

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.

Friday, December 23rd

7pm

Christmas Eve Eve

GUESTS, Welcome to our faith community here at Union UCC. To learn more about us please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at 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 on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Lay Reader: Doug Kuntz

Sound: Dawn Dengler

Additional Musicians: Jacob Roth, Organ; Mitchell Roth, Trumpet

Lighting by Damon Gelb

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

Gathering Music
A Child Is Born Thad Jones
Mitchell Roth, Trumpet with Blake Hoppes

Reflecting the Sacred

Our Christmas visuals have lots of shiny things this year to 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 have been remembering the call to shine with this holy light.

Welcome

Communion Directions:

Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.

You will be served in your seats.

Wait to eat and drink until the Pastor invites you to do so.

A non-gluten option with juice is available in a prepackaged container on the bread tray.

Both red wine and white grape juice are on the tray of cups. Please choose either.

For those of you at home, please take a minute to find something to drink and eat to represent communion for you.

You might also like to find a candle or turn on the light on your phone for during the singing of Silent Night.

Crossing the Threshold

Leader: All through the season of preparation for this night, we have been spending some quiet time at the

beginning of worship so we can be still and wonder at the brilliance of this world, of the sacred all around us. Tonight, we sit among the reflection of the lights of Christmas. You have likely had some Christmas lights up at home for a little while, and you've seen lights decorating houses and stores in our neighborhoods and cities. Shining lights this time of year seem to help soften our focus a bit, allowing us to see the ordinary places and people lit up in the reflections. Even our houses can feel special with the trees' lights illuminating the room in a magical way. I hope you've had a few moments to stop and notice and take it in. Times of quiet contemplation are not just good for the soul, they are good for our whole being, and our being with each other. And so let us begin our worship again with settling in and slowing down for just a moment.

I invite you to get comfortable where you are sitting and instead of closing your eyes, find one detail here in the room, or in your room at home if you are joining us online, to look at that brings you joy—it could be a light, a candle, anything. If other senses are better for you, then listen, or touch, or smell. There are many ways to drink in a moment deeply. Take a deep, intentional breath in and out. That's it. Take time to settle in.

Now shift your attention to something else, or simply let your eyes wander and take in more and more details that perhaps you didn't notice when you first came in, or if you are at home, things that have become so ordinary that you have stopped noticing them. What colors are getting your attention? What lights? Continue to use your senses intentionally, marveling at the things you notice. Now focus on one light out of all the lights where you are. Let this reflection of light be an anointing of insight for seeing your own 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:

7:00 **Doug, Angie, Dylan, and Cameron Kuntz**

Readers:

Please repeat after me [us]:

We pray for Hope this night.
We pray for Hope this night.

We pray for Love this night.
We pray for Love this night.

We pray for Joy this night.
We pray for Joy this night.

We pray for Peace this night.
We pray for Peace this night.

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

We open to see our deepest selves
We open to see our deepest selves

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 peace.
lighting the way to peace.

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, Holy Spirit,
we give you thanks for this holy sensing of your presence.
As we take in the light you offer,
may we be a reflection of that light,
expanding the sacred being of this place
into the sacred being of all things.

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 #193 O Come All Ye Faithful (Gold Hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God)**

Instrumentalist: Lucas Maxwell, Cameron Kuntz, Mitchel Roth

All:

**1. O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels;**

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.**

**2. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
Glory to God, all glory in the highest;**

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.**

**3. Ye, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
O Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing;**

**O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.**

Please be seated.

Time for Children

**Be sure to send your children forward for a time with Ms. Tiffany. They will also receive a gift bag!
Then they will be directed to return to their seats to sit with**

their family.

On Sundays 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.

Sundays

Education Hour for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am
Children's Church – during 10:30am Worship for ages 3-grade 5.

The Story Reflected

Luke 2: 1-20 (The Voice translation)

Leader: It is not difficult to imagine this night as “reflecting the sacred.” We gather and sing and light candles and dare to believe that love truly enters the world time and again and anything is possible. What may be more difficult to understand, however, is that this love is ours, not because we’ve been “good” (as if God is Santa Claus), but simply because we are beloved—the firstborn of God. Our very being reflects the sacred. The incarnation of God in human flesh is proof. Let us hear the story reflected this night:

Leader: Around the time of Elizabeth’s amazing pregnancy and John’s birth, the emperor in Rome, Caesar Augustus, required everyone in the Roman Empire to participate in a massive census—the first census since Quirinius had become governor of Syria. Each person had to go to his or her ancestral city to be counted.

