



**April 13, 2025**

**7pm**

**Good Friday**

**GUESTS,** Welcome to our faith community. To learn more about us please visit our website at [www.unionucc.org](http://www.unionucc.org) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/unionneffs](http://www.facebook.com/unionneffs). Let us know you're here by completing the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you.

### **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 are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here.***

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

Lay Readers: Dan Topp, Doug Brace, Ron Pope, Donna Christman, Janice Metzger, Don Penrod, Eric Minnich  
Sound: Pat Sorg

*I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,  
will enter your house;  
I will bow down toward your holy temple  
in awe of you.  
– Psalm 5:7*

**Awe is a profound emotional response that can significantly impact our wellbeing and perception of the world. Awe often arises from experiences that transcend our usual understanding, such as viewing vast landscapes, listening to powerful music, encountering extraordinary acts of kindness, or feeling heightened devotion and a Divine Presence connecting us all. To be a “Purveyor of Awe” is to be intentional about curating a life of spiritual depth. This has implications not only for one’s own life, but also as motivation to tend to the wellbeing of others. Let us approach this Lent with awe as we explore the elements of Beauty, Wonder, Meaning, Curiosity, Delight, Connection, and Self-Giving.**

A purveyor is someone who spreads or promotes a particular idea or who deals in a particular good.

**We will be sharing Holy Communion today.**

Everyone is welcome to this meal of God's love and grace.

**If you are at home**, we invite you to find something to eat and drink that represents Communion to you.

**Here:** We invite you to come forward to the railing to receive communion. The ushers will direct you when to come forward. The pastors will let you know when to leave the railing. Please place your empty cup in the trays as you return to your seat. If you want to be served in your seats, let the ushers know and the pastors will come to you.

A non-gluten option with juice is available in a prepackaged container on the bread tray. Both red wine and white grape juice are on the tray of cups.  
Please choose either.

### **Prelude Music**

The Old Rugged Cross   George Bennard  
**Blake Hoppes**

### **Welcome to Union UCC! Welcome & Announcements**

### **The Journey Begins**

Welcome to this Holy Week journey. During the last six weeks of Lent, we have been considering the elements for curating a life of spiritual depth, including Beauty, Wonder, Meaning, Curiosity, Delight, Connection, and Self-Giving. Jesus' life embodied all of these things which point to the awe of life—this wonderful world and all the creatures and people within it. The idea that we are alive at all is a miracle in the scheme of the universe. Jesus, as the Creator's Spirit made flesh in this world, knew the precious nature of life and his compassion towards those who suffered was a testament to how we are to improve the quality of life for all, being Purveyors of Awe for a hurting world.

Holy Week is a time when we remember the last week of Jesus' life. In this series, we approach these events with awe at the courage on display when justice is proclaimed in the face of a corrupt leadership within the religious authorities as they were embedded in a cruel system of governance—an occupation of bodies, hearts, and minds.

Jesus' compassion and liberation directed toward the most vulnerable was a threat to those in "high places" who were invested in keeping everyone else in their place. Any talk of a "King" besides the established ruler sent fear through the ranks. This was the story of Jesus' entire life, from the report of Wise People from the East at his birth to this moment in which he was rumored to be a "King of the Jews."

Jesus knew that his teaching would get him killed but he also knew that what he taught was from God. For, as we will hear tonight, "I and the Abba, God, are one." And just as he was one with God, Jesus' also told us that we are one in the Spirit with him, therefore with God. We are called to listen and take heed this night, hearing this story again... and anew... as those who follow him.

Tonight we embark on a journey to several scenes along the way to the cross that last week. The history of God's saving grace starts with the awesome wonder of creation and the wonder of the cross.

