

**Christmas Eve
December 24, 2025
5pm
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

Eric Minnich

Sound

Pat Sorg, Mike Baer

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

The Drummer Boy

Katherine Kennicott Davis

Instrumental Ensemble: Lucas Maxwell, Connor Maxwell, Gareth Hill, Andy Hill, Justin Bower, Mike Baer, Isaac Brace, Craig Knauss, Brittany Gelb
Director: Mitchell Roth

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Arr. Meredith Andrews & Jacob Sooter

Lucy Boyer, Vocals with Blake Hoppes

Christmas Lullaby from Songs for a New World

Jason Robert Brown

Emma Milander, Vocals with Blake Hoppes

Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring J.S. Bach Arr. John A. Dempsey

Craig Knauss, Clarinet and Mitchell Roth, Trumpet, with Blake

Hoppes

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!

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

We Gather at the Scene

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?**

Leader: God so loved the world that God became us in order to know us, to love us, even more deeply. Not just the cross at the end of Jesus' life, but the difficulty of the time of Christ's birth can show us the reality of "God-with-us" no matter what. This is a theme from our faith story that can open our hearts to see our own place in the narrative of history. No matter how afraid we are, the Babe "whom shepherds guard and angels sing" lives within us waiting to grow into Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love incarnate.

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

ALL:

**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.

Music Offering

The Present Forrest Frank 2024 River House Records

Kids Choir

**Isaac Brace, Darren Hoppes, Lincoln Hoppes, Raegan
Minnich, Cali Monahan**

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.

In that 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
favours!'

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. But 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, as it had been told them.

Music Offering

Away in a Manger Tune: Mueller

Lincoln Hoppes, Alto Sax with Blake Hoppes

The Message

Pastor Kayli

Music Offering

King of Kings Besty Lee Bailey

Garet Hill, Katelyn Attieh, Vocals with Blake Hoppes

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 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.**

Music Offering

This World That He Sees

Robert Kinkel and Paul O'Niel

Geoff Brace, Vocals; Mike Baer, Guitar, with Blake Hoppes

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.

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

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Watch for Union UCC merchandise soon!



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Relevant • Engaged • Growing

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>



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



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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

O Holy Night Adolphe Adam

Natalie St. Hill, Vocals: Jacob Roth, Organ

*** 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!**

Please stand in body or spirit.

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**

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

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.