



Merry Christmas
and Happy New Year

MEDINA
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, CONGREGATIONAL



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217 E. Liberty St. Medina, Ohio 44256 330-725-4559 www.uccmedina.org

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LIVE STREAMING OF THE SANCTUARY SERVICE IS AVAILABLE AT UCCMEDINA.ORG

“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS”

Please take a moment to sign the attendance pads, (located at the end of each pew) so that you know who is worshipping near you and you may greet them by name.

**Those who are able please stand*

RINGING OF THE BELL

PRELUDE “O Little Town of Bethlehem” – arr. Christopher Uehlein

Cathy Fafrak, Organ

WELCOME & PASSING OF THE PEACE

*OPENING HYMN

“Brightest and Best”

MORNING STAR 11.10.11.10

Reginald Heber, 1811; alt.

James P. Harding, 1892; The New Psalms and Hymns, Richmond, VA, 1901



1 Bright - est and best of the stars of the morn - ing,
2 Cold on the cra - dle the dew - drops are shin - ing,
3 Shall we not of - fer our cost - ly de - vo - tion,



dawn on our mid - night and lend us your aid.
God's ho - ly Child with the beasts of the stall;
fra - grance of E - dom and of - ferings di - vine,



Star of the East the ho - ri - zon a - dorn - ing,
An - gels a - dore while this ba - by lies sleep - ing,
Gems of the moun - tain and pearls of the o - cean,



guide where our in - fant Re - deem - er is laid.
 Mak - er and Mon - arch and Sav - ior of all.
 myrrh from the for - est or gold from the mine?

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Dear and weary ones, we made it to Christmastide.

God is here, in each shining star and in the darkness between them.

God is woven into our world, infusing it with meaning and purpose.

Christ is alive in the heart beating next to ours.

The Holy Spirit is here, in each breath we take between lines of song.

God is all around us, beckoning us inward, building peace through our hands.

Rejoice in the deep hope that God is with us throughout the ages.

The glory of God resounds throughout Earth and heaven.

SCRIPTURE Psalm 148 (O.T. pg. 550)

Kimberly, Gallagher, Liturgist

HYMN

"Many Are the Lightbeams"

LIGHTBEAMS Irr.

Cyprian of Carthage, "De unitate ecclesiae," 252 C.E.;

Swedish paraphr. Anders Frostenson (b. 1906); trans. David Lewes, 1983

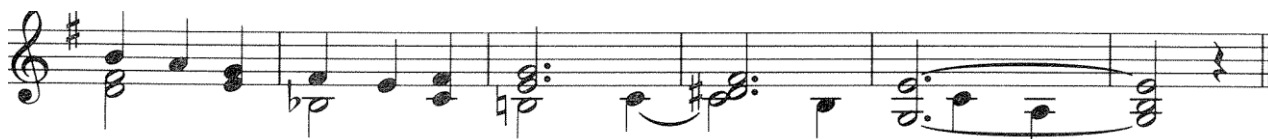
Ollie Widestrand (b. 1906); arr. Darryl Nixon, 1987



1 Man - y are the light-beams from the one light. Our one
 2 Man - y are the branch-es of the one tree. Our one
 3 Man - y are the gifts given, love is all one. Love's the



light is Je - sus. Man - y are the light-beams
 tree is Je - sus. Man - y are the branch-es
 gift of Je - sus. Man - y are the gifts given,



from the one light; we are one in Christ.
 of the one tree; we are one in Christ.
 love is all one; we are one in Christ.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Luke 2:41-52 (N. T. pg. 55)

SERMON "Stars to Guide Us"

Rev. Meghan Malone

PASSING OUT STAR WORDS

Today we take our stars out of the offering plates as gifts from God to us.

You can give to the church through our Realm app or get the link to give by texting UCCMEDINA to 73256. You can also give through VENMO. Look for the Venmo QR codes around the church. Thank you for your prayerful consideration!

***Doxology** ("Love Came Down at Christmas" Text: Christina Rossetti, 1885. Tune: "Gartan" trad. Irish melody; harm. David Evans, 1927 by permission of Oxford University Press.)



1. Love came down at Christ - mas, Love all love - ly, Love di-vine;
Love was born at Christ - mas; star and an - gels gave the sign.

*Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, God, for these stars to guide us. Let them be invitations to us, leading us in new directions, and showing us the way even when we don't know where we're going. Create something new in us this year and grant us the wisdom to seek you always. This we pray in your light-filled name. Amen.

*SENDING HYMN

"Break Forth Thou Beauteous Heavenly Light"

St. 1 Johann Rist, 1641; trans. John Troutbeck, c. 1885; alt.
St. 2 Fred Pratt Green, 1986 © 1986 Hope Publishing Company

ERMUNTRE DICH 8.7.8.7.8.8.7.7.
Johann Schop. 1641; harm. JS Bach, 1734



1 Break forth, O beau-teous heaven - ly light, and ush - er in the
2 Come, dear - est child, in - to our hearts, and leave your crib be -



morn - ing; O shep - herds, shud - der not in fright, but
hind you! Let this be where the new life starts for



hear the an - gel's warn - ing. "This child, now weak in
all who seek and find you. To you the hon - or,



in - fan - cy, our con - fi - dence and joy shall be, the
thanks, and praise, for all your gifts this time of grace; come,



power of Sa - tan break - ing, our peace e - ter - nal mak - ing."
con - quer and de - liv - er this world, and us, for - ev - er.

*ANNOUNCEMENTS

*BENEDICTION

Deeply beloved, go from this place with God's glory on your mind.

Praise God, all you shining stars! Let all creation sing!

Go wherever God is leading you now. Follow your star to a divine destination.

Visit God in both the depths of the seas and the peaks of the mountains.

Trust in the one who holds all things, and who gives us stars to guide us.

Celebrate with all creation: the faithful One who is, and was, and ever shall be.

Amen!

***CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE “God Be with You”**
God be with you ‘til we meet again; By His counsels guide uphold you;
With His sheep securely fold you; God be with you ‘til we meet again.

***POSTLUDE “Spanish Carol – Cold December Flies Away” – Charles Callahan Cathy Fafrak, Organ**

“MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY”

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PASTORAL STAFF

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Jack Sharpe, Maintenance & Custodian

THE PILGRIM MESSENGER

DECEMBER 29, 2024

**“WELCOMING, LOVING, SERVING, WHERE GOD HAS NO LIMITS.
MORE THAN CHURCH ON SUNDAY!”**

Live streaming of the 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary service is available at www.uccmedina.org/live

December 29, 2024 thru January 5, 2025 WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun 8:00 am Blake Donations Posted
10:30 am **ONE SERVICE OF WORSHIP**

Mon
Tues

Wed **NEW YEAR'S DAY - OFFICE CLOSED**

Thurs

Fri 7:00 pm Mental Health Support Group

Sat

Sun 8:15 am Chapel Worship
9:00 am Gathering Worship
9:45 am Children's Choir Rehearsal
10:00 am Blake Donations Due
10:30 am Sanctuary Worship
10:30 am Jesus Vibes
11:30 am OWL Parent Meeting
4:30 pm Youth Group

**The church office will be closed New
Years Day and will reopen at 9 am on
Thursday, January 2nd.**

**Pastor Luke will be out of the office
from December 30th – January 2nd**

TAX DEDUCTIONS...

Just a reminder, all 2024 contributions must be postmarked by December 31st, 2024, to be eligible for tax deductions.

BROKEN CHRISTMAS LIGHTS??

Rhett Behler is collecting broken, non-working, or used holiday lights for recycling to benefit the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and their efforts to support the lion and cheetah conservation program! Please look for the labeled box if you'd like to donate from now until February 2nd, 2025.

Worship Highlights: One service only at 10:30 am

Scriptures: Psalm 148 & Luke 2:41-52

Sermon: "Stars to Guide Us"
- Rev. Meghan Malone

Communion Table: The communion table flowers are given by Ron & Jill Linek in honor of their 56th anniversary.

NEW YEAR STAR WORDS SERVICE TODAY

There will only be **one service at 10:30 am today, Sunday, December 29th** led by Pastor Meghan. At this service we will give out "Star Words" to be your guiding light for 2025!

