

Sundays, December 4, 11, and 18 at 8am and 10:30am

Friday, December 23 at 7pm, Christmas Eve Worship Candlelight and Communion

Saturday, December 24, Christmas Eve Worship

3pm Candlelight and Communion

5pm Children's Choir, No Communion

8pm Candlelight and Communion

Sunday, December 25 Christmas Day No 8am Worship, Only 10:30am Worship

Sunday, January 1 New Year's Day No 8am Worship, Only 10:30am Worship

Sunday, January 8 8am and 10:30am Worship with Communion, Young Adult Sunday

Pick up a copy of the book *Everything Is Sacred* for inspirational daily readings.

Copies are in the lobby on Sundays or in the bin on the South side entrance during the week.

**Sunday, December 11th, 2022
8:00am and 10:30am Worship
Advent 3: Sacred Space**

GUESTS, Welcome to our faith community here at Union UCC. To learn more about us please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unionneffs.

Please complete the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it in with your offering or give it to a pastor. This is a good way to let us know you're here.

One of our core values as a church is extravagant welcome and hospitality. We believe in God's inclusive love. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Lay Reader: 8:00 Ron Pope, 10:30 Dan Topp

Ushers: 8:00 Kerry Snyder, Tom Anderson

10:30 Deidre Bilger, Carol James, Randy Bilger, Ruth Ruch, Janice Metzger, Julie Johnson, Todd McCoy, Laura Kohler

Sound: Karl Klinger

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

Gathering Music
Jingle Bells James Lord Pierpont
Jazz Ensemble

Reflecting the Sacred

The shiny additions to our Advent and Christmas visuals remind us that we are called to reflect the sacred each and every day. "Incarnation" is a word that means that God's presence came to dwell among all people, and we believe this happened in a special way in the birth of Jesus. All creation has always been imbued with the Creator's brilliance. This season, we will remember the call to shine with this holy light.

Welcome

When you arrived here this morning, you received a cotton ball with olive oil on it. For those of you worshiping with us at home, please take a moment to grab a little olive oil from the kitchen or some lotion from your bathroom cabinet.

Online worshipers – you might like to have a candle nearby to light.

Crossing the Threshold

Leader: All of creation is imbued with the presence of the Christ Mystery. It is a "Christ Mirror." When we say this, we don't say that all things are God, but that God is in and through all things. The Creator's very DNA was set in motion as day and night, earth and sky, flora and fauna, creatures and humans inhabited the earth. And God called it all inherently "good." The earth upon which we walk is a Sacred Place. Our homes, our

communities, our church, even the technology that enables us to be connected is reflecting the sacred creation, providing spaces for us to encounter divine joy. We come this day so very grateful for it. This day we celebrate Sacred Space in our Advent journey.

As we have done in the first two weeks, we'll take a moment to turn our memories and imaginations to the Sacred Spaces we have known. I invite you to get comfortable where you are sitting. If it helps to ground you, place both your feet on the floor. I invite you to open your hands upward in your lap. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so and take a deep, intentional breath in and out. If your mind is buzzing and you find it difficult to slow down, it's OK. Don't judge it... just take another breath and "thank and excuse" for just a moment the ping-pong thoughts in your brain. That's it. Take time to settle in.

Bring to your mind's eye a place that you love. Or it could just be a scene full of the things that you love. Perhaps there is lamplight or firelight and a cat napping in the window. Maybe you are walking outside on a tree-lined path, perhaps with a canine companion. Or it could be a place whose architecture takes your breath away. You might be sitting on a beach listening to the waves or snow-shoeing on a full-moon night. Take a moment and choose one of the many places that might be coming to mind. As you see this scene, put it in slow motion and move in closer to a detail. Think of a phrase that expresses your admiration such as, "wow," or "ahhhhhh." Now imagine particles of light showering slowly upon you in this place where you are. Let this reflection of light be an anointing of joy for seeing more and more of life through the lens of the Sacred. Continue to just breathe, listen, and see with your heart.

SOLO or CHOIR:
Upon this moment,

upon this people,
upon this place,
the holy comes.
And sacred knowing
brings sacred being
for sacred doing of God's plan.

Take one more deep breath and open your eyes slowly.

