



December 14th, 2025
Son of Mary
Advent 3

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.

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 Readers: 8 am– Carol Pope 10:30 am– Janice Metzger
Ushers: 8 am– Kerry Snyder , Tom Anderson, Larry Todd, Lorie Hackett
10:30 am– Janice Metzger, Julie Johnson, Karen Nuschke, Ralph & Connie Gioielli, Carol James
Greeters: Jim & Leanna Lane, Mark & Debbie Daluisio
Sound: Pat Sorg

GATHERING

Like the iconic figures gathered around the Christ Child in our nativity scenes, we gather together because we want to know Jesus more as we seek to bring his Reign of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love on earth.

Prelude Music

Go, Tell It On The Mountain

Jazz Ensemble

Blake Hoppes- Piano, Mike Baer- Guitar, Malcolm MacKenzie- Bass,
Andy Hill – Trumpet, Garet Hill – Alto Sax.

Welcome to Union UCC!

Welcome & Announcements

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

We Gather at the Scene

*Leader: This week in our Advent series of asking and answering the complex question “What Child **IS** This?”, we encounter another description of the Christ Child that will tell us much more about who he was destined to be.*

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?

Leader: We often hear Jesus referred to as the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man.” But this carol points out his identity over and over as the “Son of Mary.” This equally powerful description points to his being reared by a woman who, upon hearing she would bear a child, said “yes” to one of the most difficult and precarious situations she could face. And then she sings with joy a song of justice for the ages. She goes on to guide and help form this child who would tend to the suffering ones.

Reader 1: We light this candle of Joy for those who need it most.

Reader 2: For all whose despair feels endless.

Reader 1: For all who find little joy in daily living.

Reader 2: For all whose disappointment runs deep

Reader 1: Our question for today at the scene of the nativity is this:

"How can we proclaim a deep joy "in spite of" hardship in our time?"

Reader 2: What child IS this? This, this, is the Son of Blessed Mary who reigns with joy forever.

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

Prayer of Invocation

**ALL: Here, at the nativity of your birth,
give us the courage to face this moment
With an uncanny joy
Open us to new understandings of
the unfolding story of your presence among us.
Show us how to praise you even when songs and carols
feel empty.
We pray in the name of the Child,
the One Who Uplifts our hearts and lives.
Amen.**

Greeting

Peace be with you!

And also with you!

Let us pass the peace of Christ with one another.

***Please rise in body or spirit to greet each other and for the first song.**

***Hymn #192** Angels We Have Heard on High
Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God

**Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echo back their joyous strains**

REFRAIN: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo

**Shepherds why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
Say what may the tidings be,
Which inspire your heavenly song?**

REFRAIN: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo

**Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come adore, on bended knee
Christ, the Lord, the newborn King**

REFRAIN: Gloria in excelsis Deo, Gloria in excelsis Deo

Please be seated.

10:30 Children's Time

SONG

**ALL: Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

Skit with Miss Nikki and Pastors

**ALL: The cattle are lowing the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.
I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky,
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**

Sundays at 10:30am: Worship Children's Church 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. Nikki 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.

Also on Sundays 9:15-10:15 am, ages 3 to grade 7. Kids are invited to the Education Hour with Ms. Nikki and Leaders.

Watch for God First Wednesdays and other events too!

Music Offering 10:30 am: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Hazel Dojack & Aubrey Flueso

We Hear the Story

Introduction by Leader/Reader: We all have witnessed people who “rise to the occasion,” who bring energy and commitment, even and especially in the midst of the most unsettling times. From the book, *The First Advent in Palestine*, we read:

“...without a doubt, [Mary] experienced the push and pull of war and resistance that shaped the villages of Galilee.”

The situation for women in the time of Jesus' birth was more difficult than we might imagine. In the scripture today, we hear that Mary will be perceived as an unwed mother, something that could have ruined her future forever. But she believes in the mission that God is laying out for her, and her role in it. Hear now this remarkable account from Luke 1:26-56:

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!” Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, “Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus—‘Deliverance.’ His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.”

Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have never been with a man?” The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God.” Mary said, “I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say.” With that, the angel left her.

Within a few days Mary set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of Judah, where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted

Elizabeth. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the Messiah should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our God said to her would be accomplished!"

Mary said:

"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age
for those who fear you.
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,
mindful of your mercy—
the promise you made to our ancestors—
to Sarah and Abraham
and their descendants forever."

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Message
Pastor Kayli

Books and Prayer Journals to reflect and learn more are on the table in the lobby.

Blessings on your journey to the manger.

Our Friday and Sunday class is reading - **The First Advent In Palestine: Reversals, Resistance, and the Ongoing Complexity of Hope** by Kelley Nikondeah

What Child IS This? Beyond the Lullaby A daily journal for Advent.

RESPONDING

Our faithful response is to praise God for this story of Emmanuel, God-With-Us, even and especially in the midst of difficulty, for God is indeed with us even still.

Prayers

Great Holy One
by Brian Wren and Susan Heafield

All Sung:

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Leader: In this moment of silent contemplation, we lift up our hopes for the world, for its people, for the kind of kin-dom embodied by the child who was son of a strong and wise woman.

Time of Silent Contemplation

ALL Sung: Living one, how will you lead us?

**“Not by scheming or by stealth, not with glamor, power and wealth,
but through Jesus, teacher, healer,
In a manger born, joy on Christmas morn.”**

**Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Leader: Holy Living One,
Child of Joy,
Spirit of Audacity

we come to you today weary of the forces that make
joy such a difficult thing to hold,

weary of the effort it takes to birth something new
in a world bent on regressing away from
wholeness for all people.
We know you are with us,
for you came to our human story when we needed your mes-
sage so much.
We still do.