SAVE THE DATE ONE WORSHIP SERVICE ANNUAL MEETING & CHILI COOK OFF

JANUARY 26TH:

ONE SERVICE OF WORSHIP at 10:30 am

ANNUAL MEETING at 11:30 am

CHILI COOK OFF TO FOLLOW at noon

OUR WHOLE LIVES CLASSES

Our first OWL classes will take place January 14th - February 18th on Tuesday nights, 6:30-7:30 pm in the Youth Room. This class is for high school students and will be co-facilitated by Pastor Meghan and Logan Yates. Pastor Luke will lead a group for parents happening at the same time upstairs in the East Room! If you are interested, please join us in the library on January 5th after church for more information and to register.



WOMEN'S RETREAT

Pastor Meghan and Kim Gallagher will lead a women's retreat on Saturday, Jan. 25th from 10:00 am – 3:30 pm. Our

theme is "Held" based on Psalm 94:17-19. We'll spend the day being held in community, being held by God, and holding space for each other. This event is free for all the feminine folks in our church, but please register on Realm so we'll have plenty of supplies. Youth in 6th grade and up (who don't mind a lot of sitting-still activities) are welcome to join us. If you'd like to help with lunch, please bring a cold salad to share (pasta, fruit, veggie, whatever!) and we'll have a nice light potluck. Other than that – dress comfy and simply bring your beautiful selves!

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER TRIP WITH OTHER+WISE

This summer's trip is going to be a bit different. This is not a service or mission trip, but a cross-cultural experience to broaden our understanding. We will travel to Tahlequah,



Oklahoma to be immersed in Cherokee culture and indigenous spirituality with the organization Other+Wise, run by Lutheran pastors. This trip will be both enlightening and fun! The dates for this trip are June 26th-July 3rd, and the cost will be \$180 per student (entering 9th grade or higher next school year). Please register for this trip on Realm by the end of January!



YOUTH GROUP SNOW TUBING

For Youth Group on January 19th, we will go tubing at Boston Mills from 4:30-6:30pm. Youth who want to participate must register on Realm (Cost is \$15). Meet at the church at 3:45pm for carpooling! Scan the QR code for registration!

THE PROMISE OF CHRISTMAS

Mark and Dana Klaus from Castle Noel had an idea to help folks in North Carolina who were devastated by Hurricane Helene this fall, especially around the Asheville area.

As the holidays approach, they realized that many families in NC wouldn't have the Christmas they're used to—they're still rebuilding, still waiting for restoration. So, the idea came about:

"What if we brought them to our Hallmark town and gave them a Christmas?"

It's happening! **"The Promise of Christmas"** will bring friends from NC to Medina from **January 10–12**. Castle Noel, the City of Medina, Main Street Medina, the Visitor Bureau, and the Chamber of Commerce are organizing a weekend full of love, laughter, and the magic of Christmas. Around 200–300 people are expected.

Here's where we come in: On **January 11**, our church, along with St. Paul's Episcopal, will host a dinner for our NC guests. We'll need 15 crockpots of soup. We'll need donations of hot coco and beverages. We'll need volunteers to serve as hosts and friendly faces to welcome them. This is an all-hands-on-deck moment!

This is restoration in action. And like in the Bible, restoration is not just personal—it's communal. Hosting our friends and neighbors, including some fellow Christians, is a way to restore their spirits after losing so much. And here in Medina, we'll experience restoration too. This is a chance to connect with real people, to rediscover hope in humanity—and perhaps even inspire you to sing your own song of restoration.

If you'd like to volunteer or sign up for soups and other items needed, [click this link for the sign-up genius](#) with what is needed. You may also contact the office.

PRAYER CONCERNS



SUPPORT

Mary Beth Andrews	Strength and healing
Deanna Baker	Strength and healing from cancer
Lisa Beck & family	strength and healing from brain cancer
Nancy Brintnall	Strength and healing
Tad Coleman	Strength and healing
Dorothy Devine	Strength and comfort/Home Hospice
Michelle Doyle	Strength and healing from kidney cancer
Roger Fafrak	Strength and healing from brain bleed
Carole Fawcett	Strength and healing from knee replacement
Linda Fenn	Strength and comfort/Hospice
Jean Fricker	Strength and comfort/Hospice
Greg Harper	Strength and healing from heart surgery
Dianna Huffman	Strength and comfort/stg. 4 cancer Hospice
Jeff Leckie	Strength and healing
Lynn Leckie	Strength and continued healing from back surgery
Jerry McGuire	Strength and healing from bone cancer
Thomas Miller	Strength and comfort/Home Hospice
Sharon Poole	Strength and healing from kidney stones
Molly Yost	Strength and comfort from dementia