### **How Great Thou Art**

#### **All Sung:**

**O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder  
consider all the works thy hands hath made,  
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,  
thy pow'r throughout the universe displayed;**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
And when I think that God, the Son not sparing,  
sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,  
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing**

**he bled and died to take away all sin;**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

**How great thou art! How great thou art!**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

**How great thou art! How great thou art!**

### **The Scene of the Palm Parade of Justice: Beauty**

Jerusalem had always been a place where the faithful gathered. The setting is the Passover feast and Jesus and Jews from all over have traveled to be there. The desire to be at, near, or in the Temple was expressed in the poetry of the Hebrew people, the Psalms. Hear this desire to dwell with God at the Holy of Holies in Psalm 27:

*One thing I ask of you, YHWH, one thing I seek:  
that I may dwell in your house all the days of my life,  
to gaze on your beauty and to meditate in your Temple.*

But dwelling in Jerusalem in a time of Roman occupation had become complicated. The people walked a fine line of allegiance to their faith and that of complying with the occupiers. In times like these, even the religious authorities find themselves compromising in order to retain favor and power. Such was this time of Jesus' life. But Jesus' loyalty was firmly in the God of love—the kingdom of heaven which he called down to earth. Things needed to change and Jesus had no difficulty proclaiming this. But it meant that the entrance into Jerusalem at the gate was fraught with controversy.

One of the ways we experience awe is when we witness acts of “moral beauty.” These are times when someone

does something courageous in the face of difficulty. We are in awe of them and it spurs our own willingness to be brave, to go the extra mile, to be a participant in making the world a better place. As we remember the entrance of Jesus' on a donkey at the gate to the city in a little parade of the power of love and justice, we are witnesses to the beauty of his life and love, his courage and his purpose. Because this is our faith story, we can recognize moral beauty in our own time.

Take a moment in silence to think of someone whose courage exemplifies to you a moral beauty of care for others.

(Pause Silence)

All Sing:

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

**How great thou art! How great thou art!**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

**How great thou art! How great thou art!**

### **A Flashback Scene to the Home of Lazarus: Wonder**

We arrive to another scene, a flashback to the day before the parade. What led up to the parade? How did people know to gather at the gate to the city where Jesus would enter, riding on a donkey? According to the Gospel of John, the events of the night before helped spread the word.

We stand here in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, only two miles out of the city of Jerusalem. This is, in some ways, also the home of Jesus. These are his closest friends. This is where he comes to let down, to relax, to recuperate throughout his ministry. Only a short time before this moment, Jesus has performed the miracle of raising his friend Lazarus from death. The word had spread of this and when people heard Jesus was back in Bethany, they came. Imagine having made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the

Passover. Tensions are high already with Roman soldiers roaming the streets to keep an eye on things. Then you hear that the rumors are true... Jesus of Nazareth, who has been teaching hope and love and justice for the downtrodden, is nearby. Jesus of Nazareth, it is told, has brought someone back to life, and he is only two miles away. You go. These are "wonders" that you want to be part of.

A sense of wonder and awe is life-giving. We yearn to hear good news—the kind that gives hope. Certainly in times of occupation and distress, to hear that good things are happening and someone cares about your life and your wellbeing, is balm for the soul. The prayer book of the people of Jesus' time, in this case Psalm 107, expresses the sentiments of this crowd as they rushed to Bethany:

*They called to YHWH in their trouble,  
and God rescued them from their sufferings,  
guiding them by a direct route to an inhabited town.  
Let them thank YHWH for this great love,  
for the marvels done for all people—  
for God has satisfied the thirsty  
and filled the hungry with good things.*

Take a moment to think of some bit of good news that you have heard recently that lifted your spirits. It doesn't have to be a big deal, anything that offered you a vision of goodness. This is one way to have wonder at God's continual presence with us.

(Pause Silence)

All Sing:

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:  
How great thou art! How great thou art!  
Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

## **How great thou art! How great thou art!**

But when wonder abounds about someone that is perceived as a threat to those in power, the attention can get them in trouble. The high priests were worried. They said they were worried about Jesus' drawing too much attention from the Romans and they feared the destruction of the beloved Temple. But they also feared the loss of their own power over the people which they had taken great care to construct. It was a delicate balance between appearing as pious leaders and greasing the palms of the occupiers. Their survival depended on submission of the people. Jesus knew this would lead to his death.

