

UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church Of Christ



Loving God. Loving Neighbor. Building Community.



December 24, 2025
5pm and 9pm

Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
An LGBTQ+ Open and Affirming Congregation
176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, NJ
973-744-7424

www.unioncong.org

*Please rise in body or spirit.
You are invited to join in the liturgy **in bold type**.

PRELUDE – In Bethlehem

Erik Dewar & Dan Forrest

*Though the road was long, the time
drew near,
Heaven's King on earth would soon
appear.
Yet, no bed prepared; no waiting
crown.
Just a stable near the edge of town.*

*Here the child was born so far from
home,
To those humble travelers all alone.
So they whispered low their soft
amen,
On that lonely night in Bethlehem.*

*Come behold the shepherds, oft
unseen,
Chosen first to look through rough,
unclean.
Tis the Christ! Peace on earth begins:
He will save his people from their sins.*

*See our Mighty God has done great
things!
Hear the angel hosts his glories sing
And repeat the sounding joy again!
On the holy night in Bethlehem.*

*You are worthy, Jesus, Lord of all,
Stooping down to grace that cattle
stall.
You did not recoil to meet us there,
All our weakness, shame, and grief to
share.*

*So bring down the mighty from their
seat;
Gently lift the humble to their feet,
That we all would at your manger
bend
To behold that sight in Bethlehem.*

Annelie Fahlstedt, violin; Hafsa Balki, violin;
Stella Saliei, viola; Darla Coolman, bass
Jeremy Carlisle, piano; Jeremy Whitener, tenor

WELCOME

Rev. Katrina Forman

LIGHTING THE CHRISTMAS CANDLE

Kathleen Kempf, Ben & Will Rosenak (5pm)
Janet and Larry Frick (9pm)

***HYMN #89 (Red Hymnal) – O Come, All Ye Faithful**
Words & Music: John F. Wade

ADESTE FIDELIS

see next page

O Come, All Ye Faithful



1 O come, all ye faith - ful, joy - ful and tri - um - phant, O
2 Sing, choirs of an - gels, sing in ex - ul - ta - tion,
3 Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this hap - py mor - ning,



come ye, O come ye to Beth - le - hem; Come and be -
sing, all ye ci - ti - zens of heaven_ a - bove; glo - ry to
Je - sus, to thee_ be all glo - ry given; Word of the

Refrain



hold him, born the King of an - gels;
God, all glo - ry in the high - est; O come, let us a -
Fa - ther, now in flesh ap - pear - ing;



dore him, O come, let us a - dore him, O



come, let us a - dore him, — Christ, — the Lord.

READINGS AND CAROLS

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rev. Leah McCullough

A READING FROM John 1:1-14 Barbara Ross (5pm), Kayla Jackson (9pm)

*HYMN #313 (Red Hymnal) - Joy to the World

ANTIOCH

Words: Isaac Watts

Music: G.F. Handel

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

1 Joy to the world! the Lord is come: let earth re - ceive her
2 Joy to the earth! the Sav - ior reigns; let all their songs em -
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in - fest the
4 He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the na - tions

King. Let ev - ery heart pre - pare him
ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
prove the glo - ries of his right - eous -

room, and heaven and na - ture sing, and heaven and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his
and heaven and na - ture sing,

and
sing, and heaven, and heaven and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.
heaven and na - ture sing,

MODERN READING "First Coming" by *Madeleine L'Engle*

Karen Whitehaus (5pm), Jeremy Whitener (9pm)

