

Grace Devotion

Week of December 21, 2025

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^[a] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

*²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”*

which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son,^[b] and he named him Jesus.

(Matthew 1:18:25 NRSVUE)

Love: “The Heart that Waits”

Greetings of Love,

Love often shows itself in quiet faithfulness. In Joseph’s story, we see a love that listens even when life doesn’t turn out the way you’d expect. Joseph’s plans were interrupted. His confidence shaken. Yet, when Joseph heard God’s voice in the midst of his confusion, he chose compassion and love over fear. That kind of love is an active love. It is courageous. It makes room for God’s presence in a space whose path is not yet clear. Joseph’s “yes” to God becomes an act of love that changes the course of history—welcoming Jesus, “God with us”. As we draw near Christmas, may we too, open our hearts with that same love—a love that waits with hope, that trusts God’s timing, and makes space for the holy to be born in us and through us once again.

Prayer: God of Love, When our plans change and our hearts are weary with uncertainty, help us listen for Your voice and trust in Your presence. Let Your love shape our choices, so that in all that do and all that we say, Christ may be born anew. Amen

With Grace and Love,

Pastor Amy



December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes and Prelude: "I Saw Three Ships"

By Sharon Elrery Rogers

**+"Glory (Let There Be Peace)" #23

** Call to Worship

Lector: In all of the hustle and bustle of the season, our hearts are pulled in many directions.

Congregation: We long for quiet moments, but our lists grow longer by the hour.

Lector: Still, love finds its way - through small acts of kindness and unexpected grace.

Congregation: Love shows up in the faces of our neighbors, in laughter that is shared with others, and in hopes that are renewed.

Lector: Love came down at Christmas - in tenderness and light.

Congregation: May that same love take root in us today and every day.

** Opening Prayer: (pray silently or aloud)

God of Love, As Christmas draws closer, help us remember what this season is truly about. You came to us in kindness and light, in the quiet cry of a child and with the steady promise of hope. Fill our hearts with that same love, so that all that we say and all that we do reflects Your presence among us. Amen

Lighting of the Advent Candle (Love)

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

**° Hymn: "How Great our Joy" #144

Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

Joys and Concerns
Praying for Others
Lord's Prayer

Celebration of Our Gifts
** Offertory Response: "Doxology" #625

** Prayer of Dedication

° Hymn: "O Little Town of Bethlehem" #141

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 7:10-16

Matthew 1:18-25

Time for the Young at Heart

Message: "Love" The Heart that Waits

**+"Glory to God in the Highest" #24

** Final Blessing

** "A Choral Benediction"

Postlude

** Please stand, if you are able.

+ Black contemporary folder ° Blue hymnal

Announcements

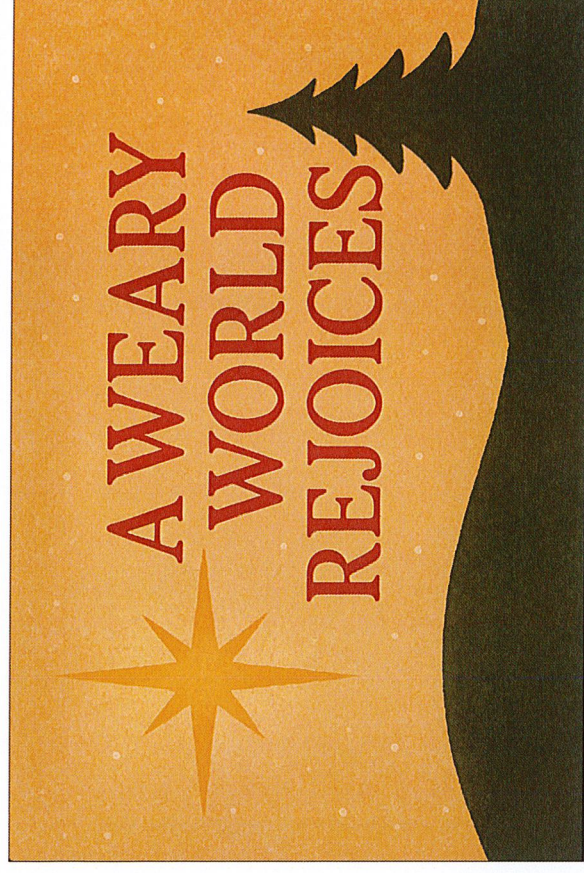
- The church will be open on Wednesdays from 11am-12pm if you would like to stop by for a quiet opportunity for prayer or stillness in the sanctuary. Pastor Amy will be available for a word of prayer or just someone to sit with in the silence.
- We will be having two Christmas Eve Services, 1st one is at 1:00 PM and the 2nd one is at 7:00 PM
- We are selling poinsettias at cost to add to the Christmas Eve decorations. The cost is \$13 for red flowers and can be In Memory or Honor of someone or for yourself or friend. The flowers may be picked up on 3 different days: December 23 at 10:00 in the Gathering Place, December 24 after the 1:00 or 7:00 Christmas Eve services, and December 28 after Sunday service. Thank you!
- Mitten & Hat tree in the Gathering Place. Place new gloves and hats on the tree.
- Christmas Fund Offering on December 21, 2025

