

**8 & 10:30am
December 1, 2024**

**Advent 1
Rome: A Place of Longing
HOPE**

GUESTS, Welcome to our faith community. To learn more about us please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unionneffs. Let us know you're here by completing the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it to a pastor or drop it in the offering plate.

Vision Statement

UNION UCC: RELEVANT, ENGAGED, and GROWING

Mission Statement

Our church is a diverse family of believers, spiritually united in Christ, rooted in a rich heritage and growing with vitality into the future. We proclaim God's word, nurturing and inspiring dedicated Christian discipleship through worship, education, pastoral care, fellowship, and outreach within our community and the world.

***No matter who you are or where you on life's journey,
you are welcome here.***

Union UCC is an Open and Affirming (ONA) Community.

Lay Reader: 8am Michael Roth, 10:30 Dan Topp

Ushers: 8am: Phil Wehr, Ron Pope, Leoma Kern

10:30am: Eric Minnich, Scott Nagle, Tami Wassum, Don

Penrod, Jennifer Haley, Suzanne Schneider, Carolyn Seyler

Greeters: Mark & Debbie Daluisio, Andy & Jan Dyszel

Sound: Pat Sorg

Holy Communion

Communion Directions

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

If you are at home, we invite you to find something to eat and drink that represents communion for you.

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.

Prelude Music

Bring a Torch, Jeanette Isabella Renaissance carol

Blake Hoppes

Welcome to Union UCC and Worship Today!

Welcome & Announcements

Light for the Journey

Guide: We begin our Advent journey toward Bethlehem and the manger with a decree from Rome. Needing more money to build the Roman Empire, Caesar Augustus demands a census so that all who lived under his reign could “contribute” to his expansion of power.

Leader/Pastor: Our lives and stories are often shaped by that which is out of our immediate control. This was true in the moment of the Roman decree that would turn into the story of hope for the world. On this first week of Advent, we ask ourselves whether we are placing our hope in the empires of the world, or in the liberating through-line of God’s presence. What are we longing for this Advent, and how does it call us to act with hope?

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.

We're on our way
We're on our way
Dream of the day
When [hope] holds sway
With all the earth
In all our hearts
We're on our way
This is the day.

The journey begins, and this candle will help light our way.

We are on our way to more hope.

Decrees and decisions affect our world and our lives as
they did in Jesus' day.

We are a people who long for Good News.

There are milestones that guide us to a better day.

God's light goes before us, we are not alone.

We're on our way
We're on our way
Dream of the day
When [hope] holds sway
With all the earth
In all our hearts
We're on our way
This is the day.

Opening Prayer and Words of Assurance

Holy and Living God, we pray for the renewal of our world.
Too often, we let fear or complacency prevent us from
calling out the injustices of our time.

Give us courage for action, even in the midst of our longing.
Call us to a "census of hope."

Call us to our senses
so that we may see, hear, know,
the power of your presence with us, Emmanuel.

We pray this in the name of your Son,
Jesus, the Christ, the Hope of Our Lives. **Amen.**

Let this be a marker of assurance that we are moving in a
faithful direction:

God is with us every step of our way toward the Hope of
Bethlehem.

Jesus is being born into our lives even now.

The Spirit is transforming us in this place.

Peace be with you!

And also with you.

As people forgiven and freed,

I invite you to pass the Peace of Christ among you
[and those worshipping remotely, we are glad you are on the
journey with us!].

The Peace

***Please rise in body or spirit to greet each other and for the first song.**

***Opening Hymn** #169 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God

O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night
And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high
And order all things, far and nigh
To us the path of knowledge show
And cause us in her ways to go
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

O come, desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of humankind
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease
And be Thyself our King of peace
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel

Please be seated.

10:30 Worship Music Offering

Feelin' Like Christmas Pursuit Kids
Kid's Choir

10:30 Worship Children's Time

Guest Readers: Brynn Buskirk, Devin Kuharik

Children's Church – during 10:30am Worship for ages 3-
grade 5. Kids start in worship with their family and are
invited forward for a children's time, They then leave with
Ms. Tiffany and return before worship is over. They will
return to worship before it's over and if not, please pick
up your children in Room 100. If you want your child to
stay in worship with you, please let them know.

