

**Christmas Eve
December 23, 2025
7 pm**

The Babe

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 Reader: Ron Pope

Sound: Doug Albert

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

What We All Want for Christmas is Peace Joel and Susie Raney
Susan Glosan with Blake Hoppes

Welcome to Union UCC! Welcome & Announcements

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

Holy Communion

Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.

Here, you will be served in your seats. Please wait to eat and drink until the Pastor invites you to do so.

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.

AT HOME: Please find something to eat and drink that represents communion for you so that you can share in Communion.

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

We Gather at the Scene

Leader: As we have ventured “beyond the lullaby” to unpack the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus, we have encountered a continuing human saga—one in which lullaby is met with lament for all that is not right with this world. But as we prepare for the celebration of the birth soon upon us, we are reminded that what also endures in the human story is the presence of hope beyond hopelessness, peace beyond understanding, and joy beyond despair. This is all made possible through the steadfast love of God-with-us.

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

Leader: In 1865, William Chatterton Dix penned a poem that would become the beloved Christmas-time favorite, “What Child is This?”

This year for Advent and Christmas, we have been prompted by this carol to ask deeper questions of Jesus' identity, "what child IS this?" When we look beyond the lullaby and behind the scenes, what we discover is that the answers are much more complicated than the lilting lullaby tune conveys. The time of Jesus' birth was fraught with difficulties. This is the scene into which Jesus was born. We are called, as his disciples, to enter the scene in the midst of our own complicated and difficult time in history, offering Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as the Christ Child did.

**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?**

Reader 1: We light these candles for those who need it most.

Reader 2: For all who need more Hope.

Reader 1: For all who yearn for Peace.

Reader 2: For all whose Joy lays dormant.

Reader 1: For all who need the salve of Love.

Reader 2: For all of who need this Child of Possibility.

Reader 1: Our question for this night at the scene of the nativity is this: "How do the messages of this child reverberate into our time, our lives, our world?"

Reader 2: What child IS this? This, this, is Christ the King who reigns with hope, peace, joy, and love forever.

**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!**

Prayer of Invocation

**Here, at the nativity of your birth,
give us the courage to face this moment
with humility and hope.**

**Open us to new understandings of
the unfolding story of your presence among us.
Show us the true meaning of the kingdom on earth
as it is in heaven.**

**We pray in the name of the Child,
the One Who Reigns in 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 #193 O Come, All Ye Faithful**
Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God
Instrumental Ensemble
Jacob Roth, Organ

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 heav'n 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 all glory giv'n!
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.

We Hear the Story
Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor 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 for them in the inn.

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: One Small Child
David Meece
Julie Wehr with Blake Hoppes

The Message

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

Leader: In this prayerful moment, we lift up our hopes for the world, for its people, for the kind of kin-dom embodied by the child who became the Christ. We pray especially this night for "peace on earth."
Let us pray:

Leader: Holy Living One, Child of Light,
Spirit of Resilience,
we come to you today weary of the violence of history.

We know you are with us,
for you came to our human story when we needed your message so much.
We still do.

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

The manger heralds the truth, "We are not alone." We thank you for your presence breaking into our lives, showing us the light of hope, peace, joy, and love.

And we ask for the courage to step into the scene, preparing the way for your reign.

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.**

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 King of Kings, the Child of Light? 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 Light in the dark corners.

Music Offering: Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas
Hugh Martin & Ralph Blane
Brittany Gelb, Violin with Blake Hoppes

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!



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>



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

Electronic Giving



Vanco Mobile



Venmo



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.

*** 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!**

Holy Communion

Everyone is welcome to this meal of love and grace.

Here, you will be served in your seats. Please wait to eat and drink until the Pastor invites you to do so.

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.

AT HOME: Please find something to eat and drink that represents communion for you so that you can share in Communion.

The Lord 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 good, Holy One, to give thanks to you,
always and everywhere.

You created us, you loved us into being,
you delivered us, and you spoke to us through prophets.
And then the time came for you to be with us, Emmanuel.

And so,
with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Sung Response:

**Holy, holy, holy,
God of the heavenly host;
Heaven and earth are full, are full
of the majesty of your glory.**

**Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!
Blessed the one who comes in the name of our God,
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!**

BLACK HYMNAL #795 (Seraphic Hymn)

Mary's boy became a man, compassionate and kind.

He invited all to follow the way of the kin-dom,
the commonwealth of God.

Wherever he went, he tended to those who suffered.

His own suffering at the hands of the elite
gave birth to a movement of your Spirit, O God,
that would forge a new covenant of hope, peace, joy, love, and
light.

Jesus promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

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."

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and cup. Bless this holy feast,
transformed and transforming, so that as Christ becomes part of
us, we might become part of him, bone of his bone, flesh of his
flesh, symbols of God's work in this world. Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.
The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.
The gifts of God for the people of God. Come, for all things are ready.

THE BREAD

Music Offering: Noul Nouvelet Traditional French Carol
Margie MacKenzie and Mike Baer, Guitars

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

THE CUP

Carol On This Day

**On this day earth shall ring
With the song children sing
To the Lord, Christ our King,
Born on earth to save us;
Him the Father gave us.**

Refrain:

Id-e-o-o-o, id-e-o-o-o, id-e-o,
gloria in excelsis Deo!

**God's bright star, o'er his head,
Wise Men three to him led;
Kneeling low by his bed,
Lay their gifts before him,
Praise him and adore him.**

Refrain

**On this day angels sing;
With their song earth shall ring,
Praising Christ, heaven's King,
Born on earth to save us;
Peace and love he gave us.**

Refrain

Take and drink, this is the cup of the new covenant, poured out for you.
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. Hil, Vocals; Jacob Roth, Organ

Candlelighting

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**

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 hope was hard.

What child IS this?

This is the one whose lowly status would send a message of peace with justice.

What child IS this?

This is the one who promises us joy
even when life is difficult.

What child IS this?

This is the "King of Kings"
who shows us the way of true love for all people.

What child IS this?

This, this, is the babe whose Light
spreads through our lives to others and to the world.

Benediction

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

May the True Sovereign,
the Child of Light,
the Spirit of Resistance to Injustice
be with you now and as you go.

Merry Christmas!
Merry Christmas!

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.

**Postlude Music
Blake Hoppes, Piano**

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 (administrator@unionucc.org) to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.

Thank you to our team of angels and elves for their work in preparing and decorating the church for Christmas

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 Lorie Hackett 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, volunteers, and leaders for giving your time and talents so generously.

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