Which is why, at the dinner in Bethany with Mary, Martha, Lazarus and the disciples, when Mary performed the traditional foot washing before the meal in an unconventional way—pouring expensive oil from a jar and wiping his feet with her very hair, he took in the act with wonder. It sparked in Jesus' imagination the moment that she would do this to prepare his body for burial. And so when Judas, the treasurer of the disciples, complained about the waste of money for the oil, Jesus stopped him. This moment was too precious, too full of the wonder of life and death, love and devotion, too perfect an expression of what was about to come. There would be plenty of opportunities to raise more money for the care of the poor. In this moment, Mary had done something worth savoring, worth remembering for all time, that also helped prepare the disciples for the unfolding events to come.

And so the word got out from the crowd that gathered in Bethany that night to other pilgrims in Jerusalem. Jesus would be coming to Jerusalem the next day. And they came ready with their palms and their shouts of "Hosanna!"



which means “Save us!” Surely this was the one that would turn things around. And he did, but at the cost of his own life.

(Pause Silence)

All Sing:

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

**How great thou art! How great thou art!**

**Then sings my soul, my Savior-God, to thee:**

**How great thou art! How great thou art!**

### **The Scene of the Overturned Tables: Meaning**

Jesus was intentional about everything he did. He showed us the true meaning of life as he taught with his words and actions. After his dramatic entrance into Jerusalem, he moved back and forth that week between staying in Bethany for the night and coming back in to the Temple grounds to teach the growing crowds there for Passover and answer the questions of the religious authorities who were scheming to catch him saying something damning... damning enough to call for his death. With every word, with every answer, Jesus confounded, frustrated, and angered them. But he called out the truth about the meaning of this moment in time, the injustices of the situation, and the desires of a loving God, parent of all, who desires the wellbeing of all, especially the vulnerable among us.

We arrive now at a significant scene that happened during that week. We can imagine Jesus in the vast Temple complex observing things he had likely seen before. But this time was different, knowing he had nothing to lose. This was the moment to act, to draw attention to the inequities perpetrated there.

Filled with thousands of pilgrims, this was a place of money-changing from one currency to another so that pilgrims to Jerusalem could pay a Temple tax. It was also a place of money-lending where the wealthy would lend money to the poor, with interest, so they would not lose their land and their livelihood. Vendors in the Temple market were also taking advantage of the pilgrims, especially those most in need of prayers and healing by selling goods required for sacrifice at exorbitant prices. It was an economic system designed to advantage the wealthy and the elite.

Jesus' action of overturning some tables no doubt gathered a crowd and his condemning words added meaning to his mission as he confronted the situation, calling what is supposed to be a house of prayer a "den of thieves." His message was tangible and straightforward—no parables or metaphors here. There is injustice in this world... and even within his faith tradition. And he followed this up by healing those who came to him seeking wholeness—without need for money for sacrifices—simply because God's healing is more precious than gold and God's people are beloved.

The Psalmist reminds us that God loves justice and the meaning this brings to our lives evokes awe in Psalm 19:

*Holding you in awe, YHWH, is purifying; it endures.*

*Your decrees are steadfast, and all of them just.*

*They are more precious than gold,  
than the purest of gold, and sweeter than honey,  
than honey fresh from the comb.*

*In them your faithful people find instruction;  
there is great reward in keeping them.*

Especially when we witness injustice, we are called to question as Jesus did: "what is the meaning of this?" What deplorable situations have your attention in this moment of

our time? What is our equivalent to overturning tables?  
What can we do to bring healing and wholeness in our corner of the world and for the most vulnerable among us?

(Pause Silence)

**All Sing:**

**Open the eyes of my heart, Lord**

**Open the eyes of my heart,**

**I want to see you**

**I want to see you**

## **NEWS ABOUT THE MINISTRY AND MISSION OF GOD'S CHURCH AT UNION**

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Neffs, Pennsylvania

### **Responding with Awe OFFERING**

#### **Easter Mission Offering**

Please share your financial support by using the Easter Mission Offering envelope in your envelope packet, or blank envelope or a check marked "Easter Mission", or donate online at <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/campaign/C-12H63>

**The Chemo Bag** Their Mission Statement - The CHEMO Bag, Inc, in partnership with the generosity of our community, corporate sponsors and volunteers is committed to providing care bags filled with items to provide comfort to men and women in the Lehigh Valley and surround areas undergoing chemotherapy treatments. CHEMO - Caring, Helping, Encouraging, Motivating, Others.  
Union UCC held a successful packing session for The Chemo Bag and plans to hold another one soon.