Upcoming Events

- Monthly Movie – January 9th @ 3:00 PM
- Bible Study Group & Movie – January 14th @ 12:30
- Women's Ministry – January 14th @ 7:00 PM – **Zoom**
- Women's Ministry – January 28th @ 7:00 PM – **In Person**
- PAL – Grace UCC Helpers – January 17th @ 9:00 AM

Upcoming Meetings

- Finance Committee Meeting – January 5th @ 1:00 PM
- Consistory Meeting – January 12th @ 6:00 PM
- Worship & Music – January 26th @ 4:45 PM
- Faith Formation – January 26th @ 6:00 PM



Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

Prayer Line: 717-632-1146 - LINE 3

Thank you for today's Worship Leaders:

Pastor - Amy Fawks

Lector - Brad Arnold

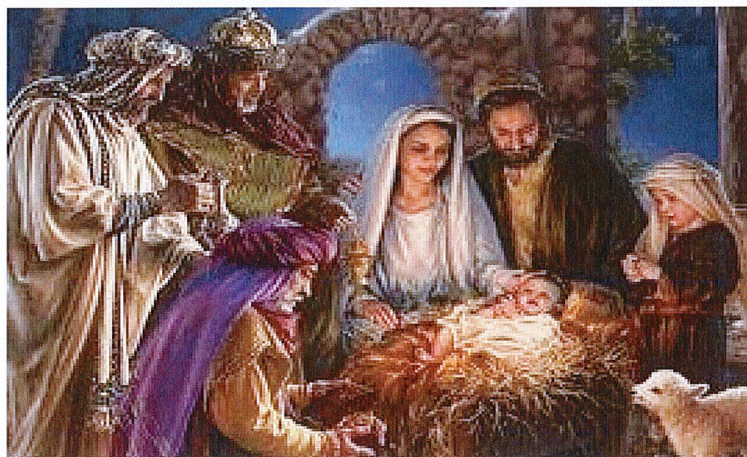
Organist and Music Director - Christian Keller

Head Usher – Craig Bixler & Vickie Arnold

Matthew 1:18-25

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E	X	P	R	O	M	I	S	E	D	R	B	F	M	R	V	N	M	O	Q
P	B	M	L	Y	E	B	P	H	D	I	Z	Q	C	M	B	G	M	S	N
H	Z	U	L	I	D	A	P	U	N	I	S	H	M	E	N	T	I	O	H
G	U	L	I	H	Z	Q	P	W	O	X	Z	A	E	R	U	T	U	F	X

CONTROL
COST
DEMANDS
DIFFERENT
FUTURE
IDEAL
IMMANUEL
IMPORTANT
INTERRUPT
JESUS
JOSEPH
KINGDOM
LIVES
MARY
OWN
PLANS
PROMISE
PUNISHMENT
REPUTATION
SALVATION





Advent Word Search



S	I	N	W	R	E	A	T	H	T	S
M	Y	E	I	S	O	A	N	Q	O	V
I	R	D	V	T	C	A	N	D	L	E
I	C	A	L	E	N	D	A	R	Q	J
P	E	A	C	E	O	P	E	H	S	O
N	A	T	I	V	I	T	Y	L	S	Y
H	O	P	E	Y	F	U	H	O	T	K
A	D	V	E	N	T	A	U	V	A	R
T	A	Y	N	X	T	U	I	E	R	Y

- **Advent**
- **Joy**
- **Candle**
- **Peace**
- **Calendar**
- **Love**
- **Wreath**
- **Nativity**
- **Hope**
- **Star**