MILITARY SUPPORT

CPT Dakota Thomasini	Air Force, San Antonio, TX (Carolee Rafn's granddaughter)
CPT Kyle Thomasini	Air Force, San Antonio, TX (Carolee Rafn's grandson-in-law)
CPL Andrew J. Root	Marines, Camp Pendleton, CA (Brad & Kathy Root's son)
PFC Joe DeSario	Army/National Guard, OH (Paul & Kelly DeSario's son)
CPL Greg Swayer	Army, Fort Bliss, TX (Stacie Yates' cousin)
SGT Tyler Walschon	Army/National Guard, OH (John & Joan Walschon's son)
Kyle Weekley	Army (Daubner Family)

Don't forget to stop by the Greeting Card Table to sign cards!

The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday's *Messenger* is this Sunday at 11:30 am

Please submit articles to the church office at office@uccmedina.org

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9 am – 3 pm MONDAY THRU THURSDAY; FRIDAY 9 am – 12 pm



P+K Bible Study

**MONDAYS 2+7 P.M.
STARTING 1/13/25**

New Library

As we begin our exploration of **The Prophet and the King**, we embark on a journey through some of the most formative and compelling narratives in Scripture. Together, we will reflect on the intertwined stories of Samuel, the prophet, and David, the king. Through their lives, we will discern what it means to be prophetic voices and faithful leaders, even amidst human vulnerability and imperfection.

Our Resources

To enrich our study, we will draw insights from the New Interpreters Bible, a resource known for its balanced approach to historical context, theological depth, and practical application. Additionally, we will lean on the scholarship of Bruce Birch, a preeminent voice on the ethics and theology of Old Testament narratives. Birch's work will guide us as we reflect on themes of covenantal leadership, power, and repentance in the stories of Samuel and David.

Series Structure

The study will follow the progression of our sermon series, starting in January with the life of Samuel and transitioning in February to David's rise and reign. Each session will correspond to the upcoming weekly sermon text, giving us an opportunity to dig deeper into the Scripture and themes. You may even hear your insights from the pulpit! Series ends February 24, 2025.

Luke 2:45-52

"Who Is This Child?"

Jesus was missing. Mary and Joseph were present. So were the shepherds and their sheep. Even the angel took its place in the nativity scene. But no Jesus figurine. The young mother searched the house many times, but to no avail. Was the new puppy to blame? Or did the figurine get placed in the box marked "ornaments" rather than the one that read "nativity"?

The mother eventually gave up looking.

Then, while taking down the Christmas decorations, the box marked "nativity" fell over. There on the floor was the Jesus figurine, tangled in a clump of straw used to adorn the nativity scene. He was exactly where he was supposed to be all along.

While technically Christmastide doesn't end till Jan. 6 with the celebration of Epiphany, many of the festive trimmings are being packed away and, with them, many a baby Jesus figurine.

But how do we keep Christmas in our hearts long after the decorations are gone? Will we remember who this child is for us come spring or summer?

It might feel jarring to go from infant Jesus to 12-year-old Jesus in a week, but today's reading from Luke does just that, bringing us to the temple where a precocious preteen is discussing matters of faith with religious leaders.

Jesus' parents find him there after a three-day search upon discovering their son was not in the group that they were travelling with from Jerusalem back to their home in Nazareth.

Mary's agitation is not helped when Jesus says to her, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I would be in my Father's house?"

Good question, Jesus.

Didn't Mary remember that holy night of your birth 12 years ago? It was a night the angels sang, and shepherds left their flocks to adore you. Did the challenges and stresses of parenting make her forget?

Will being back to the challenges and stresses of life after the holidays are packed away deaden our senses to the Holy One?

As Christmas becomes a distant memory will we have a Mary moment — or two — forgetting who this child is? And if we find ourselves searching for Jesus, will we know to look in our hearts first. For he is always there, waiting for us to find him.

God of Christmas promises, we praise You for the greatest gift we could ever receive, Your Son Jesus. As we make our way into a new year, help us to keep the words of the old hymn in our hearts, the words that remind us that "this, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing." In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.