## World Central Kitchen

In 2010, Chef Jose Andres, founded World Central Kitchen to feed people around the world after a disaster. Quote - 'When you need medical service, you bring doctors and nurses. When you need the rebuilding of infrastructure, your bring in engineers and architects. And if you have to feed large groups of people, you need professional chefs'. WCK is first to the front lines, providing fresh meals in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crises.

In 2024, WCK provided help to families in 20 countries, providing over 109 million meals. Recently they served meals to families and first responders of the California fires.

**Be an ambassador for Union UCC and tell your friends and neighbors about our church!**

**Thank you for your prayers, participation, and financial support which helps us be a church that is relevant, engaged, and growing!**

• **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 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



Venmo

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.

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## **Music Offering**

Via Dolorosa Billy Sprague and Niles Borop

**Blake Hoppes**

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

### **\*Offering Response**

Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary

#187 Sing! Prayer and Praise

### **All Sing:**

**Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary**

**pure and holy, Tried and true:**

**With thanksgiving I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

**God empower me to be a witness for you,**

**Acting boldly, in your name:**

**Seeking justice, where there is hurting**

**offering hope where there is pain.**

**Please be seated**

### **The Scene of the Meal 1: Curiosity**

Jesus has asked that an upper room banquet space be arranged for the disciples. This common practice of gathering for a formal meal at significant times is familiar to us as it was for them. But this night would prove to be the most memorable of gatherings, handed down to us even now.

A ritual that has not survived the ages at the beginning of a meal is that of washing feet. In a time of sandals and walk-

ing dusty roads, this was practical. But the ritual surrounding it was a show of respect as those with higher honor or prestige would have their feet washed by those of lesser esteem. And Jesus turned things on their head once more. He himself, the guest of honor, the beloved Teacher, and certainly the one with the spotlight upon him, prepared himself to wash the feet of his friends. Peter, aghast, questioned this outrageous action. The subject of who was the greatest and how respect and honor is orchestrated, shown, and given, was the topic of hot debate. And through it all, Jesus' invites them to consider a new paradigm of love and relationship.

Indeed, this is his "last chance" to convince them that there is another way than what society has prescribed as who is better, who is worthy, who is to be honored. He turns hierarchy into a level playing field by washing the feet of his disciples. This invites curiosity and an expanding of how they understand the very world they live in. We come to this story in awe as the disciples themselves were moved to awe. This is what awe does. It shifts our perspective and make us more curious about the treasures of a life well-lived, well-loved, with well-being. The Hebrew poet in Proverbs 2 reminds us again to...

*Incline your ear to Wisdom,  
and take her truth into your heart.  
For if you yearn for insight and cry out for understanding,  
if you search for it as you would for silver,  
and dig for it as you would for buried treasure,  
you will understand what [awe] of YHWH is,  
and discover how to truly know God.*

Jesus was telling his disciples, and us, that to truly know God is to love as God loves. His message that night that he hoped would be passed on through generations is to love each

other deeply and well without regard for status and how our loving will gain us favor or make us look good. The point is to love so that the exchange is more about how others feel, not how we look.

To be curious is to be humble and admit that not only do we not know everything, but we are not better than anyone. There is no more humbling act than the exchange of love.

The disciples of Jesus were not afraid to ask questions. This is the mark of a disciple. Before we move to the meal, I'd like to invite you to think about what questions you might have asked Jesus at the gathering that night if you had the chance to be there in person. What would your questions to Jesus be?

