

Sundays, December 4, 11, and 18 at 8am and 10:30am

Friday, December 23 at 7pm, Christmas Eve Worship Candlelight and Communion

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve Worship

3pm Candlelight and Communion

5pm Children's Choir, No Communion

8pm Candlelight and Communion

Sunday, December 25 Christmas Day No 8am Worship, Only 10:30am Worship

Sunday, January 1 New Year's Day No 8am Worship, Only 10:30am Worship

Sunday, January 8 8am and 10:30am Worship with Communion, Young Adult Sunday

Pick up a copy of the book *Everything Is Sacred* for inspirational daily readings.

Copies are in the lobby on Sundays or in the bin on the South side entrance during the week.

## **Sunday, December 18th, 2022 8:00am and 10:30am Worship Advent 4: Sacred Knowing**

***GUESTS, Welcome to our faith community here at Union UCC. To learn more about us please visit our website at [www.unionucc.org](http://www.unionucc.org) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/unionneffs](http://www.facebook.com/unionneffs).***

*Please complete the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it in with your offering or give it to a pastor. This is a good way to let us know you're here.*

***One of our core values as a church is extravagant welcome and hospitality. We believe in God's inclusive love. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.***

Lay Reader: 8:00 Rosalie Snyder, 10:30 Donna Christman

Ushers: 8:00 Debbie Romig, Connie Gioielli, Dixie Gross

10:30 Donna Christman, Brian Horwith, Deb Wenner, Dan Haftl, Maryann Puia, Eric Minnich, Gloria Toner, Carol Stout

Sound: Mike Baer

**\*Please stand in body or spirit.**

**Gathering Music**  
**Old English Carol, arr. Billy McLaughlin**  
**Mike Baer, guitar**

**Reflecting the Sacred**

*The shiny additions to our Advent and Christmas visuals remind us that we are called to reflect the sacred each and every day. "Incarnation" is a word that means that God's presence came to dwell among all people, and we believe this happened in a special way in the birth of Jesus. All creation has always been imbued with the Creator's brilliance. This season, we will remember the call to shine with this holy light.*

**Welcome**

***When you arrived here this morning, you received a cotton ball with olive oil on it. For those of you worshiping with us at home, please take a moment to grab a little olive oil from the kitchen or some lotion from your bathroom cabinet.***

***Online worshipers – you might like to have a candle nearby to light.***

**Crossing the Threshold**

*Leader: These times of quiet contemplation are not just good for the soul, they are good for the body and the mind. Today we focus on the Sacred Knowing that can happen when we allow ourselves to go deeper, inward, to a place of quiet where we can imagine the voice of Sacred Knowing saying to us, "do not be afraid." And so let us begin our worship again with settling in and slowing down.*

I invite you to get comfortable where you are sitting, simply finding a posture that is most relaxing for you. This week I invite you to open one hand upward in your lap and let the other one touch your chest where your heart lies beneath. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so. Take a deep, intentional breath in and out. If you are still thinking about what you need to do when you leave this place or the online worship ends, it's OK. Don't judge it... just take another breath and "thank and excuse" for just a moment the urge in your brain to do its usual planning ahead. That's it. Take time to settle in.

Imagine that particles of light, glinting in the sun, are showering you gently in slow motion. Their reflection dances on your face and skin. They begin to coalesce on the hand you have placed over your heart. When they have concentrated there, these light refractions begin to "slip through your fingers"—between your fingers, finding their way to surround your heart. They begin to drop down to your belly and expand upwards filling you all the way to the top of your head ... and now down to your toes. You are filled with light, and you see that there is nothing to fear by spending time examining the depths of all that is within you. You are not alone. Let this reflection of light be an anointing of peace for seeing your own inward journey through the lens of the Sacred. Continue to just breathe, listen, and see with your heart.

SOLO or CHOIR:  
Upon this moment,  
upon this people,  
upon this place,  
the holy comes.  
And sacred knowing  
brings sacred being  
for sacred doing of God's plan.

Take one more deep breath and open your eyes slowly.