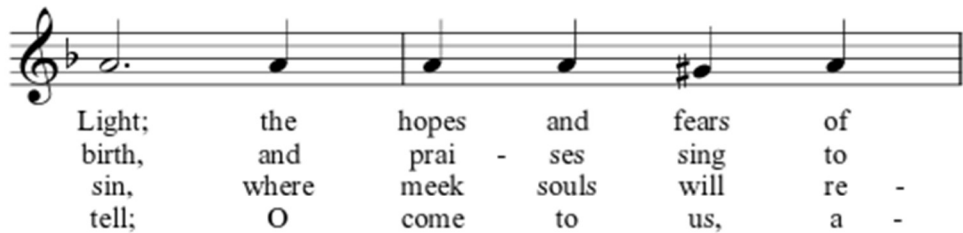
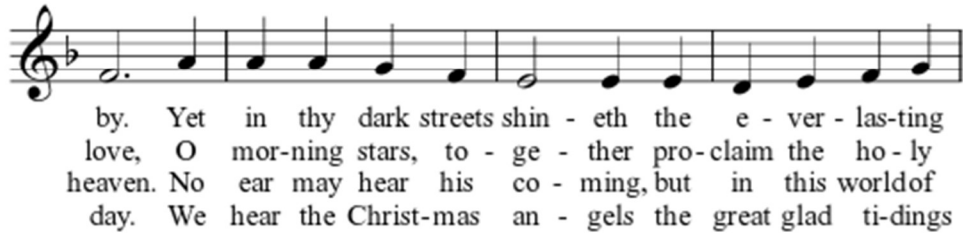
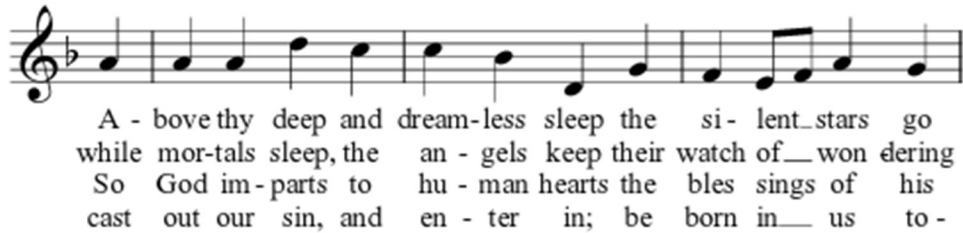
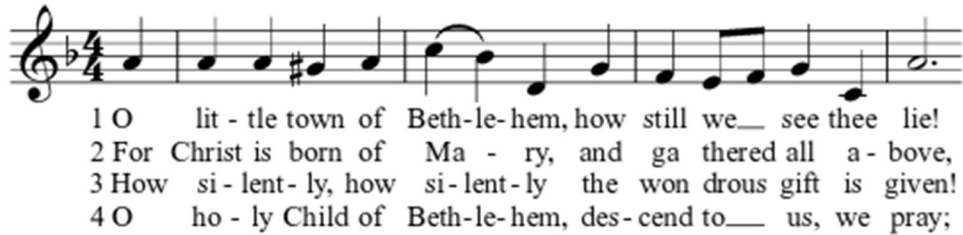
*HYMN #99 (Red Hymnal) - O Little Town of Bethlehem

ST. LOUIS

Words: Phillips Brooks

Music: Lewis H. Redner

O Little Town of Bethlehem



***HYMN #90 (Red Hymnal) - Angels We Have Heard On High**

GLORIA

Words & Music: Trad. French carol

Angels We Have Heard on High



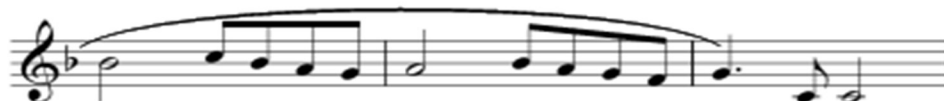
1 An - gels we have heard on high sweet - ly sing - ing
2 Shep - herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous
3 Come to Beth - le - hem, and see him whose birth the



o'er the plains, and the moun - tains in re - ply
strains pro - long? Say, what may the ti - dings be
an - gels sing; come, a - dore on ben - ded knee



e - cho back their joy - ous strains.
which in - spire your heaven - ly song? Glo - -
Christ the Lord, the new - born King.



ri - a



in ex - cel - sis De - o! Glo - -



ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o!

MODERN READING "Christmas Carol" by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Rob Middleton (5pm), Janet Aldrich (9pm)

***HYMN #100 (Red Hymnal) - The First Noel** (vs. 1-4)

NOWELL

Words & Music: Trad. English carol

MEDITATION

"One Christ, Many Cultures"

Rev. Katrina Forman

SPECIAL MUSIC – O Holy Night

arr. Tom Fettke

*O holy night! The stars are brightly
shining,*

*It is the night of our dear Savior's
birth.*

*Long lay the world in sin and error
pining,*

*Till He appeared and the soul felt its
worth.*

*A thrill of hope, the weary world
rejoices,*

*For yonder breaks a new and glorious
morn!*

*Fall on your knees! O hear the angel
voices!*

*O night divine, O night when Christ
was born;*

O night, O Holy night, O night Divine.

