

UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church Of Christ



Loving God. Loving Neighbor. Building Community.

December 28, 2025 First Sunday after Christmas

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

*There is no childcare available today.
Children are invited to remain in the
service today.*

*Please wear a name tag so we can
greet one another by name
(There are blank name tags in the
back of the sanctuary).*

PRELUDE – In the Bleak Midwinter

Words: Christina Rossetti

Janet Valdes-Dapena & Jeremy Carlisle

Music: Gustav Holst

WELCOME

Rev. Leah McCullough

CALL TO WORSHIP (*Psalm 96 – Inclusive Bible*)

One: Sing to Yahweh a new song! ☐
Sing to Yahweh, all the earth!

**Many: Sing to Yahweh, bless God's name!
Proclaim God's salvation day to day.**

One: Declare God's glory among the nations,
God's marvels to every people.

**Many: Yahweh is great, most worth of praise,
Yahweh is to be revered above all gods.**

One: Let the heavens be glad; let the earth rejoice;
Let the sea roar and all that it holds!

**Many: Let the fields exult and all that is in them!
Let all the trees of the forest sing for joy
at the presence of Yahweh who is coming.**

One: God is coming to rule the earth –
to rule the world with justice
and it's people with truth!

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

Words: Isaac Watts

ANTIOCH
Music: G.F. Handel

Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

D
A⁷ D G A

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

D

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 -

A

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

D
D/A A⁷ D

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,

A MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

PASSING THE PEACE

SCRIPTURE READING – Luke 2:4-20

***HYMN #94 (Red Hymnal) - Hark, the Herald Angels Sing!** *MENDELSSOHN*
Words: Charles Wesley Music: Mendelssohn

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing



1 Hark! the he - rald an - gels sing, — "Glo - ry to the
2 Christ, by high - est heaven a - dored, — Christ, the e - ver -
3 Hail the heaven - born Prince of Peace! Hail the Sun of



new - born King: peace on earth, and mer - cy mild, —
las - ting Lord, late in time be - hold him come, —
Right eous - ness! Light and life to all he brings, —
God and sin - ners re - con - ciled!" Joy - ful, all ye
off - spring of the Vir - gin's womb: veiled in flesh the
risen with heal - ing in his wings. Mild he lays his



na - tions, rise, — join the tri - umph of the skies; —
Go - dhead see; — hail th'in - car - nate De - i - ty, —
glo - ry by, — born that we no more may die, —



with th'an - ge - lic hosts pro - claim, "Christ is — born in
pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Je - sus, — our Im -
born to raise us from the earth, born to — give us



Beth - le - hem!"
ma - nu - el. Hark! the her - ald an - gels sing,
se - cond birth.



"Glo - ry — to the new - born King."

MODERN READING – “Hope in the Cradle” from *Black Liturgies*

***HYMN #89 (Red Hymnal) – O Come, All Ye Faithful**

ADESTE FIDELIS

Words & Music: John F. Wade

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.

***HYMN #129 (Black Hymnal) – Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**

IN DULCI JUBILO

Words: Heinrich Suso

Music: German Melody

1 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now give heed to what we say:
Jesus Christ was born today;
Ox and ass before him bow,
asleep within the manger now.
Christ is born today,
Christ is born today!

2 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now you know of endless bliss:
Jesus Christ was born for this!
God has opened heaven's door,
and you are blessed forevermore.
Christ was born for this,
Christ was born for this!

3 Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save,
Christ was born to save.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – Joys

Scott Randel's daughter, Alison Scott Randel, had a healthy baby boy,
Jesse Berry Morgan, on Tuesday, December 9th

Response: In the light of Christ among us,
We give joy time to breathe.

MODERN READING – "Hope in the Cradle" (continued)

***HYMN #124 (Black Hymnal) – Away in a Manger**

Words: Anon.

MUELLER

Music: James R. Murray

(next page)

Away in a Manger



1. A - way in a man-ger, no crib for a bed, The
2. The cat - tle are lo-wing, the Ba - by a - wakes, But
3. Be near me, Lord Je - sus, I ask Thee to stay Close



lit - tle Lord Je - sus laid down His sweet head; The stars in the
lit - tle Lord Je - sus, no cry - ing He makes; I love Thee, Lord
by me for - e - ver, and love me, I pray; Bless all the dear



sky ——— looked down where He lay, The
Je - sus! look down from the sky, And
chil - dren in Thy ten - der care, And



lit - tle Lord je - su, a - sleep on the hay.
stay by my cra - dle til mor - ning is nigh.
fit us for hea - ven to live with Thee there.