Readers:

**8:00 Connie Gioelli**

**10:30 Brynn, Jon, Nolan, Reid, and Wesley Buskirk**

Readers:

Please repeat after me [us]:

We pray for Joy this day.

**We pray for Joy this day.**

We open to see the Sacred reflected in all things.

**We open to see the Sacred reflected in all things.**

We open to see each place

**We open to see each place**

as a gift of holy presence.

**as a gift of holy presence.**

This is the gift of the Christ Mystery,

**This is the gift of the Christ Mystery,**

lighting the way to joy.

**lighting the way to joy.**

**ALL (sung):**

**Upon this moment,**

**upon this people,**

**upon this place,**

**the holy comes.**

**And sacred knowing**

**brings sacred being**

**for sacred doing of God's plan.**

## **Prayer**

*Leader:*

Living God, Christ Mystery, Spirit of Peace,  
we give you thanks for this holy sensing of your presence.

As we take in the peace you offer,  
may we be a reflection of your light,  
expanding the sacred knowing of "you are here for me"  
into the sacred knowing of "you are present for all of us."

**Amen.**

## **Sharing God's Light**

*Leader:* One of our core values as God's church here in  
Neffs is extravagant welcome.

So repeat after me - No matter who you are or where you  
are on life's journey,

**ALL: No matter who you are or where you are on life's  
journey,**

*Leader:* you are welcome here.

**ALL: You are welcome here.**

*Leader:* Please stand in body or spirit to greet each other  
and to share God's light with one another.

We send our love and light to those watching and  
listening at home or during the week.

**\*Opening Hymn #192 Angels We Have Heard on High**  
(Gold Hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God)

**1. Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,  
And the mountains in reply  
Echo back their joyous strains.**

**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?**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo**

**3. Come to Bethlehem and see  
Him whose birth the angels sing;  
Come adore, on bended knee,  
Christ the Lord, the new born King.**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo**

Please be seated.

### **Refracting the Sacred**

*Leader: As light passes through a medium, it can be redirected in ways that make its brilliance more visible, as in a prism. As we encounter the message today, we see the world and our own lives and loved ones in a different light, one that invites us to know more deeply the sacred nature of all things.*

### **10:30 Worship – Time for Children**

**Education Hour for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am**

**Children's Church – during 10:30am Worship for  
ages 3-grade 5.**

Ms. Tiffany would like to invite children to join her and her volunteers for Sunday School at 9:15 and Children's Church during 10:30am service.

**TODAY: Pastors invite children forward for a Children's Time and then they leave with Ms. Tiffany for a time designed just for them!**

Children will be in the basement and will return before worship is over. If worship ends early, parents are welcome to meet their children downstairs.

**Children's Time**

**All: (Sung)**  
**We reflect a sacred light,**  
**Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.**  
**Shining through the darkest night.**  
**Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.**  
**Like the shining stars above,**  
**Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la.**  
**We can beam God's light and love,**  
**Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.**

### **10:30 Music Offering**

**All I Want for Christmas is You** Mariah Carey

**Ben Anderson**

### **Introduction to Scripture**

*Reader:* Many of us look for signs to help us know what to do, or we wish we could have our own personal angel visit us to let us know the “right” next steps. Uncertainty is a fact of life—this seems ever more true. This week we will remember that there is a Christ within us constantly birthing wisdom and a deep knowing if we will but listen with a contemplative heart. Let us seek out quiet in order to hear the voice that brings peace by gently saying, “do not be afraid.” Hear our first reading:

#### **First Reading**

*Isaiah 7: 10-16 (NRSVUE)*

*Reader:* Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and

choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

## **Second Reading**

*Matthew 1: 18-25 (NRSVUE)*

*Reader:* Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, 'God is with us.'"