(Pause Silence)

**All Sing:**

**Open the eyes of my heart, Lord**

**Open the eyes of my heart,**

**I want to see you**

**I want to see you**

### **The Scene of the Meal 2: Delight**

As we remember the meal that had the disciples gathered in that upper room that night, we remember the meals that have meant so much to us over the years. There are no doubt "unforgettable" times that live in our memories. The delight we feel at the gathering of friends and loved ones is one of the most basic human experiences. Psalm 36 describes God's love as the presence of a "feast of bounty" and drinking from "streams of delight." Hear these words again:

*How precious is your love!*

*Whether creatures of heaven or children of earth,*

*we all find refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
We feast on the bounty of your estate,  
and drink from the stream of your delights.  
In you is the wellspring of Life,  
and in your light we become enlightened.*

On the table that night in the upper room where the basics of every meal, bread and wine. In typical Jesus style, he used these common elements to speak of God's kin-dom of love and light that would shine through his body broken and his love poured out for them very, very soon. He invited them to remember that moment whenever they gathered around tables after he had gone. Just as we retell stories around the table of loved ones now gone and the things they said, Jesus was leaving them a memory, a moment, that could last for eternity. And so we remember together tonight.

## **Holy Communion**

Everyone is welcome to this meal of God's love and grace. **If you are at home**, we invite you to find something to eat and drink that represents Communion to you.

**Here:** We invite you to come forward to the railing to receive communion. The ushers will direct you when to come forward. The pastors will let you know when to leave the railing. Please place your empty cup in the trays as you return to your seat. If you want to be served in your seats, let the ushers know and the pastors will come to you.

A non-gluten option with juice is available in a prepackaged container on the bread tray.  
Both red wine and white grape juice are on the tray of cups.

Please choose either.



The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them up to the Lord**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and awe-filled thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth. With wonder we muse at how you formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him, we find meaning and purpose for our lives.

Your Spirit anointed him  
to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
and to announce that the time had come  
when you would save your people.  
He healed the sick, fed the hungry,  
and ate with sinners.

By the baptism of his suffering death,  
and resurrection you gave birth to your church,  
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,  
and made with us a new covenant  
by water and the Spirit

When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us  
always,  
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of your wonder-filled acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in self-giving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,  
so that we may be for the world the body of Christ,  
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit seal our connection with Christ,  
our connection with each other,  
and our connection to all the world through our ministry,  
until Christ comes in final victory  
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,

all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**SHARING THE MEAL**

## **MUSIC OFFERING**

The Welcome Table with Sweet By and By  
Spiritual, Arr. Joel Raney

**Adult Choir with Blake Hoppes**

### **The Scene of the Meal 3: Connection**

John's gospel is unique in the long passages of Jesus' last words to the disciples after the meal and before they leave to go to the garden. At one point, Jesus' says, "let's get up and go" and yet he continues with more lessons and last words to them before they actually do that.

Throughout this pouring out of what-has-yet-to-be-said, he speaks of unity and connection. This is the most important thing at this moment. He says he is one with God, and he is one with them, the beloveds gathered at the table. And he says that this is true of each one of us. We are one with God, we are one with Jesus, and we are one with one another. Disconnection is an illusion. All of this is already true.

We must simply open to believing this truth.

For just a moment, imagine what your last message to your loved ones would be. What feels so important to you that you hope will outlive you? Perhaps it is something someone in your life imparted to you before they passed. Whether from you or from something you heard, what would you have said in Jesus' situation?

(Pause Silence)

**All Sing:**

**Open the eyes of my heart, Lord**

**Open the eyes of my heart,**

**I want to see you**

**I want to see you**

Furthermore, Jesus says that he will not leave them orphaned and alone but that the Spirit will come and inhabit all people, just as the prophet Joel described. It will not distinguish between gender, status, age, or any other marker of difference. The Hebrew poet in Psalm 149 tells of this new song of connection, God's love offered to all, especially crowning the lowly with wholeness:

*Alleluia! Sing to YHWH a new song!*

*Sing praise in the assembly of the faithful.*

*Let Israel be glad in its Maker;*

*let the children of Zion rejoice in their God.*

*Let them praise God's Name with festive dance;*

*let them sing praise with timbrel and harp.*

*For YHWH loves the people, and crowns the lowly with salvation.*

Jesus whole life has been a narrative of this equality of love so that "all may be one." And this will not end when he is gone, he says. And the time is near. In the course of the dinner, Jesus has acknowledged that he knows what Judas will do to hand him over to the authorities. And so he leads his disciples to the place where the events of the next three days will be set into motion.

