



January 5, 2025

8AM & 10:30AM

COMMUNION



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 Ron Pope, 10:30am Eric Minnich

Ushers: 8am Eric Minnich, Scott Nagle, Tami Wassum, Don Penrod,
Jennifer Haley, Suzanne Schneider, Carolyn Seyler

10:30am : Phil Wehr, Ron Pope, Leoma Kern

Greeters: Jen Haley, George & Val Borman

Sound: Doug Albert

Prelude Music

He Is Born! Traditional French Carol, 19th c.

Blake Hoppes

Welcome to Union UCC and Worship Today!

Welcome & Announcements

Light for the Journey

Guide: O Star-flinging God, whose light dances across eternity, dazzle us into your presence this new year. Open our hearts to the mystery of your love. Awaken us to your presence, knit to the ordinary. Reveal to us what is possible, but not yet present. Heal us, that we might be healers. Reconcile us to you and to ourselves, that our living might be reconciling. Stop us often, we pray with news that is good, with hope that holds, with truth that transforms with a Word tailored to this trail we're on. May the word of your grace guide our steps like the sun by day, and the north star by night, as we travel into the gift of a new year. Amen

**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 continues, and the light remains.

We have been changed on this journey.

We have journeyed from grand to humble places in search
of Good News.

**We are a people who believe that Good News resides in
every place.**

The milestones and markers of hope, peace, joy, and love
have guided us along the way.

God's light continues to go before us, we are never 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

We thank you God that you know what it is to be human
Fragile and vulnerable,
searching for ways to stay alive in dangerous and
complicated times

We thank you that you know the struggles and temptations
of living in darkness.

And we thank you that you give light to the world.

We confess that sometimes it's easier to stay
in the shadows,
where things can stay hidden,
where people can't see our cracks and flaws.

We confess that we have at times brought darkness
into the world by our anger, our selfishness, our violence.

We confess that we are sometimes skeptical of light
and find it easier to trust its absence.

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 your Kin-dom.

Jesus has been born into our lives.

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** #153 Go Tell It on the Mountain (New
Century Hymnal, black)

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain,

Over the hill and everywhere

Go tell it on the mountain,

That Jesus Christ is born!

1. While shepherds kept their watching

o'er silent flocks by night

Behold throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.

REFRAIN

2. The shepherds feared and trembled

when lo above the earth

Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth

REFRAIN

3. Down in a lowly manger the humble Christ was born

And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn.

REFRAIN

Please be seated.

10:30 Worship Children's Time

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.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi from the east came to Jerusalem asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star in the east and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him, and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah, for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the magi and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out, and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen in the east, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Keeping the Faith as Members and Disciples of Union UCC for 40+ Years

Joyce Burda

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 the sense that Christ is our Home.

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 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 was 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 the Kin-dom. In this moment, we pause in silence, marking your presence with awe and asking you to fill us and guide us along our journey into the new year.

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



**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-751X/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.

Music Offering

Holiday Medley Arr. Mark Hayes

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 pre-packaged 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 to this table all who are ready to move
beyond the limitations of the past,
all who are eager to move into the "new thing" that God is
doing in our midst,
all who are willing to let go of the pain that's gone.

And so this is an open invitation to come
and receive the bread that will sustain us as we embark on
this new calendar year.

All are invited to receive the sweetness of the cup
as a sign of God's promise of abundant possibilities.

All are invited to this meal, for all are forgiven
their past regrets

and invited into God's grace-filled future!

ALL: Praise to the Living God!

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,
Creator and Renewer of all life.
Time and again you seek us out,
breathing again the breath of life into the deflated places
our lives.

And so,
we come to your table again to praise you
and taste yet again what your steadfast love can do...
Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry and ate with those
others considered unworthy.
Through him, faith and hope were born again for so many...
On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks for 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, as we remember these words and acts of Jesus,
we offer our own lives, leaving behind what we do not
need, seeking new paths full of risen life in you.
As followers of Christ, we proclaim and live out this holy

mystery:

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
so that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
breaking ourselves open to your future.

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.

Through your Son Jesus Christ
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,
now and forever!

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 #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

**HYMN #417 This Is a Day of New Beginnings (New
Century Hymnal/Black Hymnal)**

**1. This is a day of new beginnings
Time to remember and move on
Time to believe what love is bringing
Laying to rest the pain that's gone**

**2. For by the life and death of Jesus
God's mighty Spirit, now as then
Can make for us a world of difference
As faith and hope are born again.**

**3. Then let us with the Spirit's daring
Step from the past and leave behind
Our disappointment, guilt and grieving
Seeking new paths and sure to find**

**4. Christ is alive and goes before us
To show and share what love can do
This is a day of new beginnings
Our God is making all things new.**

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

HYMN #330 Let Us Break Bread Together (New Century
Hymnal, black)

**1. Let us break bread together on our knees
Let us break bread together on our knees
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
My God have mercy on me**

**2. Let us drink wine together on our knees
Let us drink wine together on our knees
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
My God have mercy on me**

**3. Let us praise God together on our knees
Let us praise God together on our knees
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
My God have mercy on me.**

Please rise in body or spirit.

We Set Off: A Proclamation for the Continued Journey

Guide: We checked the signs and markers all along the way to make sure we were moving in a faithful direction. And now, with faith, we move on into a new year with perseverance for the continued journey ahead. Having been to Bethlehem, we know that the Light of Christ shines through any night we may encounter. We are never alone. And so we sing with confidence, that Jesus Christ is born and goes before us!

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.

***Closing #584 I am the Light of the World (New Century Hymnal, Black)**

**1. When the song of angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the sages and the shepherds have found their
way home,
The work of Christmas is begun.**

REFRAIN: I am the light of the world!

**You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery of what
you're meant to do and be.**

**2. To find the lost and lonely one,
To heal the broken soul with love,
To feed the hungry children with
warmth and good food,
To fee the earth below, the sky above!**

REFRAIN

**3. To free the prisoner from all chains,
To make the powerful care,
To rebuild the nations with strength of good will,
To see all God's children everywhere!**

REFRAIN

**4. To bring hope to every task you do,
To dance at a baby's new birth,
To make music in an old person's heart
And sing to the colors of the earth!**

REFRAIN

Postlude Music

Let it Snow Sammy Cahn and composer Jule Styne
Blake Hoppes

Worship Theme: c. Worship Design Studio

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$23,764.00	8 AM	N/A
<i>Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Nov.)</i>	\$351,540.00	10:30 AM	62
<i>Calendar Year 2023 (Jan.-Nov.)</i>	\$346,119.00	Online Views	
Change from Last Year	1.6%	Sunday School	N/A
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	15
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		2024 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
		Last Week:	\$, 250lbs
		Total YTD:	\$, 250lbs

Christmas Mission YTD:	\$3,100.00
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Presentations to the Glory of God

Grandparents Wes and Maria Beltz

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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