When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

## **Music Offering**

**8 Heritage Choir**

**Once Upon a Silent Night    Jerry Ryan**

**10:30 High School Choir**

**Christmas Sanctus    Susan Naus Dengler & Lee Dengler**



## **The Message**

Sacred Knowing

Pastor Kris, Pastor Kayli, Carrie Beleno

**Hymn:** #185 Away in A Manger (Gold Hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God)

**1. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky all looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus, asleep on the hay.**

**3. Be near me, Lord Jesus! I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And fit us for heaven to live the Thee there.**

**Hymn:** #178 O Little Town of Bethlehem (Gold Hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God)

**1. O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by;  
Yet in their dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light:  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.**

**3. How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessing of His heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.**

**Hymn:** #183 I Wonder As I Wander (Gold Hymnal,  
Hymns for the Family of God)

**1. I wonder as I wander our under they sky,  
How Jesus, the Savior, did come for to die.  
For poor, ornery people like you and like I  
I wonder as I wander, Out under the sky.**

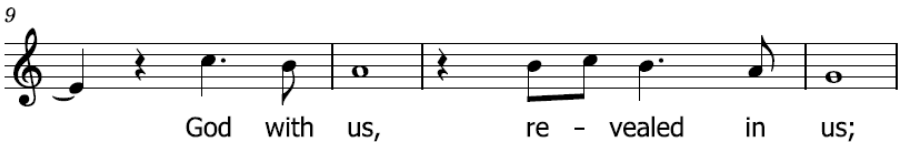
**2. When Mary birthed Jesus, 'twas in a cows' stall,  
With wisemen and farmers and shepherds and all.  
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,  
And the promise of ages It then did recall.**

### Refilling the Sacred

*Leader: We are wells of the sacred. God's presence is poured into creation in a never-ending flow of love. We enter a time of prayer that invites us to be refilled in ways that can help us pour out our love throughout the week. All we must do in this moment is open our hearts to the Holy One.*

### Prayers

Emmanuel, Emmanuel      Bob McGee



**ALL: (Spoken) Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ  
behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise.  
(St. Patrick's Prayer)**

**Repeat ALL Singing: Emmanuel, Emmanuel**

### **The LORD'S PRAYER**

**ALL: 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.**

### **News about the Ministry and Mission of God's Church**

**401(g) Moment from Our Financial Leadership Team –  
Marianne Kitzmiller, Treasurer**

**Guest Speaker: Skip Smith, Allentown Rescue Mission**

### **Prayer**

God of birthing new life into the world and our lives, we bring our gifts to you and to this church and community: gifts of heart, spirit, energy, love, time, resources, dreams, hopes, passion, compassion, meaning and purpose, and faith. We come to the manger and we bow, asking for your guidance and blessing on these gifts and on us. Deepen our commitment to you and to each other. Pour your light

on these gifts, on us, and on your church and all people we pray. Amen.

## Offering

**Thank you for the many ways in which you support God's work and God's people.**

### **CHRISTMAS MISSION OFFERING**

Please share your financial support by using the Christmas Mission Offering envelope in your envelope packet, or blank envelope marked - Christmas Mission, or donate online at:

<https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/home>

**The Allentown Rescue Mission** For more than a century, the Allentown Rescue Mission has addressed the changing face of homelessness, tackling the root causes of homelessness, and helping to end homelessness one life at a time throughout the Lehigh Valley. Thousands have come to their shelter receiving life changing help. Their shelter has been a place where men have begun to experience restoration.

**The Laurel House** is part of the Thistle Farms and Bloom community which provides sanctuary and a continuum of care to heal, empower, and employ women survivors of sex trafficking. This new location in Allentown will support pregnant survivors with 2 years of safety while they heal, deliver their child, attend parenting classes, and receive mentoring and vocational training in order to live independently.

**Donate to God's Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC OFFERING ENVELOPES.** If you can't attend worship, you can mail your envelopes to the church. The church ad-

dress is on one side, just add a stamp.

**ELECTRONIC GIVING.** Choose to give a repetitive contribution on a regular basis (i.e weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly), or make single contributions whenever you desire in an amount of your choice. Electronic contributions are initiated from Union UCC's website (UnionUCC.org). Click on 'giving', then on 'Ways to Give' and follow the prompts. Feel free to contact John Harting (610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-398-2654) to answer your questions or demonstrate the process.

**MOBILE GIVING.** If you would like to give on the go, Vanco, the company that processes our e-giving transactions, has a mobile app that allows you to do so. Open your app search screen, search under "Vanco Mobile Faith \Engagement" and follow the prompts.