Mary’s fiancé Joseph, from Nazareth in Galilee, had to participate in the census in the same way everyone else did. Because he was a descendant of King David, his ancestral city was Bethlehem, David’s birthplace. Mary, who was now late in her pregnancy that the messenger Gabriel had predicted, accompanied Joseph.

While in Bethlehem, she went into labor and gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped the baby in a blanket and

laid Him in a feeding trough because the inn had no room for them.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

**ALL: O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
Oh, come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!**

Reader: Nearby, in the fields outside of Bethlehem, a group of shepherds were guarding their flocks from predators in the darkness of night. Suddenly a messenger of the Lord stood in front of them, and the darkness was replaced by a glorious light—the shining light of God’s glory. They were terrified!

Don’t be afraid! Listen! I bring good news, news of great joy, news that will affect all people everywhere. Today, in the city of David, a Liberator has been born for you! He is the promised Anointed One, the Supreme Authority! You will know you have found Him when you see a baby, wrapped in a blanket, lying in a feeding trough.

At that moment, the first heavenly messenger was joined by thousands of other messengers—a vast heavenly choir. They praised God.

Angels We Have Heard on High
**ALL: Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply
echoing their joyous strains.**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song?**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo!**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.**

**Gloria in excelsis Deo,
gloria in excelsis Deo!**

Leader: As soon as the heavenly messengers disappeared into heaven, the shepherds were buzzing with conversation. Let's rush down to Bethlehem right now! Let's see what's happening! Let's experience what the Lord has told us about!

So they ran into town, and eventually they found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the feeding trough. After they saw the baby, they spread the story of what they had experienced and what had been said to them about this child. Everyone who heard their story couldn't stop thinking about its meaning. Mary, too, pondered all of these events, treasuring each memory in her heart. The shepherds returned to their flocks, praising God for all they had seen and heard, and they glorified God for the way the experience had unfolded just as the heavenly messenger had predicted.

This is the story reflecting the light of goodness that God has created—the light that we are called to reflect in our own lives, for each other, and for all the world. Let the people say “Amen!” **“Amen!”**

The Message

Prayers

Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Bob McGee

Em - man - u - el, Em - man - u - el,

5
His Name is Called Em - man - u - el;

9
God with us, re - vealed in us;

13
His name is called Em-man - u - el.

**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

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 <http://www.unionucc.org/resources/giving-and-sponsorship/ways-to-give/ChristmasMission>.

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 address 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 de-

sire 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>

Music Offering

Rose of Bethlehem By Lowell Alexander

Julie Wehr with Blake Hoppes

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

HOLY COMMUNION

Leader: Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and

grace. You will be served in your seats.
Wait to eat and drink until the Pastor invites you to do so.
A non-gluten option with juice is available in a prepackaged container on the bread tray.
Both red wine and white grape juice are on the tray of cups. Please choose either.

Invitation

Leader: Christ invites all to his table, for he is the One who is reflected in all things and unites all things. There is a place for you. This Cosmic Banquet of hope, love, joy, peace, and light is set for a hungry and hurting world. When we take in and take on Christ, we are the Body of Christ sent forth into the world to lay this banquet wherever we find ourselves. Let us open ourselves so that our hearts might be filled completely.

Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Word of God, Logos from the beginning.
You made us reflective of your image
and set us ablaze with the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love dulled,
your love remained as light for our lives.
You delivered us from captivity,
made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through your prophets.

And so,

with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, God of the
heaven - ly host; Heav - en and earth are full, are full of the
majes-ty of your glo-ry, Ho - san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san-na in the
high-est! Blessed the one who comes in the name of our God, Ho-
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san-na in the high - est!

Please be seated.

Leader: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.

Your Spirit anointed him
to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.

A reflection of this purpose,
and anointed as his disciples,
we are his Body in the world—

the Body of Christ.

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 cup 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.”

