquake, and more.
Our aim is to acknowledge this, to mourn this,

and to know that in all of this,
there is the possibility of more light.
If we are to be overwhelmed,
let it be that we are overwhelmed with the assurance that we
are not alone.

We are able to do this because the longest night is the birth
canal for ever-more-light
as the days now lengthen and we wait for the springtime of
new life.
Some of our earliest evidence is that our ancient ancestors
saw this night
and the dawn of tomorrow as the appropriate time to honor
their lost loved ones.
It was this moment that symbolized most powerfully that the
path
to everlasting life is filled with the light of a new and growing
dawn.

Psalm 36:9 says, "Within You is the spring of life; in your
light, we see light."

As we light our advent wreath, may we be assured that even
in darkness the light is still there. When we feel as if our
light is dimmed, we can rely on the Holy Light to continue to
shine until we ourselves shine bright once more.

We are not alone.

MUSIC OFFERING

In the Bleak Midwinter Gustav Theodore Holst
Blake Hoppes

Prayers for More Light

🕯 We mourn the loss of life.
For so many, the pandemic has taken loved ones.
We mourn the loss of those close to us and those whose
names we do not know.

We mourn those who perished while working to save other lives.

We mourn those who died, not of pandemic, but of other causes.

And we mourn the loss, in many cases, of our ability to be with them as they passed, our loss of gathering together for comfort in the ways we needed so much.

I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of life.

ALL: We mourn this loss of life.

We honor and remember these beloveds.

ALL: We honor and remember these beloveds.

We pray for comfort and peace.

ALL: We pray for comfort and peace.

Amen.

Amen.

L We the loss of livelihoods.

For so many, the pandemic has taken the security of food, shelter, care for families, and medical care.

We mourn the loss of businesses that could not withstand the circumstances.

These were not just businesses, but dreams born of passion and hard work.

We mourn those who find themselves needing to rely on others for help

when what they really want to do is to be able to help others.

I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of livelihood.

ALL: We mourn this loss of livelihood.

We honor and remember the dreams now deferred.

ALL: We honor and remember the dreams now deferred.

We pray for sustenance and resilience.

ALL: We pray for sustenance and resilience.

Amen.

Amen.

① We mourn the loss of love.

Our society's dilemma, centuries in the making, has created such hatred, suffering, oppression, and ill-will.

We mourn the loss of those whose lives were lost to brutality and violence.

We mourn the loss of our ability to love one another despite our differences, as beings who deserve to be seen for their inherent beauty and worth.

We mourn the pandemic of racism, division, and hatred that still plagues the fabric of our communities.

I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of love.

ALL: We mourn this loss of love.

We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.

ALL: We honor and remember the work of prophets who proclaim justice.

We pray for compassion and change.

ALL: We pray for compassion and change.

Amen.

Amen.

① We mourn the loss of liveliness.

For so many, this year has robbed us of our energy, our enthusiasm, and our sense of well-being.

We mourn teachers and leaders and caregivers and workers

who are struggling to help those in their care, themselves exhausted and needing the sustenance they give to others.

We mourn the loss of all who are suffering with anxiety and depression,
who are finding it difficult to live each day with fullness or to find hope for tomorrow.

We mourn those we have lost to suicide.

We mourn those who find themselves addicted to substances in order to ease the pain that feels unbearable.

We mourn those who are experiencing their place of shelter as an abusive place from which they struggle to escape.

I invite you to repeat after me:

We mourn this loss of liveliness.

ALL: We mourn this loss of liveliness.

We honor and remember that each person is precious and whole.

ALL: We honor and remember that each person is precious and whole.

We pray for recovery and renewed vigor.

ALL: We pray for recovery and renewed vigor.

Amen.

Amen.

L We believe in the Light that has come and is coming. This light casts its glow on all the surrounding prayers we have prayed.

This light resides within us, perhaps dim for a time, but always lit—an ember of the Holy inside us.

This light reminds us that we are not alone.

Silent Night Franz Gruber (recording)

December 20 at 1pm Jacob Roth

December 22 at 7pm Abby Kern

December 23 at 7pm Abby Hill

Please light Your Candles

A Celebration of Communion

Directions for Communion: Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.

In the sanctuary: Please pick up your bag of Communion elements at the sign in tables.

At Home: Since we are worshipping virtually we invite you to take communion virtually.

Please find a cracker, piece of bread or something to represent the body of Christ. And please find some juice, wine or water to represent the blood of Christ.

L On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

Blessing

L Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and fruit of the vine. Make them be for us your love and light so that our hearts may be broken open for the world and our lives poured out in service.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world.

Mix our voices in harmony with each other
until we sit at the same table
and sing in the same choir
in your Kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven.

Please take your communion at home so that we don't need to take our masks off.

The Lord's Prayer (In Unison)

**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.**

The Witness of Music

LFor all of Advent, we have called on the power of music that inspires those who hear it to a brighter tomorrow. It has been a difficult time in this pandemic for singing to be restricted. In its absence, we have been reminded just how important it is to sing together. Indeed, music has often been the soundtrack of hope. We enjoyed a season of music *appreciation*—as well as reflection on the power of music. We watched documentaries that told courageous stories of people singing as witness to light in the midst of poverty, death camps, protests, disasters, and the oppressive bonds of enslavement. We have filled the night of loss and discouragement with music and light—by taking our singing outside in socially-distanced ways.

We have also been presented with Carols of Resistance that have been sung as commentary on injustice. Today we bring you another. It is a song you will no doubt have heard on other Christmas Eve nights. But this time, listen with a new appreciation. Written in France by Placide Cappeau with melody by Adolphe Adams, the song was banned from church

services when Cappeau's theology was deemed heretical (some called him an atheist) and Adams' music was labeled as "Jewish" (the ultimate insult in Christian circles at a time when Gregorian chant was having a resurgence). Further, the song's message of humility and shared humanity went against the late 19th century idea that slaves did not have souls. Even though the church in France tried to kill the song, the American abolitionist and Unitarian minister, John Sullivan Dwight, made it popular in the Civil War era with its third verse proclaiming a radical message:

*"Truly he taught us to love one another;
his law is love and his gospel is peace.
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother;
and in his name all oppression shall cease."*

Someday, we will once again be able to join our full voices in song in our sanctuary. We will sing as never before. For now we allow this song to be a prayer of hope that we will destroy the inequity that still haunts us.

O Holy Night Adolphe Adam (recording)
Jillian Krempasky

Benediction

❶ I invite you to raise your candle high for the benediction.

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 Christ is born among us,
fill the night left by sadness with messages of hope, love,
joy, and peace.
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that light
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!

Merry Christmas!

**Enjoy the Lights in the Grove, they will be on every night
until the end of December.**

**Please wait for the ushers to dismiss you from the
sanctuary.**

Postlude (recording)

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

Worship Notes

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www.worshipdesignstudio.com.

Thank you to all who helped to make our Advent and Christmas so meaningful. Thank you to everyone who helped clean and decorate our sanctuary, church, and grove. Thank you to those who served as choir members, musicians, acolytes, ushers, and worship participants.

Thank you to our staff, Consistory, and leaders for giving your time and talents so generously. Merry Christmas!

Decorations: Thank you Claire Kern, Kathy Bonsell, Deb Wenner, Deb Topp, Pastors Kris and Kayli, The Worship Committee: Edie Fella, Susan Glosan, Ron Pope, Julie Wehr.