



Resurrection Story: Freed

April 7, 2024

8am and 10:30am Worship

Music Guest: Stacy Gabel

GUESTS, Welcome to our faith community. To learn more about us please visit our website at www.unionucc.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/unionneffs. Let us know you're here by completing the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it to a pastor or drop it in the offering plate. Feel free to call or email a pastor.

Vision Statement

UNION UCC: RELEVANT, ENGAGED, and GROWING

Mission Statement

Our church is a diverse family of believers, spiritually united in Christ, rooted in a rich heritage and growing with vitality into the future. We proclaim God's word, nurturing and inspiring dedicated Christian discipleship through worship, education, pastoral care, fellowship, and outreach within our community and the world.

***No matter who you are or where you on life's journey,
you are welcome here.***

Union UCC is an Open and Affirming (ONA) Community.

Lay Reader: 8am Doug Albert, 10:30 Doug Kuntz

Ushers: 8am Phil Wehr, Ron Pope, Leoma Kern

10:30 am Eric Minnich, Scott Nagle, Tami Wassum, Don Penrod,
Jennifer Haley, Suzanne Schneider

Greeters: Andy & Jan Dyszel, Mark & Debbie Daluisio

Sound: Karl Klinger

GATHERING AT THE GATE

"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." — John 11: 25-26, NRSVUE

The Easter Season is a time of celebrating all the ways in which resurrection is possible in our lives. We can be in need of rising out of the depth of imprisonment, addiction, poverty, illness, and oppression — not just physically and literally, but also spiritually. What keeps us locked up inside? What holds us back from the joy of life? What binds us, keeping us from the fullness of who God created us to be? Join us for powerful testimonies of courage, kindness, strength, and overcoming — Resurrection Stories — from those who have found “resurrection” in their lives. It might just inspire you to unlock your own rising up!

Prelude Music

Behold the Lamb Dottie Rambo
Blake Hoppes

Welcome

The Collective Story of Resurrection

Leader: We may be imprisoned by many things. Jesus' declaration that he had come to “set the prisoner free” can be interpreted for all of us, whether or not we've ever experienced being behind literal prison bars. This day, we will hear Resurrection Stories that move from chains to freedom. We will reflect on how we can each step into freedom from whatever binds us.

**ALL (sung): Rise up in us and we will rise
From death into a newfound life:
From bondage freed, from harm released,
From illness healed, as one in peace.
When all is lost our hearts are warmed,
Our hope restored, our lives transformed.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

Leader: They were on the road to Emmaus...

Reader: We travel so many roads, so many journeys in this life, sometimes traveling towards, sometimes away from, a life of freedom.

Leader: Jesus came and fell into step with them, but they did not recognize him...

Reader: We are sometimes so overwhelmed with the struggles of this world that we can't see the Companion that walks alongside us.

Leader: Jesus asked them what they were talking about...

Reader: We have recited our stories of pain so often that we can't imagine there are other ways to interpret events, to get past the regret.

Leader: They explained the horror of the recent past, about their friend who was crucified and their disappointment at dreams of liberation dashed...

Reader: We so often think we've hit the end of the road, the finale of the story, with nothing left to say.

Leader: Then Jesus began to tell the story as a bigger picture...

Reader: We sometimes perceive only the parts that feel insurmountable without zooming out to notice the larger narrative of hope.

Leader: They invited Jesus to dinner after such a long walk...

Reader: We actually know how to reach for help,
even when we don't realize we need it.

Leader: Jesus took the bread, blessed, broke and gave it to
them...

Reader: We are capable of having our eyes opened
to the presence of Love in our midst.

Leader: Jesus vanished from the room as quickly as he had
appeared on the road but they were left with the awe and
wonder of having their hearts transformed...

**All: We open to the possibility that nothing is closed,
that our hearts can be opened anytime, anywhere,
and resurrection from death-dealing forces is possible.**

Leader: This is a Word of Hope for the people who long for it.

All: Thanks be to the Living Word.

– based on Luke 24:13-32

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

Opening Hymn Abide With Me
#99 Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal

**1. Abide with me; fast falls the even tide;
The shadows deepen, Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.**

**2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;**

**Change and decay in all around I see;
O Christ who changes not, abide with me.**

**3. I need your presence every passing hour;
I need your grace to foil the tempter's power.
Give me your love my guide and stay to be.
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.**

**4. I fear no foe, with you at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, your victory?
I triumph still if you abide with me.**

**5. Hold now your cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Christ, abide with me.**

The Key to Peace

Leader: Know that Christ companions us along this journey.
Because of this, we can be honest about our lives, our
struggles, and the things that keep us locked up.

This is the key to peace: as soon as truth is spoken and the
desire for freedom is known, Divine Love begins the process
of resurrecting your life.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you can know freedom.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you can know freedom.

Leader: Let's sing our Easter Alleluia and pass the peace of
Jesus Christ *[making sure to greet those worshipping
remotely]*.

AT 10:30 WORSHIP I invite the children forward as we sing.

Halle, Halle

#236 Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal

All (sung):

Halle, halle, halle-luya!

Halle, halle, halle-luya!

Halle, halle, halle-luya!

Halle-luya, halle-luya!

Please be seated.