**Little donkey, little donkey
On the dusty road
Got to keep on plodding onwards
With your precious load.
Been a long time, little donkey
Through the winter's night
Don't give up now, little donkey
Bethlehem's in sight.**

**Kids are invited to the Education Hour and Faith Formation
for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am on Sundays, ages 3 to grade 7.**

8:00 Music Offering

A Winter Night David Waggoner

Heritage Choir

First Scripture Reading

Romans 8: 18-25

*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not
worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.
For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of
the children of God, for the creation was subjected to futility,
not of its own will, but by the will of the one who subjected it,
in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its en-
slavement to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory
of the children of God. We know that the whole creation
has been groaning together as it suffers together the pains
of labor, and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who*

have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what one already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2: 1-3

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered.

Sermon

Rome: A Place of Longing (Hope)

Rev. Kris P. Snyder

Guided by Prayer

Guide: We begin our prayer time today remembering that when we need guidance the most, we can turn to God in prayer. Today we are guided by Hope.

Leader: Let us pray:

Lead Me, Guide Me

Lead me, guide me, a - long the way, for if you
lead me, I can - not stray. Lord, let me walk each
day with thee. Lead me, O Lord, lead me.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of three staves of music. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics, with a triplet of eighth notes over the words 'if you'. The second staff continues the melody for the second line of lyrics, also featuring a triplet of eighth notes over 'let me walk'. The third staff concludes the piece with the final line of lyrics.

God of Hope, we come to you today longing for your presence in our lives and with all those who suffer—in body, mind, or spirit. We pray this day for...

God of Hope, we come to you today so deeply grateful for celebrations, triumphs, and even small steps toward the lives we seek and the world we desire. We pray this day for...

Holy God, we know you are near. We know that every step along the way to Bethlehem in this Advent season is a step closer to renewed life in Jesus, the Christ. We know that your Spirit resides within us, growing day by day into the fullness of Hope. In this moment, we pause in silence, marking your presence with awe and asking you to fill us, guide us, along our journey.

Moments of Silence

May we live by the prayer you taught us...

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
AT UNION**

OFFERING



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neffs, Pennsylvania

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to help our church be
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Electronic Giving

• **FREE Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app**

Look for our church Union United Church of Christ, Neffs, PA and register your information to contribute.



Vanco Mobile

• **Venmo @unionuccneffs** Make a donation or pay for a fundraiser or event. Complete "What's this for?" See QR code.

• **Cash or checks (to "Union UCC")** Place in the offering plate with a member offering envelope or guest envelope (in the seat racks) or drop in the mail if you're not in person.



Venmo

Contact John Harting (610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-972-8719) or Pastor Kris if you have questions or if you'd like to learn more about other giving options or legacy gifts to Union.

Christmas Mission Offering – Sharing God's Love with the World

The Christmas Mission Offerings will go to Phoebe Home and Phoebe Ministries in Allentown and Disaster Relief through the Penn Northeast Conference (and Penn

Southeast Conference). 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://www.unionucc.org/resources/giving-and-sponsorship/> OR <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/campaign/C-12DNK>

Phoebe Home & Phoebe Ministries

Phoebe Ministries provides faith-based communities and services for senior living, including independent apartments, personal care, skilled nursing, memory support services, short-term rehab, and geriatric care management. Union UCC has a long history of supporting Phoebe Home in Allentown and the overall mission of Phoebe Ministries.

Disaster Relief through Penn Northeast Conference (PNEC)

Hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, earthquakes, flooding, blizzards, and explosions are some examples of disasters, some minor, some major. Union UCC also regularly provides financial support to the Disaster Relief program through the Penn Northeast Conference. These donations are provided to communities and families in need after a disaster strikes.

December 1st Guest Speaker Rev. Leah Knox from Phoebe Home

Music Offering

Go Tell It on the Mountain Spiritual

Blake Hoppes

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

Offering Response

(Sung to the tune of *Away In a Manger*)

Praise God for these gifts that we offer today

**and bless them for good in the world, this we pray.
Praise Jesus, the Christ-Child, our Hope and our Stay,
the Spirit, our Keeper, our Guide on the Way.**

Holy Communion

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

**If you are at home, we invite you to find something to eat
and drink that represents communion for you.**

**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

Whether your journeys are by choice or by necessity,
each one requires a moment of pause
to nourish body and spirit.