### **The Scene of the Cross: Self-Giving**

As we have journeyed this Lent, learning more about our faith connection to the practices of awe, we have learned that awe is not just about pleasure or happiness, awe is found in the most selfless acts of giving we witness. We look upon sacrificial acts for the sake of love as inspiration for our own contributions to the wellness of the world and all its inhabitants. This faith story we share tonight is one of the most profound examples of self-giving that we know as followers of Jesus. I invite you to simply dwell with awe in the scriptural account of the final events. As you listen to the

readings, imagine the scenes in your mind's eye, imagine the way it must have felt to be there. Your imagination does not need to go far. We've all felt loss, we've all felt disappointment, we've all felt horror at times in our lives. In remembering this story, we remember that we are not alone in whatever we may be facing today. Let us pray: Awe-inspiring God, we come together in this moment too aware

that so much has not changed in over two thousand years. As those who were bereaved at the state of the world in Jesus' day,

we come weary with the weight of our time,  
and at times it is difficult to find hope.

Open us to the story of violence, betrayal, and death this night—

not as an added burden, but so that we might remember that God is with us.

Even as Jesus prayed in anguish in the garden that night,  
the plants around him were growing,  
the insects going about their business.

Even now as we mourn and pray for God's deliverance, we wonder with awe that we continue to breathe and our hearts continue to beat.

You sustain us, you love us, you never leave us.

The story of life continues no matter what else is happening. Be with us on this difficult chapter of the Holy Week journey as we mourn what is wrong and yet know that a different chapter to come is always the source of our hope.

Be still and know that God is God. Wonders never cease and new life is possible. God forgives us. Jesus embraces us. The Spirit enlivens us. We are whole. With awe we accept this belovedness. And all God's people say, "**Amen.**"

**All Sing:**

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!**

**What wondrous love is this, O my soul!**

**What wondrous love is this,**

**That caused the Lord of bliss,**

**To bear the dreadful curse,**

**For my soul, for my soul,**

**To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.**

### **The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus**

**Dan Topp**

Jesus... went forth with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with his disciples.

So

Judas, procuring a band of soldiers and some officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns, torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that was to befall him, came forward and said to them, "Whom do you seek?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again, he asked them, "Whom do you seek?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you seek me, let these men go." This was to fulfill the word which he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's slave and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?"

## **Jesus before the High Priest and Peter Denies Jesus**

**Doug Brace**

So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Judean authorities seized Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas; for he was the father in law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had given counsel to the religious authorities that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. As this disciple was known to the high priest, he entered the court of the high priest along with Jesus, while Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. The woman who guarded the gate said to Peter, "Are not you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves; Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

## **The High Priest Questions Jesus and Peter Denies Jesus**

**Ron Pope**

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jewish people come together; I have said nothing secretly. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said." When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, "Is that how you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, "Are not you also one of his disciples?" He denied it and said, "I am not." One of the servants of the high priest, a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Peter again denied it; and at once the cock crowed.

GOLD HYMNAL #283 What Wondrous Love Is This? Verse 2

**All Sing:**

**To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing!**

**To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing!**

**To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great "I AM, "**

**While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing!**

**While millions join the theme, I will sing.**

**Jesus before Pilate Donna Christman**

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. So, Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered him, "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have handed him over." Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The religious authorities said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die.