Readers:

8:00 Ron Pop, Edie Fellae

10:30 Devon, Rowan, and Lochlan Kuharik

Readers:

Please repeat after me [us]:

We pray for Joy this day.
We pray for Joy this day.

We open to see the Sacred reflected in all things.
We open to see the Sacred reflected in all things.

We open to see each place
We open to see each place

as a gift of holy presence.
as a gift of holy presence.

This is the gift of the Christ Mystery,
This is the gift of the Christ Mystery,

lighting the way to joy.
lighting the way to joy.

ALL (sung):

**Upon this moment,
upon this people,
upon this place,**

**the holy comes.
And sacred knowing
brings sacred being
for sacred doing of God's plan.**

Prayer

Leader:

Living God, Christ Mystery, Spirit of Joy,
we give you thanks for this physical and
online space for gathering.

As we take in the joy you offer,
may we be a reflection of your light,
expanding the sacred space of "right here"
into the sacred place of "everywhere."

Amen.

Sharing God's Light

Leader: One of our core values as God's church here in
Neffs is extravagant welcome.

So repeat after me - No matter who you are or where you
are on life's journey,

**ALL: No matter who you are or where you are on life's
journey,**

Leader: you are welcome here.

ALL: You are welcome here.

Leader: Please stand in body or spirit to greet each other
and to share God's light with one another.

We send our love and light to those watching and
listening at home or during the week.

***Opening Hymn #193 O Come All Ye Faithful (Gold
Hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God)**

**1. 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.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.

2. Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
O sing, al 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.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.

3. Ye, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning,
O Jesus, to Thee be all 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.
O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord.

Please be seated.

Refracting the Sacred

Leader: As light passes through a medium, it can be redirected in ways that make its brilliance more visible, as in a prism. As we encounter the message today, we see the world and our own lives and loved ones in a different light, one that invites us to know more deeply the sacred nature of all things.

10:30 Worship – Time for Children

Education Hour for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am

**Children's Church – during 10:30am Worship for
ages 3-grade 5.**

Ms. Tiffany would like to invite children to join her and her volunteers for Sunday School at 9:15 and Children's Church during 10:30am service.

**TODAY: Pastors invite children forward for a Children's Time
and then they leave with Ms. Tiffany for a time
designed just for them!**

Children will be in the basement and will return before
worship is over. If worship ends early, parents are welcome
to meet their children downstairs.

Children's Time

All: (Sung)

We reflect a sacred light,

Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

Shining through the darkest night.

Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

Like the shining stars above,

Fa-la-la, la-la-la, la-la-la.

We can beam God's light and love,

Fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la.

Introduction to Scripture

Reader: The pregnancy of Mary is connected to the
promise of justice and joy in the readings this week. Mary's
womb becomes a sacred space for the gestation of grace
that moves into, and is transforming, the world. We will pon-
der the spaces we inhabit at home, work, and
community, asking whether they are feeding, nurturing,
and reflecting the freedom and joy that is so desperately
needed. Hear this first reading:

First Reading

Isaiah 35: 1-10 (NRSVUE)

Reader: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,

the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the Lord,
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Second Reading
Luke 1: 46b-55 (NRSVUE)

Reader: And Mary said,
“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his
servant.

Surely from now on all generations will call me
blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of
their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Music Offering
God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Jazz Ensemble

The Message Sacred Space Pastor Kris

Hymn #180 What Child is This (Gold Hymnal, Hymns for the Family of God)

**1. What child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?**

**This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the son of Mary.**

**2. Why lied He in such mean estate
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.**

**This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the son of Mary.**

**3. So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come peasant, king, to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.**