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

**8am: In the Bleak Midwinter Gustav Theodore Holst  
Blake Hoppes**

**10:30am: O Come, O Come Emmanuel  
Ben Anderson**

**\*Offering Response  
Please stand in body or spirit.**

*(Sung to the tune of "What Child Is This")*  
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God all heavens and the earth  
reflecting the sacred story.**

**This, this is Christ the One**

**who mirrors Joy for all of us.  
Haste, haste to bring him laud,  
the Word of time eternal.**

### **Reframing the Sacred**

*Leader: We too often think that something "sacred" is far away and not available to us. This Advent season, we are "reframing" the way we recognize the sacred reflected all around and through us. As we prepare to move into the world, we begin to reframe our view of the world and our circumstances, illuminating new ways of being the Christ (Anointed One) tangibly present.*

### **Anointed to Sacred Knowing**

*When you arrived here this morning, you received a cotton ball with olive oil on it. For those of you worshiping with us at home, please take a moment to grab a little olive oil from the kitchen or some lotion from your bathroom cabinet.*

All season long, we have been marking sacred time, people, and space with the anointing of oil, lotion, or touch.

This week is the countdown to Christmas with all the harried preparations to be on or off work, planning time with family, traveling, or whatever you will do. It will be more difficult to find occasions to step away, to go within, to find the peace that we all need. But I encourage you to try finding some peaceful time for yourself. I also want to invite you to a kind of "anointing" of blessings that only takes a few seconds. See if you can dare to say, in your own way, a blessing for peace to the people you encounter. It might be "I hope you can find some quiet moments of peace for yourself this week" to the check-out clerk at the store. Or it might be a more formal "peace be upon your soul" to someone who won't look at you funny when you say that to them. Or it could just be a quick peace sign and a joyful

“Peace to you!” as you part ways with friends. How will you bestow the blessing of peace on yourself and others this week?

Let's start by opening the bag and anointing ourselves now. Inviting God to be with on this advent journey of reflecting the sacred.

### **Benediction**

Leader: When you see lights twinkle,  
when you catch a reflection in a mirror,  
when you notice the sunlight dancing on a surface  
or a nightlight glowing in the darkness,  
let these be signs that the Christ Light is revealed  
again and again in and through this world.

Know that your brilliant presence  
is pouring more PEACE into a weary world.  
God loved us by becoming us.  
This means you are already  
reflecting the sacred.

In the name of the Creator, Christ, and Spirit of Hope. Amen.

Please stand.

**\*Closing Hymn #128** In the Bleak Midwinter (Black Hymnal, New Century Hymnal)

**1. In the bleak mid winter, frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid winter, long ago.**

**2. Our God transcends all heaven, earth, and its domain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away when Christ comes to reign;  
In the bleak midwinter a stable place sufficed**

**The sovereign God almighty, Jesus Christ.**

**3. Angels and archangels may have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the midnight air;  
But his mother only, in her maiden bliss,  
Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.**

**4. What can I offer, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.  
If I were a wise one, I would do my part;  
But what can I offer: all my heart.**

**Go, Be Light in the World Music  
Angels We Have Heard on High     Edwin S. Barnes**



# EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)	
Last Week	\$9,405.00
Calendar Year 2022 (Jan-Oct.)	\$ 309,414.00
Calendar Year 2021 (Jan-Oct.)	\$ 302,292.00
Change from Last Year	<b>2.4%</b>
Budget FY 2022 (July 2022 - June 23)	\$ 131,000.00
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July 2022-June 23)	\$ 112,648.00
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	<b>-14.0%</b>
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

Attendance Last Week		
	In person	Online
8:00 am	<b>30</b>	<b>87</b>
10:30 am	<b>106</b>	<b>194</b>
Education Hour	<b>6</b>	

2022 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Last Week:	750lbs, \$
Total YTD:	6,739 lbs, \$1549.00

Christmas Mission to date: \$1,142.00

## Presentations to the Glory of God

***Spread the Good News :***

***In loving memory of parents, Ruby and Donald Peters. From Ann***

*Be a sponsor for \$20, send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or \$8 for Children's Bulletin. Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.*

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