Proclaiming Freedom

10:30 Worship New Life Happens

Children's Time

THIS SUNDAY CHILDREN WILL STAY IN WORSHIP TO ENJOY STACY GABEL.

10:30 Worship Children's Time

Children's Church – during 10:30am Worship for ages 3-grade 5. Kids start in worship with their family and are invited forward for a children's time, They then leave with Ms. Tiffany and return before worship is over.

Kids are invited to the Education Hour and Faith Formation for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am on Sundays, ages 3 to grade 7.

Children will be in **Room 100** and will return before worship is over. If worship ends early, parents are welcome to meet their children in Room 100 on the first floor.

All (sung):

Halle, halle, halle-luya!

Halle, halle, halle-luya!
Halle, halle, halle-luya!
Halle-luya, halle-luya!

Notes on Freedom

All scripture translations from the NRSVUE.

Scripture Acts 16: 16-34

Reader: One day as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a female slave who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men, these Jews, are disturbing our city and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us, being Romans, to adopt or observe." The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake so violent that the

foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. He brought them up into the house and set food before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

The Message and More Easter Joy with Stacy Gabel

Stacy is an accomplished performer with a passion for writing songs with catchy lyrics and memorable melodies.

When not in the studio recording, Stacy can be seen performing at festivals, wineries, resorts and theatres. She enjoys connecting with her audience, leaving each show with new friends and putting a smile on everyone's face. Be sure to visit the lobby after worship to purchase Stacy's music or visit her website at www.stacygabel.com

Responding to Freedom

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer

ALL: 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.

Opportunities to Live Resurrected
NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF GOD'S CHURCH
AT UNION



OFFERING

Thank you for the many ways you give of yourself to God's ministry and mission here at Union.

Because of YOU our church changes lives....

Here are some of the ways you can share your financial generosity at Union.

• **ELECTRONIC GIVING** <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/home> or use the QR code with your cell phone. Choose an ongoing regular donation or a single donation with your credit or debit card. (Help us with fees if you can.)



Electronic Giving

• **FREE Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement app** Look for our church Union United Church of Christ, Neffs, PA and register your information to contribute.



Vanco Mobile

• **Venmo @unionuccneffs** Make a donation or pay for a fundraiser or event. Complete "What's this for?" See QR code.

• **Cash or checks (to "Union UCC")** Place in the offering plate with a member offering envelope or



Venmo

guest envelope (in the seat racks) or drop in the mail if you're not in person.

Contact John Harting (610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-972-8719) or Pastor Kris if you have questions or if you'd like to learn more about other giving options or legacy gifts to Union.

Music Offering **Stacey Gabel**

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

***Offering Response**

Sung to the Tune I Love to Tell the Story

**ALL (sung); The Savior of our stories
has brought his peace to you;
now go and tell the story,
for others need it too.
To ev'ry one who's hurting
ring out the gospel call;
proclaim that Christ is risen
and grants his peace to all.**

**I love to tell the story;
'twill be my theme in glory
to tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.**

***Benediction**

Whatever binds you, whatever locks you up,
whatever keeps you from the freedom for which you were
created...
can be wiped clean...

... for we believe our stories can be rewritten each and every day.

We know it isn't this easy or quick, but let this be a vision of your life resurrected.

And now, may you go into the world,
unlocking freedom in all the ways you discover you can,
for yourself, for others, for the world.

And may the God who created you to be free,
the Christ who showed you what freedom looks like,
and the Spirit who is transforming your life even now,
be with you now and evermore.

Amen.

**ALL (Sung): Rise up in us and we will rise
From death into a newfound life:
From bondage freed, from harm released,
From illness healed, as one in peace.
When all is lost our hearts are warmed,
Our hope restored, our lives transformed.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

***Closing Hymn**

#249 Peace I Leave With You, My Friends

Refrain

**Peace I leave with you, my friends:
Shalom my peace, in all you do.
Peace I leave with you, my friends,
I give to you, so you can give to others, too.**

**To share God's love is why I came,
To show God's kindness to the world**

**Go now my friends and do the same,
Until I come again...**

Refrain

**Take my hand and be at peace,
The spirit of our love I send;
And with this love you will be free,
Until I come again...**

Refrain

**With this love you all will know,
That loneliness is at an end,
Rejoice my people though I go
For I will come again...**

Refrain

Postlude

The Heart of Worship Matt Redman
Blake Hoppes

Worship Theme ©www.worshipdesignstudio.com

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)	
Last Week:	\$16,806.00
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Feb.)	\$ 70,110.00
Calendar Year 2023 (Jan.-Feb.)	\$ 67,335.00
Change from Last Year	4.1%
Budget FY 2023-24 (July-Feb.)	\$ 298,400.00
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Feb.)	\$ 277,547.31
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-7.0%
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

Attendance Last Week	
Sunrise	70
8 AM	130
10:30 AM	302
Online Views	635
Breathe	12

2023 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Last Week:	lbs
Total YTD:	\$700, 2,575lbs

Easter Mission	\$2,726.00
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Presentations to the Glory of God

Good News Sponsor— for \$20 help us cover the costs of advertising on social media, mailings, and local papers.
Children’s Bulletin sponsor— for \$8 cover the cost of bulletins for children.

Send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or Children’s Bulletin. Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.

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