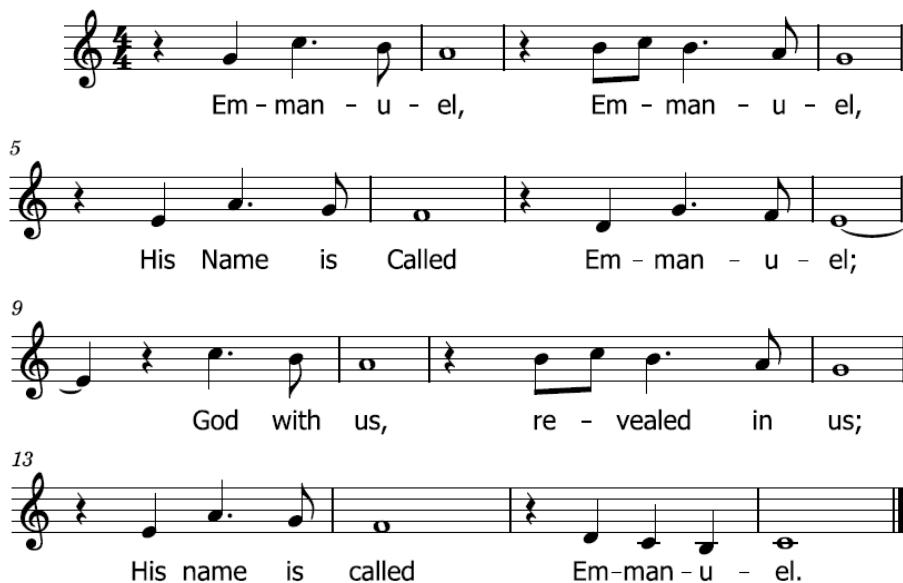
**This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
Haste, haste to bring Him laud, The Babe, the son of Mary.**

Refilling the Sacred

Leader: We are wells of the sacred. God's presence is poured into creation in a never-ending flow of love. We enter a time of prayer that invites us to be refilled in ways that can help us pour out our love throughout the week. All we must do in this moment is open our hearts to the Holy One.

Prayers

Emmanuel, Emmanuel Bob McGee



Em - man - u - el, Em - man - u - el,

5
His Name is Called Em - man - u - el;

9
God with us, re - vealed in us;

13
His name is called Em - man - u - el.

**ALL: (Spoken) Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise.
(St. Patrick's Prayer)**

Repeat ALL Singing: Emmanuel, Emmanuel

The 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.**

10:30am Musical Offering
Greensleeves Anonymous
Cameron Kuntz

News about the Ministry and Mission of God's Church

Prayer

God of birthing new life into the world and our lives, we bring our gifts to you and to this church and community: gifts of heart, spirit, energy, love, time, resources, dreams, hopes, passion, compassion, meaning and purpose, and faith. We come to the manger and we bow, asking for your guidance and blessing and these gifts and on us. Deepen our commitment to you and to each other. Pour your light on these gifts, on us, and on your church and all people we pray. Amen.

Offering

Thank you for the many ways in which you support God's work and God's people.

CHRISTMAS MISSION OFFERING

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 <http://www.unionucc.org/resources/giving-and-sponsorship/ways-to-give/ChristmasMission>.

The Allentown Rescue Mission For more than a century, the Allentown Rescue Mission has addressed the changing face of homelessness, tackling the root causes of homelessness, and helping to end homelessness one life at a time throughout the Lehigh Val-

ley. Thousands have come to their shelter receiving life changing help. Their shelter has been a place where men have begun to experience restoration.

The Laurel House is part of the Thistle Farms and Bloom community which provides sanctuary and a continuum of care to heal, empower, and employ women survivors of sex trafficking. This new location in Allentown will support pregnant survivors with 2 years of safety while they heal, deliver their child, attend parenting classes, and receive mentoring and vocational training in order to live independently.

Donate to God's Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC OFFERING ENVELOPES. If you can't attend worship, you can mail your envelopes to the church. The church address is on one side, just add a stamp.

ELECTRONIC GIVING. Choose to give a repetitive contribution on a regular basis (i.e weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly), or make single contributions whenever you desire in an amount of your choice. Electronic contributions are initiated from Union UCC's website (UnionUCC.org). Click on 'giving', then on 'Ways to Give' and follow the prompts. Feel free to contact John Harting 610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-398-2654) to answer your questions or demonstrate the process.

MOBILE GIVING. If you would like to give on the go, Vanco, the company that processes our e-giving transactions, has a mobile app that allows you to do so. Open your app search screen, search under "Vanco Mobile Faith \Engagement" and follow the prompts.

