

DENNIS UNION CHURCH, UCC

an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24, 2025

7:30 p.m.

We claim as our mission the promotion of justice, human dignity, and peace. Thus we bind ourselves to follow where the Spirit of God shall lead, revealing God's will for our lives and the life of the Church.

Bells Toll the Hour

Prelude

"Est ist ein Ros entsprungen"

J. Brahms

Christmas Greeting

*Call to Worship

On this holy night, we come,
dazzled and awe-struck, ready to sing alongside the angels.
On this holy night, we come,
eager and hopeful, ready to journey alongside the shepherds.
On this holy night, we come,
quietly and tenderly, ready to worship alongside Mary.
On this holy night, we come,
singing, trusting, believing, proclaiming: good news is louder than fear.
Let us worship our good news, with-us God.

*Carol

"O Come All Ye Faithful"

Verses 1 & 2 - Hymn #148

***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 you citizens of heaven 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!***

*Invocation¹

Living God, on this holy night we gather-
To stand with shepherds, amazed at your glory;
To sing with angels, rejoicing in your work;
To wait with Joseph, trusting in your promise;
To sit with Mary, cradling your love.
May the good news of this night inspire us not to be afraid,
But to tell the world of our great joy; for to us is born a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord.
Glory and praise to you forever! Amen.

Advent Candle Liturgy

In a fearful world, where do you see the presence of God?

We see God's fingerprints all around us. We see God in the beauty of the stars. We see God in the love of this community. We see God in the dreams we hold for a better world.

Yes, even in a fearful world, God is here. God is all around us. On this holy night, we light all of the Advent candles, the light of hope, the light of peace, the light of joy, the light of love. After weeks of waiting, we light the Christ Candle, the One who is Emmanuel, God with us.

May these lights and the light of Christ help us remember that even in a fearful world, God's love is all around us and we are not alone. Amen.

Choral Response

"One Candle Is Lit"

Hymn 128

***Come, listen, the sounds of God with-us ring clear,
and signs of a cross in the distance appear.
The Word once made flesh, yet the Word ever near.
One candle is lit for the Christ birthday here.***

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of angel choruses, you hang the stars in the sky, but we do not see them.

You fill the night with angelic song, but we do not hear it.

You send shepherds to tell the good news, but we do not believe them.

You bring love into the world, but we do not seek it.

Quiet the fear in us that works to rationalize, minimize, and distract from the good news you put forth into the world.

Tune our hearts back to your song. With hope we pray. Amen.

Silent Reflection

Assurance of Grace

Family of faith, when the angels arrived in the field that night, the shepherds were afraid. But the angels said:

"Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good news of great joy for *all* people.

This good news is:

**love freely given, grace radically extended,
welcome always offered, belonging never restricted.**

Friends, we are seen, loved, welcomed, forgiven, called, and sent to serve.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Carol "Angels We Have Heard on High" Verses 1 & 2 - Hymn #155

***Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply echoing their joyous strains.
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!***

***Shepherds, why this jubilee? Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be which inspire your heav'nly song?
Gloria, in excelsis Deo! Gloria, in excelsis Deo!***

Carols and Readings

Contemporary Reading "First Coming" by Madeleine L'Engle

Hebrew Scripture Isaiah 11:1- 9 Lois André

Carol "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" Hymn #160

***Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung,
of Jesse's lineage coming by faithful prophets sung;
it came a flow'ret bright, amid the cold of winter
when half spent was the night.***

***Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright she bore to us a Savior
when half spent was the night.***

Psalter Reading Psalm 96:1, 7-10 Joe Hesse

Anthem "He Shall Feed His Flock"
Shannon Goheen, solo G. F. Handel

First Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38 Cal Mutti

Carol "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" Hymn #163

***Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing, Christ the babe is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing;
Christ the babe is Lord of all, Christ the babe is Lord of all!***

***Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new,
saw the glory, heard the story -- tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow;
Christ the babe was born for you, Christ the babe was born for you!***

Second Gospel Reading Matthew 1:18-24 Jim Sherman

Contemporary Reading “Joseph” by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

Anthem “Were You There on That First Christmas Night?” Sleeth
Ellen Sheetz, solo

Third Gospel Reading Luke 2: 1-20 Patti Goyette

*Carol “Joy to the World” Hymn #143

***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 all their songs employ;
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.***

***He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness, and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.***

Christmas Offering

Anthem “What Strangers Are These?” Dan Forrest

Proclamation of the Good News!

The Distribution of the Light

Carol: “Silent Night, Holy Night”

Choir:

*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.*

*Congregation: (please stand to sing)

***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!***

***Silent night, holy night, Son of God, Love’s pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.***

***Silent night, holy night, wondrous star, lend thy light;
With the angels let us sing, alleluia to our King;
Christ, the Savior, is born! Christ, the Savior is born!***

***Please stand in body or spirit.**

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We welcome everyone to worship on this Christmas Eve!

Visitors, please fill out a guest card from the pew rack and place in the offering plate so we can acknowledge your visit. We hope you will join us again for Sunday worship at 10 am each week, either in-person or online at www.duchurch.org.

Please feel free to contact the church at 508-385-3543 if you have any concerns, prayer requests or desire a pastoral call.

Ushers: Kim Seserman and Earl Springer

Thanks to our readers, candlelighters and choir members for their participation in tonight’s service.

Our Christmas offering tonight will be allocated to the Christmas Fund, a program of the United Church of Christ that assists active and retired clergy and lay employees and to the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund to provide for local requests for aid and assistance.

Dennis Union Church
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Crib Room Attendant: Open