We cannot move forward into new places, into new stories,
without the sustenance that makes life possible.

There is no way to navigate the difficulties
that arise on the way

without a connection to the One who gives us life.

Jesus knew this when he gathered the disciples for a meal
that would come to sustain a movement on its way
throughout the ages.

And he offers that same meal to us now.

Won't you pause for a while at this table set for you?

Great Thanksgiving

The God of Hope be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
Especially on this road to Bethlehem, we remember
that like the first breath of all things born,
you formed each of us in your image
and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we forget this connection of life with you,
when we think we travel alone and the journey is too hard,
you never leave us.
You guide us and protect us every step of the way
as you did with our spiritual ancestors,
making the promise of presence more real
than we could have imagined.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
By your Spirit, he was born to offer
hope to the poor and those poor in spirit;
peace to the captive and those imprisoned by fear;
joy to the despairing and those who mourn;
and love to the lonely and those disparaged by the world.

He was born into a world that needed to hear the good
news
that the time had come when you would save your people.
Just as Bethlehem offered a warm place to lay his infant
head,
as an adult he offered healing and wholeness and
hospitality to all.
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.”

And so,
in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here
and wherever we are on our journeys of life.
Pour out your Spirit on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the sustenance of Christ's presence
on the way
so that we may be for the world the presence of Christ,
redeemed by his love.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,

and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

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

THE BREAD

HYMN HYMN

#677 They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love
Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God

**We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love**

**We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love**

**We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand**

**And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
They will know we are Christians by our love**

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

THE CUP

#105 Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear
Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal

**"Gentle Joseph, Joseph dear,
stay with me, for the baby's near;
God will surely your goodness hear,
as you will love this new-born child," says Mary.**

**"Gladly Mary, Mary mine,
I will cradle the child divine;
Here will heaven and earth combine,
for you will bear God's child, O dearest Mary."**

**"Peace to all and God's good-will,"
heaven and earth with this song will fill;
Soon will God, in the evening still,
be born in Bethlehem, the child of Mary.**

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

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 The Feast Meant for Everyone Tom Booth, Sarah Hart
Jason Klinger, Pastor Kris and Blake Hoppes

Everyone join us on the 4th Chorus:
Oh, how great is the love of God
in this body broken, this saving blood.
Oh, how great is the love of God
here in the feast meant for everyone,
here in the feast meant for everyone.

Please rise in body or spirit.

We Set Off: A Proclamation for the Continued Journey

Guide: We have checked the signs and markers to make sure we are moving in a faithful direction. With hope, we move on towards Bethlehem, knowing that the Light of Christ shines through the night. We are not alone. The powers that would keep some down and out are not the final word. The story continues, and we will proclaim it in our lives. Hope, not fear, perseveres.

Benediction

And now as you go forth from this place,
know that all the places you encounter in the world
will contain signs and markers of God's work among us.

So keep your senses alert,
your perception wide,
and your heart open
to new discoveries along the way.

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray,
cast out our fear, and draw us near; be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;**

**O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.
We're on our way
We're on our way
Dream of the day
When [hope] holds sway
With all the earth
In all our hearts
We're on our way
This is the day.**

Postlude Music

Christmastime Michael W. Smith
Blake Hoppes

Worship Theme: c. Worship Design Studio

Worship Design Team: Kathy Bonsell, Claire Kern,
Deb Topp, Pastor Kris, Tiffany Lakatosh, Kathy Milander,
Maryann Puia

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$4,968.00	8 AM	
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Oct.)	\$320,290.00	10:30 AM	111
Calendar Year 2023 (Jan.-Oct.)	\$ 308,275.00	Online Views	364
Change from Last Year	3.9%	Sunday School	9
Budget FY 2024-25 (July-Oct.)	\$115,200.00	God First	25
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Oct.)	\$114,112.00	Faith on Tap	30
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-0.9%	Breathe	15
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		2024 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
		Last Week:	\$100, bs
		Total YTD:	\$1300, 6,090lbs

Presentations to the Glory of God

In memory of Walt Disney

Good News Sponsor– for \$20 help us cover the costs of advertising on social media, mailings, and local papers.

Children’s Bulletin Sponsor– for \$8 cover the cost of bulletins for children.

Send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or 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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