AMAZON SMILE. Donate to Union UCC, Neffs (Search by zip code 18065) while you shop <https://smile.amazon.com>

10:30 Music Offering

Go Tell It on the Mountain Spiritual

Jazz Ensemble

*Offering Response

Please stand in body or spirit.

(Sung to the tune of "What Child Is This")

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God all heavens and the earth

reflecting the sacred story.

This, this is Christ the One

who mirrors Joy for all of us.

Haste, haste to bring him laud,

the Word of time eternal.

Reframing the Sacred

Leader: We too often think that something "sacred" is far away and not available to us. This Advent season, we are "reframing" the way we recognize the sacred reflected all around and through us. As we prepare to move into the world, we begin to reframe our view of the world and our circumstances, illuminating new ways of being the Christ (Anointed One) tangibly present.

Anointed to Sacred Space

[When you arrived here this morning, you received a cotton ball with olive oil on it. For those of you worshiping with us at home, please take a moment to grab a little olive oil from the kitchen or some lotion from your bathroom cabinet.]

All things were "Christified"—anointed at their creation. This week, you are invited to an anointing of your senses to seek

a depth of vision that notices the precious details around us.

As you rise in the morning, try a ritual of touching your eyes and ears, nose, lips, and hands for a brief moment (with lotion, cream, or chapstick... or without) to ready them to a deeper looking, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. Imagine that this ritual touch imbues your senses with a kind of superpower beyond their usual powers of observation. Imagine that your “noticer” is turned onto a high frequency and that you will experience common and usual spaces at home and work and out in your daily life in a way that brings more joy than you have felt before about those places. And then one time this week, share a visit with someone to a place that is special, that is magical to you—perhaps it is a street with houses covered in Christmas lights, or a place in nature that calms and soothes you, or a cozy place by a fire with a cup of tea or coffee. Soak in the sacred that is reflected all around you.

Benediction

Leader: When you see lights twinkle,
when you catch a reflection in a mirror,
when you notice the sunlight dancing on a surface
or a nightlight glowing in the darkness,
let these be signs that the Christ Light is revealed
again and again in and through this world.

Know that your brilliant presence
is pouring more Joy into a weary world.
God loved us by becoming us.
This means you are already
reflecting the sacred.

In the name of the Creator, Christ, and Spirit of Hope.
Amen.

Please stand.

***Closing Hymn #179 The First Noel (Gold Hymnal)**

**1. The first noel the angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.**

Noel, noel! Noel, noel! Born is the King of Israel!

**2. They looked up and saw a star Shining in the east,
Beyond them far; And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.**

Noel, noel! Noel, noel! Born is the King of Israel!

**3. And by the light of that same star,
Three wise men came from country far;
To seek for a king was their intent,
And to follow the star wherever it went.**

Noel, noel! Noel, noel! Born is the King of Israel!

**4. This star drew nigh to the north-west,
Over Bethlehem it took its rest;
And there it did both stop and stay,
Right over the place where Jesus lay.**

Noel, noel! Noel, noel! Born is the King of Israel!

**5. Then entered in those wise men three,
Full reverently upon their knee,
And offered there, in His presence,
Their gold and myrrh and frankincense.**

Noel, noel! Noel, noel! Born is the King of Israel!

Go, Be Light in the World Music
O Tannenbaum Arr. Vince Guaraldi
Jazz Ensemble

Special thanks to our Jazz Ensemble: Blake Hoppes-
piano, Mike Baer– guitar, Mitchell Roth– trumpet, Matt
Gerry– trumpet, Andy Hill– trumpet

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)	
Last Week	\$10,321.00
Calendar Year 2022 (Jan-Oct.)	\$ 309,414.00
Calendar Year 2021 (Jan-Oct.)	\$ 302,292.00
Change from Last Year	2.4%
Budget FY 2022 (July 2022 - June 23)	\$ 131,000.00
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July 2022-June 23)	\$ 112,648.00
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-14.0%
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

Attendance Last Week		
	In person	Online
8:00 am	44	153
10:30 am	102	160
Education Hour		

2022 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Last Week:	lbs, \$
Total YTD:	5,989 lbs, \$1449.00

Presentations to the Glory of God

Spread the Good News :

Be a sponsor for \$20, send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or \$8 for 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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