

8 & 10:30am
December 22, 2024

Advent 4
Bethlehem: A Place of Humility
LOVE

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 are on life's journey,
you are welcome here.***

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

Lay Reader: 8am Rosalie Snyder, 10:30 Janice Metzger

Ushers: 8am: Cliff James, Carol James, Michael Haffl, Daniel Haffl

10:30am: Jason Klinger, Andy Dyszel, Claire Kern, Gene Thrash,
Marlene Blose, Dale Blose

Greeters: Mark & Debbie Daluisio, Andy & Jan Dyszel

Sound: Mike Baer

Prelude Music

A Song, A Star, A Little Child Nancy Price & Don Besig

8:00 Heritage Choir

Christmas Carol Medley John Bayless

10:30 Blake Hoppes

Welcome to Union UCC and Worship Today!

Welcome & Announcements

Light for the Journey

Guide: It is time we got to Bethlehem. First, a decree set by Rome; second, a declaration of birth for an elderly couple in Jerusalem; third, a girl surprised by news of pregnancy in Nazareth! And NOW it all culminates in our travels to Bethlehem. Bethlehem is the ancestral home of mighty King David as well as his humble and faithful descendant: Joseph, the carpenter.

Guide: Bethlehem was called "little" by the prophet Micah who recognized that something of great worth would come from a humble place. As a champion of the "least of these," Jesus' ministry would shine light on the worth of humble people and places. Let us ask, how will we show this kind of humble love to others?

**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 love 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 love.

Life is full of expectations and waiting for the right time, the right answer, the right opportunity.

We are a people who wait for Good News.

It is hard to wait, but there are milestone moments when we get a glimpse of what true peace feels like.

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 love 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 hearts and minds to open wide to merciful acts in your name.

Too often, we clench our fists in fear that what we have will not be enough for us.

Give us the humility to make more room.

Call us to a "generosity of grace."

Call us to be generous—not to a fault—but to a future
where all have a place and a home where
they are deeply loved.

We pray this in the name of your Son,
Jesus, the Christ, your Love Incarnate. **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 Love 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 #193 O Come, All Ye Faithful**
Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God

**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
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 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!

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be 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!

Please be seated.

8 and 10:30 Music Offering

Christmas Night Arr. Michael Helman

Chimers: Carol Pope, Ron Pope, Tami Wassum, Barbara Carinci, Bonnie Herzog, Sandy Daumer, Dawn Dengler, Susan Glosan, Debbie Romig, John Fabian and Dan Haffl
Director: Edie Fella

10:30 Worship Children's Time

Guest Readers: Ron Pope, Edie Fella

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.**

First Scripture Reading

Romans 13: 8-11

Owe no one anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; you shall not murder; you shall not steal; you shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is already the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone; the day is near.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2: 1-14

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. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was

descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room.

Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favors!"

Music Offering

Christmas Angels Arr. Brian Tervo

Chimers: Carol Pope, Ron Pope, Tami Wassum, Barbara Carinci, Bonnie Herzog, Sandy Daumer, Dawn Dengler, Susan Glosan, Debbie Romig, John Fabian and Dan Haftl
Director: Edie Fella

Readings and Carols

Pastor Kris

Music Offering Hark! The Herald Angels Sing Mendelssohn,
Arr. Patrick Liebergen A Concertato

**Aine Demko, Kylie Masters, Addison Treat, Tessa DeJesus,
Carter Sachse, Andrew Sachse, Jaxon Egge, Eric Wood
Director: Matt Gerry**

Glory to God
Glory to God
The Child is Born, give glory
Proclaim the Christmas story
Joyfully Sing

Praise the New King

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 Angelic Host Proclaim
Christ is Born in Bethlehem
Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Glory to the Newborn King

Glory to God, Sing Alleluia
Glory to God the Angels Sing
Glory to God Sing alleluia
Joyful News the Angels Bring

Hail the Heaven Born Prince of Peace
Hail the Son of Righteousness

Light and Life to all He Brings
Risen with healing in his wings
Mild He lays his glory by
Born that we no more may die
Born to raise us from the earth
Born to give us second birth
Hark the Herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn king

Pastor Kris

Music Offering Remembering Decembers Pinkzebra
**Aine Demko, Kylie Masters, Addison Treat, Tessa DeJesus,
Carter Sachse, Andrew Sachse, Jaxon Egge, Eric Wood
Director: Matt Gerry**

I'm remembering Decembers in the quiet of the evening
I'm recalling inter moments long ago
I saw life through the eyes of a child then
playing games in the snow with my best friends
And now how it warms my heart

I'm remembering Decembers spent with loved ones filled
with laughter
Time was moving so much slower in those days
There was wonder and joy in the small things
I can still feel it now when the bells ring
They ring like they did before, just like before
My heart is filled once more.

The candle lanterns glowing in the snow
Shining like the stars at night
ignite my memories leading me back home
Leading me back home again
The seasons turn with lessons learned
As life unveils its play in its own way
I'll remember this December, I'll forever hold it closely

When I look back on this season I'll recall
Time with you, by your side, spent together
In my dreams these are days I will treasure
So now come and join with me
Join with me. Make a memory.

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 Love.

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 of Love, 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 Love, 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 Love. 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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• **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.

Music Offering Angels with Have Heard on High
Andy Hill, Mitchell Roth – Trumpet

***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 love, we reside here in Bethlehem, knowing that the Light of Christ shines through the night. We are not alone. Humble places can be full of abundance. The story continues, and we claim our place in the narrative. We have come to Bethlehem to see, hear, sense, and know that love, not fear, perseveres.

Benediction

Soon we will gather once again to sing with the angels about
the love that came down to Bethlehem.

Our journey to the stable...

Worship Monday 12/23/2024 7pm

Tuesday 12/24/2024 3pm, 5pm, & 8pm

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

***Closing Hymn #128 In the Bleak Midwinter**
Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal
ALL: 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.

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.

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.

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,
what I can I offer,
Give my heart.

Postlude Music

Angels We Have Heard on High Edwin S. Barnes
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	\$13,075.00	8 AM	51
<i>Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Oct.)</i>	\$320,290.00	10:30 AM	104
<i>Calendar Year 2023 (Jan.-Oct.)</i>	\$ 308,275.00	Online Views	416
Change from Last Year	3.9%	Sunday School	7
Budget FY 2024-25 (<i>July-Oct.</i>)	\$115,200.00	God First	25
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (<i>July-Oct.</i>)	\$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:	\$, 1000lbs
		Total YTD:	\$1300, 7,090lbs

Christmas Mission YTD:	\$2,785.00
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Presentations to the Glory of God

**In memory of Rich Correll
Love Deana, Ryan, and Brooke**

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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