Hymnary.org

***HYMN #130 (Black Hymnal) – From Heaven unto Earth I Come**

VOM HIMMEL KOCH

Words: Martin Luther

Music: Hans Leo Hassler

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – Concerns

Response: Infant Christ, draw near to our needs.
Cradle us in your care.

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

Our {name for God}, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY

Invitation to the Christmas Offering

Music for Meditation – Lullay, mine liking

Jeremy Carlisle

arr. R. R. Terry

***Prayer of Dedication**

Generous God, use our gifts of time, talents and treasure, to spread the good news that Christ was born on Christmas long ago and is still being born anew in and through us each day. Amen.

***HYMN #154 (Black Hymnal) – Go Tell It on the Mountain**

African-American Spiritual adapted by John Wesley Work, Jr.

Refrain:

Go, tell it on the mountain,
Over the hills and everywhere.
Go, tell it on the mountain
That Jesus Christ is born.

2. The shepherds feared and trembled
When lo! above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus
That hailed our Savior's birth.

1. While shepherds kept their
watching
O'er silent flocks by night,
Behold thru-out the heavens
There shone a holy light.

3. Down in a lowly manger
The humble Christ was born,
And God sent us salvation
That blessed Christmas morn.

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE – The Hands That First Held Mary's Child

Jeremy Carlisle

Dan Forrest

Modern readings and the pastoral prayer are from the book, ***Black Liturgies: Prayers, Poems, and Meditations for Staying Human*** by Cole Arthur Riley, 2024.

THANK YOU for joining us this morning. Please complete a welcome card if you are visiting and put it in the offering plate, or scan the QR code on the back of the pew. Please join us in the Assembly Room after worship for fellowship.

THANK YOU to the Sunday Welcome Team, Jeremy Carlisle, and Janet Valdes-Dapena

LIVESTREAM VIDEO: Nkenge Jones

SOUND OPERATOR: Joe Cristiani

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@unioncongregation.org

January 2nd - January 10th

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

From The UCC Players: Join the Cast of a One Evening Reading of Shakespeare on Saturday, January 24th

Got an acting bug but not much time? Want to share your performing talents and benefit one of UCC's longest-standing groups? UCC Players will be hosting a one-night fundraiser on Saturday, Jan. 24th, 2026, and we want to involve as many of our UCC community as possible. Our goal is to raise funds so we can replace our antiquated, energy-wasting lights with more modern, energy-efficient LED lights. The evening will be called: *"List, List, O List: An Evening of Shakespeare's Soliloquies, Sonnets, Songs and Scenes"*. We'll be reading and singing from scripts so no memorization needed! We have material you can choose from and UCC Players who will act as coaches/directors. We will have only one full group rehearsal, on Friday, January 23rd. Email Carlos (crvdapena@gmail.com) if you are interested.

SMALL GROUPS RESUME THE WEEK OF JANUARY 5, 2026.

END-OF-YEAR GIVING AND CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Help The Church Finish Strong In 2025 And Plan For The Future

As the year draws to a close, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and dedication to our shared life in faith. Your contributions have been vital to our mission and ministry throughout the year. The final Sunday of the year provides an opportunity to consider three ways to financially support the church's missions.

2025 Pledges and End-of-year Gifts

With the calendar year coming to an end, it is a good time to make a tax-deductible contribution to fulfill your 2025 pledge if you have not done so yet or to make an end-of-the-year gift. If you would like to do so, you can place your gift in the offering plate during worship, place a check in the mail (postmarked by December 31), or make an online donation by clicking here.

2026 Pledges

Additionally, if you have not yet made a commitment for the 2026 pledge year, we encourage you to prayerfully consider doing so now. You can submit your 2026 commitment by clicking here. The Generosity Team is excited to share that we have already received 83 pledges for a total of \$397,003. This includes 11 new pledgers for 2026!

Christmas Offering

Lastly, our Christmas Offering invites members and friends 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 Roots of Resilience, a local organization supporting farmers in the West Bank. We have already raised over \$6,000! Thank you!

There are multiple ways 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
- 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

Thank you again for your faithful stewardship and partnership in our ministry.

SCAN ME



CHURCH CONTACT INFO: Church Office: 973-744-7424

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**Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
An LGBTQ+ Open and Affirming Congregation**

176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, NJ 973-744-7424 www.unioncong.org