Leader: Anoint this community with your Holy Spirit,
and pour out your Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them a reflection of your life and love,
so that we may be for the world a Christ Mirror,
radiating and multiplying this life and love in the world.
Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

L: The bread which we break is the communion of the
body of Christ.
L: The cup of blessing which we bless is the
communion of the blood of Christ.
L: The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all
things are ready.

SHARING THE MEAL

**Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace. You
will be served in your seats.
Wait to eat and drink until the Pastor invites you to do so.**

A non-gluten option with juice is available in a prepackaged container on the bread tray. Both red wine and white grape juice are on the tray of cups. Please choose either.

THE BREAD

L: Take and eat, the body of Christ, broken for you.

MUSIC OFFERING

**My Lord Has Come Will Todd
Alison Dyszel**

THE CUP

L: Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you.

CAROL

Away in a Manger

**ALL: Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
the little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head.
The stars in the sky look down where he lay.
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

**The cattle are lowing The poor Baby wakes
But little Lord Jesus No crying He makes
I love Thee, Lord Jesus Look down from the sky
And stay by my side, 'Til morning is nigh.**

The Blessing

L: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, keep and preserve you unto eternal life.

COLLECTING OF CUPS

MUSIC OFFERING

What Sweeter Music John Rutter

Julie, Amanda, Leanna Lane with Blake Hoppes

Anointed to Sacred Knowing

All season long, we have been marking sacred time, people, and places with the idea of “anointing,” which is the literal meaning of the word “Christ.” We believe we are all “Christified,” which means that the sacred is reflected in and through us all. There is an obscure Irish fable of St. Brigid, patroness of that country, that says St. Brigid was also a time-traveler and was mysteriously present at the birth of Jesus. She had a shell of water with her, and she placed three drops on the infant Jesus’ forehead. The Irish are quite generous with their blessings, and apparently St. Brigid was their representative at the stable that night. This fable is simply a wonderful story to help us remember that all times are holy, not just that night so long ago. All people are sacred, because God loves us by becoming us. So right now I invite you to an anointing of sorts by touching your forehead lightly three times, a sign that you are blessed and that you are also part of the story of hope, love, joy, and peace this night.

CANDLELIGHTING

***Carol** Silent Night, Holy Night

Directions: Turn your candle on when the music begins and join in singing.

**Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.
Holy infant so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace**

**ALL: Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight.
Glories stream from heaven afar
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born**

RAISE YOUR CANDLE:

**Silent night, holy night!
Son of God love's pure light.
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth**

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 LIGHT 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.

* **Carol** Joy To The World

ALL: 1. Joy to the world! The Lord is come:

**Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.
And heaven and nature sing.
And heaven, and heaven and nature sing.**

**2. Joy to the world! The Savior reigns:
Let men their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

**3. No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found,
Far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.**

Merry Christmas!

**Enjoy the Lights in the Grove, they will be on every night
until the New Year.**

**Go, Be Light in the World Music
Bring A Torch, Jeanette, Isabella
Blake Hoppes**

Worship Theme
©www.worshipdesignstudio.com/theinn

Thank you to our team of angels and elves for their work in decorating the church for Christmas: Claire and Doug Kern, Deb Topp, Deb Wenner, Kathy and Emma Milander, Maryann and Claire Puia, Tiffany Lakatosh with Justin and Miranda, Rick and Kathy Bonsell, Worship Committee – Susan Glosan, Edie Fella, Ron Pope, Dan Haftl, Julie & Phil Wehr, Eric & Pam Minnich family, Pastors Kayli and Kris.

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, ushers, and worship participants. Thank you to our staff, Consistory, and leaders for giving your time and talents so generously.

Thank you to our Poinsettia Sponsors. See insert.

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)	
Last Week	\$10,321.00
Calendar Year 2022 (Jan-Oct.)	\$ 309,414.00
Calendar Year 2021 (Jan-Oct.)	\$ 302,292.00
Change from Last Year	2.4%
Budget FY 2022 (<i>July 2022-June 23</i>)	\$ 131,000.00
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (<i>July 2022-June 23</i>)	\$ 112,648.00
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-14.0%
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

Attendance Last Week		
	In person	Online
8:00 am	44	
10:30 am	102	
Education Hour		

2022 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Last Week:	lbs, \$
Total YTD:	5,989 lbs, \$1449.00

Presentations to the Glory of God

Spread the Good News :

Merry Christmas from Pastor Kris

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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