

**Tuesday, December 24th
8pm
Christmas Eve**

The Stable: A Place of Care

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: Claire Kern
Sound: Doug Albert, Mike Baer

Holy Communion and Candlelight

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.

Children and Families: Be sure to get a Christmas activity bag at the door. Merry Christmas from Ms. Tiffany!

Prelude Music

The Holly and the Ivy-trad.; arr. Alex Degrassi
Mike Baer, Guitar

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day Henry W. Longfellow
Julie Wehr, Vocals; Blake Hoppes, Piano

Belleau Wood Brooks & Henry
Geoff Brace, Vocals; Mike Baer, Guitar

All Is Well Michael W. Smith
Susan Glosan, Vocals, Blake Hoppes, Piano

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light Johann von Rist
Instrumental Ensemble

Welcome & Announcements

Light for the Journey

Guide: All during the last four Sundays—the Season of Advent—we have been traveling to famous places “On the Way to

Bethlehem." Tonight, we will retrace our steps, finally arriving at Bethlehem to see what we find there!

**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 of life requires the light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love shining out into the world.

**On our way to Bethlehem, we search for the star
that lights the path.**

The road can be difficult, and the search for home can be elusive.

We are a people who look for Good News for all people.

There are milestones—signs and markers—
that can 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 more hope, peace, joy,
and love in our world.

Too often we throw up our hands in frustration,
thinking there is little we can do.
Show us that much can be done
in the most unlikely of places,
including a small town like Bethlehem.
Call us to offer stability in times that feel difficult.
Call us to be “stables of care”
so that we can show others
that you are present with us, Emmanuel.
We pray this in the name of your Son,
Jesus, the Christ, the Center 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.
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
Instrumental Ensemble
Jacob Roth, Organ

**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.

The Story Continues

Luke 2: 1-20

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 he favors!"*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

Music Offering While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night George Handel

Julie Wehr, Susan Glosan, Vocals; Blake Hoppes, Piano

Sermon The Manger is Messy Pastor Kris

Guided by Prayer

Guide: We have spent our preparation for Christmas remembering that when we need it most, we are guided by the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love of Christ. Born in a stable of care, Jesus knows the power of teaching us to tend to the least among us. As the First Letter to the early church in Corinth says, "God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it."

Lead Me, Guide Me



Leader: Let us pray:

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 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 of Peace and Love, 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 your Kin-dom. 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

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.

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.**

**Carol Hark the Herald Angels Sing
Instrumental Ensemble**

ALL:

**Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new born 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!”
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new born King!”**

**Christ, by highest heaven 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 as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new born King!”**

**Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
risen with healing in his wings.
Mild he lays his glory by,
born that man no more may die,
born to raise the sons of earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the new born King!”**

**NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF GOD’S
CHURCH AT UNION**



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neffs, Pennsylvania

OFFERING

**Thank you for your faithful generosity and for all that you do
to help our church be
*Relevant - Engaged - Growing***

• **ELECTRONIC GIVING** <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-251X/home> or use the QR code with your cell phone. Choose an ongoing regular donation or a single donation with your credit or debit card. (Help us with fees if you can.)



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

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.

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

Music Offering Ave Maria Bach
Madelyn Kohler, Vocals; Blake Hoppes, Piano

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

THE CUP

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

Music Offering Light of the World Lauren Daigle
Abby Kern, Vocals; Blake Hoppes, Piano

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
O Holy Night Adolphe Adam
Natalie St. Hill, Vocals; Jacob Roth, Organ

Candlelighting

Guide: We have checked the signs and markers to make sure we are moving in a faithful direction. We have arrived

at Bethlehem, knowing that the Light of Christ has come to shine in our deepest night. We are not alone.

Carol Silent Night, Holy Night
Jacob Roth, Organ

**Please remain seated.
Turn your candle on when the music begins
and join in singing.**

**ALL: 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**

**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

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
for Christ is being born within you and among you.

**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.**

**The choir and instrumentalists will introduce the song.
Please be seated until it's time to sing.**

Closing Hymn Joy to the World Setting by Joel Raney
Jacob Roth, Organ
Natalie St. Hill, Vocals
Blake Hoppes, Piano
Adult Choir

Choir – cue for all to join in singing:
Let every heart, prepare him room
Let every heart, prepare him room

***ALL – please stand:**

**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.**

**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.**

**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 and New Year Blessings!
Enjoy the Lights and Luminaries in the Grove.**

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

Sound Team: Doug Albert, Mike Baer, Pat Sorg, Karl Klinger, Dawn Dengler

Lighting: Damon Gelb

Thank you to our Poinsettia Sponsors and our Helping Hearts and Communion Ministers and Pastor Carrie for delivery to those on our Visitation List.

Thank you to our Luminary Sponsors.

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.

Postlude Music
Blake Hoppes

Worship Theme: c. Worship Design Studio

Instrumental Ensemble: Lucas Maxwell – saxophone, Gareth Hill – saxophone, Connor Maxwell – trumpet, Andy Hill – trumpet, Andy Dyszel – trumpet, Justin Bower – trumpet, Katelyn Attieh – euphonium, Mike Baer – trombone, Isaac Brace - snare

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$13,075.00	8 AM	51
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Oct.)	\$320,290.00	10:30 AM	104
Calendar Year 2023 (Jan.-Oct.)	\$ 308,275.00	Online Views	416
Change from Last Year	3.9%	Sunday School	7
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:	\$, lbs
		Total YTD:	\$1300, 6,090lbs

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

Merry Christmas!
Pastor Kris

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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