*Christ is the Lord! O praise His Name
forever,
His power and glory evermore
proclaim.*

Sanctuary Choir; Jeremy Carlisle, piano;
Annelie Fahlstedt, violin; Hafsa Balki, violin;
Stella Saliei, viola; Darla Coolman, bass

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Rev. Katrina Forman

MUSIC FOR MEDITATION – God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

arr. Tim Doran

UCC Ringers; Jeremy Carlisle, piano;
Annelie Fahlstedt, violin; Hafsa Balki, violin;
Stella Saliei, viola; Darla Coolman, bass

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Rev. Leah McCullough

***CLOSING HYMN – Silent Night**

Words: Joseph Mohr

STILLE NACHT

Music: Franz Gruber

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 Al-le-lu-ia!
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent night, holy night
Son of God, love's pure light,
Radiant beams from your holy face
bring the dawn of redeeming grace;
Jesus Christ at your birth,
Jesus Christ at your birth.

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Katrina Forman

Liturgy adapted from Rev. Amber Neuroth.

The church office will be closed through Sunday, January 4th.

For pastoral care needs, please contact:

December 25th-January 1st

Rev. Leah at 973-417-3407 / LMcCullough@unioncong.org

January 2nd-January 10th

Rev. Katrina at 973-417-3409 / KForman@unioncong.org

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS AND CHRISTMAS MUSIC DEDICATIONS

Christmas Flowers

In memory of Bill and Mary Eppell, from the Crist family

In honor of my three sons, Ben, Mati, and Matthew, and our joy-filled companion, Jake, from Vicki Paulson

In memory of Bert and Beryl Crist, and Bob Crist, from the Crist family

In memory of Bert Ghavami, from Deborah Williams

In memory of my mother, Flora, my father, John, and my brother, Davey, from Kim Crabtree

In memory of my grandparents, from Rev. Katrina

In honor of my father, Hal Moore, from Melissa Moore

In memory of Hal Moore from his grandchildren, Julia and Matthew Abate

In memory of Ina Minor, from Ellyn Minor

In memory of my parents, Clyde and Cleo Nesbit, from Judy Nesbit

In memory of Roseann Wallace, from Marcie and Dave Wallace

Christmas Music

In memory of Kate Khachaturian, from Armen

In memory of Dr. Raymond Stover, from Amy Hohn Stover

In gratitude for the incredible music ministry of Union Cong, from Rev. Katrina

To my loved ones, from Kim Reissig

In memory of Ruth E. Holzschuh, from Lisa Kauffman

Christmas Flowers And Music

In memory of our parents, from Ina Isobe and Paul Nishimoto

In loving memory of our parents, John and Helen, and Mike and Rose, from Michele and Paul Sionas.

In honor of the Anderson and Chase families, from Bob and Blythe Chase

In memory of Earl Crawford, beloved grandfather and educator, from Christy Crawford, Xavier Sullivan, and Cassius Sullivan

In memory of our parents, Joe and Gloria, Bob and Carol, from Catherine and Michael Spinella

ABOUT OUR CHRISTMAS OFFERING

In the spirit of celebrating Christmas traditions from around the world in our worship series, "One Christ, Many Cultures," we invite you to offer some tangible support to Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank this Christmas as we pray for the fragile ceasefire to grow into a just, lasting peace. Our Christmas offering will go to **Al Ahli Arab Hospital** in Gaza City, and to **Roots of Resilience**, an organization with roots here in Montclair, which supports farmers in the West Bank. Together, our gifts can be tangible expressions of our prayers for peace, hope, and dignity.

Roots of Resilience exists to foster mutual aid and solidarity with farmers in the West Bank. Their mission is to directly support Palestinian farmers, strengthen and preserve traditional food systems, and advocate for food sovereignty.

Al Ahli Arab Hospital (Ahli), in Gaza City (affiliated with the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem) is a beacon of hope and healing in one of the world's most troubled areas. Ahli serves everyone regardless of religion, ethnicity, or ability to pay. Today, Ahli Hospital operates the only functioning ICU in Gaza with just three beds to serve more than half a million people. Despite these immense pressures, the hospital remains a lifeline for vulnerable populations.

"Your generous support helps us to continue to be a beacon of light and hope to our devastated community. We are tired, but we cannot give up; there is much work still to do."

— Suhaila Tarazi, Ahli Hospital Director

To donate to the Christmas offering:

- Place money or a check in the Christmas offering envelope, located in the pew, and place it in the offering plate.
- Mail at check to the church: 176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07043.
- Donate online by going to www.unioncong.org and clicking the DONATE/PAY tab. Be sure to select "Christmas Offering" as your donation's purpose.
- Scan the QR code
- Any loose cash or checks in today's offering plate will benefit the Christmas Offering

SCAN ME

