

**8 & 10:30am  
December 15, 2024**

**Advent 3  
Nazareth: A Place of Simplicity  
JOY  
Jazz Ensemble**

**GUESTS**, Welcome to our faith community. 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). 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 are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.***

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

Lay Reader: 8am Doug Albert, 10:30 Doug Kuntz

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

10:30am: Deb Wenner, Maryann Puia, C Gloria Toner,  
Carol Stout, Marianne Kitzmiller, Donna Christman, Brian  
Horwith

Greeters: Tracey & Rob Bilger, Gene & Christina Thrash

Sound: Doug Albert

**Prelude Music**  
Jingle Bell Rock  
**Jazz Ensemble**

**Welcome to Union UCC and Worship Today!**

**Welcome & Announcements**

**Light for the Journey**

*Guide:* We move north to the tiny village of Nazareth. Although not so tiny anymore, in those days, Nazareth was a place where “everyone knows your name” since it could only support a limited amount of people from one small well of water. Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel with news that she would bear a son!

*Leader/Pastor:* Mary’s joy was not limited by the improbability that such a thing could happen in Nazareth. In this simple, tight-knit community of limited resources—a place where survival required interdependence with your neighbors—Jesus would be raised and grow into the teacher he became. This week, we wonder: what joy can we glean from the simplest of moments, the simplest of gifts, allowing ourselves to savor this season, pregnant with possibilities?

**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 joy holds sway  
With all the earth  
In all our hearts  
We're on our way  
This is the day.**

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

**We are on our way to more joy.**

Life can be so complicated and filled with distractions.

**We are a people who simply want Good News.**

We need a marker on the journey to tell us to stop and notice

the wonder of the moments along the way.

**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 joy 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 refocusing of our lives on what really matters.

Too often, we allow the complexity of modern life to take over,

and we fail to sense your presence in our everyday lives.

Call us to a simplified joy.

Call us to simply pause in the midst of our scheduled mania  
and breathe in the possibility that you are asking for our  
attention.

We pray this in the name of your Son,  
Jesus, the Christ, the Joy 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 Joy 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 worshiping 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** Hymn #193 O Come All Ye Faithful  
(Hymns for the Family of God, Gold)

**ALL:**

**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!**

**Refrain:**

**O come, let us adore Him;**

**O come, let us adore Him;  
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord!**

**Sing, choirs of angels; sing in exultation;  
sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!  
Glory to God, all glory in the highest!  
[Refrain]**

**Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;  
Jesus, to Thee be all glory giv'n!  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!  
[Refrain]**

**Please be seated.**

### **10:30 Worship Children's Time**

**Guest Readers: Bynn Buskirk, Devon 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.**

### **Music Offering**

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen Kyle Pederso

### **Jazz Ensemble**

### **First Scripture Reading**

Romans 15: 12-13

*Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the gentiles; in him the gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

### **Gospel Reading**

Luke 1: 26-38

*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age*

has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

### Sermon

### Nazareth: A Place of Simplicity (Joy)      Rev. Kayli Freeman

Book for this series: On the Way to Bethlehem Rob Fuquay  
Copies are on the table in the lobby/foyer or at your favorite bookstore.

Prayer Journals for this series are on the table in the lobby/foyer.

### 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 **JOY**.

### 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.

Leader: Let us pray:

God, Our Source of Joy even in sorrow, 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 Joy, 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 Joy. 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

**Thank you for your faithful generosity and for all that you do  
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• **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.

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**Music Offering**

Go, Tell It On The Mountain

**Jazz Ensemble**

**\*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.**

**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 joy, we move on towards Bethlehem, knowing that the Light of Christ shines through the night. We are not alone. We remember to open our hearts to the possibility that God's work in the world is happening in the most simple and unlikely of places—even within us. The journey continues as we feel the pregnancy of possibility. Joy, not despair, 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 joy holds sway  
With all the earth**

In all our hearts  
We're on our way  
This is the day.

**\*Closing Hymn Hymn #184 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing** (Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God )

Hark! The herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!"  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
Join the triumph of the skies;  
With th'angelic host proclaim,  
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

**Refrain:**

Hark! the herald angels sing,  
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest Heav'n adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord;  
Late in time, behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin's womb.  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
Hail th'incarnate Deity,  
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.

**Refrain**

Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings,  
Ris'n with healing in His wings.  
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that [we] no more may die;

**Born to raise [us all from] earth,  
Born to give [us] second birth.  
Refrain**

**Postlude Music**  
Jingle Bells  
**Jazz Ensemble**

**Jazz Ensemble:** Blake Hoppes-piano, Mike Baer-guitar,  
Mitchell Roth – Trumpet, Andy Hill – Trumpet, Gareth  
Hill – Alto Sax

**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	\$14,055.00	8 AM	49
<i>Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Nov.)</i>	\$ 351,540.00	10:30 AM	91
<i>Calendar Year 2023 (Jan.-Nov.)</i>	\$ 346,119.00	Online Views	393
Change from Last Year	1.6%	Sunday School	
Budget FY 2024-25 ( <i>July-Nov.</i> )	\$ 145,390.00	God First	25
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date ( <i>July-Nov.</i> )	\$ 145,362.06	Faith on Tap	30
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	0.0%	Breathe	8
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		<b>2024 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:</b>	
		Last Week:	\$50, 150 lbs
		Total YTD:	\$1350, 6,240lbs
Christmas Mission Total:		\$1,168.00	

## Presentations to the Glory of God

In loving memory of parents, Ruby and Donald Peters.  
Miss you, Love, Ann

Praise to the Glory of God. Rejoicing in the coming of our Lord! - Carol Barry

**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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