We ask, "what child is this that we follow, and who are we
in the scene of this unfolding story?"

As the nativity begins to fill with the promise of new birth,
we again plead for your presence to break into our lives
and show us the light of joy.

And we ask for the courage to step into the scene,
preparing the way for fullness of possibility for all people

We give you thanks, O God, this day for...

We name our sorrow this day for...

We ask for your forgiveness this day for...

Be with us as we seek to be the Body of Christ in the world.
We pray this in the way you taught us, saying...

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.**

**ALL Sung: Great, Holy One, spreading time and space,
show us who You are in a human face.**

Celebrating and Blessing Our Members and Disciples Of 1-19 years

Video: Nicole & Kim Pentland

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

Christmas Mission Offering

You can support this by using the Christmas Mission Offering envelope in your envelope packet, or a blank envelope marked - Christmas Mission, or donate electronically by using any of the options below and noting "Christmas Mission."

This year we are supporting:

HUGS Pediatric Cancer Foundation of the Lehigh Valley -

When a parent hears the words "your child has cancer," their world is forever altered. PCFLV can immediately step in and offer assistance and support to the entire family.

Allentown Rescue Mission - Since 1900, the Allentown Rescue Mission has rescued, rehabilitated, and restored men in crisis across the Greater Lehigh Valley. Their approach is both practical and spiritual, meeting immediate needs while addressing root causes through the power of Christ.

Invitation to the Offering

What gifts are adequate for the Son of Mary, the Bringer of Joy? Our theme song says, "so bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come peasant, king, to own him." Whether what we have to give is simply the gift of our presence and gratitude, or if we are privileged with coffers of precious resources, we give what we can. In this way we "take ownership" of our role in the scene, in the unfolding story of Joy.

Faith Commitment Cards – please complete and return your Faith Commitment Card by January 18 by placing it in the offering plate, or in the box at the sanctuary entrance, or by completing it with the link <https://bit.ly/faithcommitment25-26>

Ambassadors (everyone!): Share our news, events, and spirit on social media and with your friends, family, and neighbors.

That's what keeps us relevant, engaged, and growing!

Watch for Union UCC merchandise soon!



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Relevant • Engaged • Growing



OFFERING

Dreaming God's Dream

NO GIFT TOO SMALL. NO DREAM TOO BIG.

Thank you for all the ways that you help us make God's dream a reality at Union UCC.

ELECTRONIC GIVING <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/home> or **QR code**. Single or ongoing donation with credit/debit card. Help with fees if you can.

FREE Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app. Look for our church Union United Church of Christ, Neffs, PA and register your information to contribute.

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 Sunday's offering plate with a member offering envelope or guest envelope (in the seat racks).

Please reach out to Don Penrod or Pastor Kris if you have questions or if you'd like to learn more about other giving options or legacy gifts to Union.

Electronic Giving



Vanco Mobile



Venmo



Music Offering: God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman
Jazz Ensemble

*** Offering Response**

ALL Sung:

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

SENDING FORTH

Just as our theme carol asks, “what child is this?” we, too,
have come with our questions this day. We go into the world
with
answers of Good News, being the Body of Christ through our
words and deeds.

We Ask, We Answer

As we prepare to go into the world,
let us ask and answer the question we came with.

What child IS this?

This is the one born into a time when
unbridled joy was squelched by those in power.

What child IS this?

This is the one whose birth would stir the world from slumber
and challenge us to know joy that comes from right
relationships.

What child IS this?

This, this is the “Son of Mary”
who shows us the song of life that is ours when
we stand up for the least.

Benediction

May the Womb of Life,
the Child of Joy,
the Spirit of Resistance to Injustice
be with you now and as you go.

Amen.

***HYMN #197** It Came Upon the Midnight Clear (Gold Hymnal)

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious song of old
From angels bending near the Earth to touch their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, good-will to men, from heaven's all-gracious
King
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing

And ye, beneath life's crushing load, whose forms are bending
low
Who toil along the climbing way with painful steps and slow
Look now for glad and golden hours come swiftly on the wing
O rest beside the weary load, and hear the angels sing

For lo, the days are hastening on, by prophet seen of old
When, with the ever-circling years, shall come the time foretold
When the new heaven and earth shall own The Prince of Peace
their King
And the whole world send back the song which now the angels
sing.

Postlude Music Good King Wenceslas
Jazz Ensemble

Worship Theme: c. Worship Design Studio
Worship Design Team: Kathy Bonsell, Claire Kern, Deb Topp,
Pastor Kris, Nikki Pentland, Pastor Kayli
Sanctuary Decorations: Kathy Milander and Family,
Maryann Puia and Family
Outside Decorations: Worship Committee, Donna Christman and
Teresa Dalrymple
Special thanks to Ori Handwerk and Phil Wehr

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$10,472.00	8 AM	40
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan-Nov)	\$338,493.00	10:30 AM	95
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan. - Nov)	\$320,290.00	Online Views	-
Change from Last Year	5.7%	Sunday School	10
Budget FY 2025-2026 (July-Nov)	\$ 156,840.00	God First	30
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Nov)	\$151,776.00	Faith on Tap	38
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-3.2%	Breathe	8
Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes		2025 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
		Last Week:	175 lbs \$100
		YTD	5,590 Lbs \$1,560.00

Christmas Mission: \$1,706.00

Presentations to the Glory of God

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 Sarah to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.

