

DENNIS UNION CHURCH

an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ

Second Sunday after Christmas

January 4, 2026

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 "Schlafe, mein Liebster"

J.S. Bach

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Silent Reflection

*Call to Worship

In the dark of morning,
the stars still shine.

In the depth of winter,
the birds still climb.

At the start of the year, tender and new,

God is here.

God is near.

Do not rest in your fear.

God is here.

So like the stars and the birds.

Let us worship holy God.

*Hymn #176 “Sing of God Made Manifest”

Verses 1 and 3

*Sing of God made manifest in a child robust and blest,
to whose home in Bethlehem where a star had guided them,
magi came and gifts unbound, signs mysterious and profound:
myrrh and frankincense and gold grave and God and king foretold.*

*Sing of God made manifest when Christ came as wedding guest
and at Cana gave a sign, turning water into wine;
further still was love revealed as he taught, forgave, and healed,
bringing light and life to all who would listen to God's call.*

*Invocation¹

Holy God, we come before you with awe, for you are great in love and power. Some of us come with reluctance, and some with joy, some with sadness, and others full of fear, yet we know you receive us as we are. Open our eyes to the ways of your love and grace and lead us into the hours ahead with joy and thanksgiving. Amen.

Anthem

“The Work of Christmas”

Dan Forrest

Call to Confession

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer:

Prayer of Confession

Ever-loving God, we long for Christmas to usher in a season of peace and joy. However, we know that is not how the world works.

Even just days after Christmas, we find ourselves face to face with fear once again. So today we pray:

Forgive us when we allow fear to stop us in our tracks.

Forgive us when our own fear prevents us from following your call.

Forgive us when fear is louder than love.

Show us how to turn our fear into action.

Show us how to live like the magi who searched for you in a fearful world.

With hope we pray, amen.

Silence

Assurance of Grace

Family of Faith, whether you are brave and courageous or fearful and timid, God's love for you knows no end. So join me in these words of forgiveness:

**Whether fear inspires us to action, or stops us dead in our tracks,
God's love for us is boundless. We are seen. We are surrounded with grace.
We are sent to serve. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

Scripture

Matthew 2: 1-12

Homily

“Standing Up to Herod”

*Hymn

“We've Seen God's Face”

Insert - Verses 1 & 4

Like the magi from the east we travel into the unknown

Step by step we make the journey, called by God to seek the throne

Over mountains, through the deserts seeking Christ, we follow ever

'Til at last we reach the place where we hope to see God's face

When new threats derail our journey from the path we planned to take

We won't let fear paralyze us, no we won't stay locked in place

Staying nimble, we'll move forward keeping safe by crossing borders

Move around the fear with grace for we know we've seen God's face

Sacrament of Communion

Invitation to The Lord's Table

Great Thanksgiving

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and good to give God thanks and praise.

Sanctus

Holy, holy, holy. My heart, my heart adores you!

My heart knows how to say to you: holy are you, Lord.

Words of Institution

Invocation of the Holy Spirit

Choral Response

The gifts of God for the people of God! Come now, for all is prepared!

The gifts of God for the people of God! The Gospel is among us.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup

Please hold each element so we can partake together as a congregation

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Loving God, in a world wracked with fear, you gather us together.

You set the table.

You meet us here.

You nourish our bodies

as you nourish our spirits.

**You remind us that this is a joyful feast,
and that fear cannot win every time.**

So with renewed courage,

with renewed hope,

with renewed conviction,

send us out into the world.

Help us to feed others as you have fed us.

With gratitude we pray, amen.

Offerings of the People

Offertory

“Quem Pastores”

H. Walcha

*Doxology

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God for all that love has done!
Creator, Christ and Spirit One. Amen.*

Joys and Concerns of the Community

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

+Creator 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

(**+Our Father/O Holy One**)

*Hymn #173

"As with Gladness"

*As with gladness sages bold did the guiding star behold;
as with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
so, true Morning Star, may we evermore your splendor see.*

*As with joyful steps they sped to that lowly manger bed,
there to bend the knee before One whom heaven and earth adore;
so may we with willing feet ever seek your mercy seat.*

*As they offered gifts most rare at the manger plain and bare,
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you from whom they spring.*

*Sending Forth / Passing of the Peace

The Spirit of God is upon us.

**God has anointed us to bear good news to the afflicted
and to bind up the broken hearted.**

To proclaim freedom to the captives.

To open the prisons of those who are bound.

Before we leave this time of worship let us greet one another
with the peace of Jesus the Christ, who seeks peace in broken relationships,
who seeks healing in alienated persons, who seeks justice in oppressive structures.

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you. (Please turn and acknowledge those around you).

*Benediction

Recessional

"In Dulci Jubilo"

J.S. Bach

The congregation may be seated for the music or depart.

***Please rise in body or spirit.** Music for the service today reproduced with permission: One License #8-730116.
¹ adapted from *Touch Holiness* by M.Tirabassi.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome
at Dennis Union Church. Please feel free to contact the church at 508-385-3543
if you have any concerns, prayer requests, or desire a pastoral call.

Deacon of the Day: Kim Seserman
Ushers: Al & Darlene Fisk, Earl Springer
Greeters: Sally Bullard, Dottie Damon, Jeff Gordon

New Member Inquiry Sessions Starting Soon

If you are interested in learning more about membership at Dennis Union Church, information sessions are planned after worship on January 11 and 18.

Everyone interested is welcome to ask questions and find out more about faith and fellowship in our church community before deciding to continue to membership.

New members will be received into the congregation on Sunday, January 25.

Dennis Union Church Open and Affirming Covenant of Welcome

Believing that everyone is a child of God, it is with joy, and in the love of Christ, that we welcome all persons into the full life, ministry and mission of Dennis Union Church. We choose not to turn away anyone whom Christ would welcome. We affirm the dignity and worth of every person including, but not limited to, people of every race, ethnicity, age, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, family structure or economic circumstance. We celebrate God's creative love shown in the wide diversity of humanity and the unique gifts each of us brings to the world.

It is our intention to love one another as Christ has loved us.



Dennis Union Church
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Pastor: Rev. Nancy S. McHugh
Director of Music: Margaret Bossi
Director of Faith Formation for Youth & Adults: Doreen Mayer
Children's Ministries Coordinator: Evy Sirignano
Finance Secretaries: Elise Gordon and Doreen Mayer
Office Administrator: Jane Wilson
Sexton: Dave Crocker
Crib Room Attendant: Open