Pilate entered the headquarters again and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me; what have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingship is not of this world; if my kingship were of this world, my servants



would fight, that I might not be handed over to the religious authorities; but my kingship is not from the world." Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

## **Jesus Sentenced to Death and Jesus Scourged and Crowned with Thorns Janice Metzger**

After Pilate had said this, he went to the religious authorities again, and told them, "I find no crime in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover; will you have me release for you the King of the Jews?" They cried out again, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged him. And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again, and said to them, "See, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him." So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The religious authorities answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard these words, he was the more afraid; he entered the headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and power to crucify you?"

Jesus answered him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore he who delivered me to you has the greater sin.

## **Music Offering**

I Only Want to Say (Gethsemane) from Jesus Christ Superstar  
Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber

**Ben Anderson with Blake Hoppes**

### **"Crucify Him" Don Penrod**

Upon this Pilate sought to release him, but the religious authorities cried out, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend; everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar." When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgment seat at a place called The Pavement, and in Hebrew, *Gab' · ba · tha* .

Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. He said to the religious authorities, "Behold your King!" They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." They handed him over to them to be crucified.

### **The Crucifixion of Jesus**

So, they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew, *Gol' · go · tha* . There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Many of the Judeans read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. The Jewish chief priests then said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written I have

written."

**Solo: Abby Kern**

***Were you there when they crucified my Lord?***

***Were you there when they crucified my Lord?***

***Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.***

***Were you there when they crucified my Lord?***

### **Casting Lots Eric Minnich**

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus they took his garments and made four parts, one for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was without seam, woven from top to bottom; so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

### **Jesus Meets His Mother**

So the soldiers did this. But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

### **"It is Finished"**

After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), "I thirst." A bowl full of vinegar stood there; So, they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished"; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

### **Jesus' Side is Pierced**

Since it was the day of Preparation, in order to prevent the bodies from remaining on the cross on the sabbath (for that sabbath was a high day), the religious authorities asked

Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him; but when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth—that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken." And again another scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

**Solo: Abby Kern**

***Were you there when they pierced him in the side?***

***Were you there when they pierced him in the side?***

***Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.***

***Were you there when they pierced him in the side?***

### **The Burial of Jesus**

After this Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the religious authorities, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him leave. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who had at first come to him by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds' weight. They took the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb where no one had ever been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, as the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

**Solo: Abby Kern**

**Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?**

**Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?**

**Sometimes it causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble.**

## **THE 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.**

**We usually leave this service in silence.**

**Blessings on your vigil until Easter morning.**

**May you know God is with you and that we are with you  
as you journey through life and  
toward Easter, resurrection, and new life.**

**Solo: Abby Kern**

**Were you there when he rose up from the dead?**

**Were you there when he rose up from the dead?**

**Sometimes I feel like shouting 'Glory, glory, glory!'**

**Were you there when he rose up from the dead?**

**Go in Silence, Go in Peace, Go in Love.**

## **Easter Sunday Worship**

**6:00am Sunrise Worship in the Cemetery (No Online Option)**

**8am and 10:30am Worship in the Sanctuary and Online**

**Mimosas and the Easter Bunny!**

**Join us after 8am and 10:30am worship on the front lawn and**

**steps of the church for a celebratory mimosa, orange juice, and snack.  
The Easter Bunny will be joining us.**

Worship Theme ©[www.worshipdesignstudio.com](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com)

**Thank you to:**

**Our worship design team** for their work in decorating the church for Easter: Claire and Doug Kern, Deb and Dan Topp, Kathy and Rick Bonsell, Pastor Kris.

**Sound Team** Doug Albert, Mike Baer, Pat Sorg, Karl Klinger, Dawn Dengler.

**Sunday Set Up Staff and Tech Team** Hannah Minnich, Ryleigh Minnich, Claire Puia, Miranda Brown

**Flowers Sponsors** for the Sanctuary and for our Visitation List and our **Helping Hearts and Communion Ministers** for delivery to those on our Visitation List.

**ALL** who helped to make our Lent, Holy Week, and Easter so meaningful. Thank you to everyone who helped clean and decorate our sanctuary, church, and grove. Thank you to those who served as choir members, musicians, ushers, greeters, and worship participants. Thank you to our staff, Consistory, and leaders for giving your time and talents so generously.

**And thank you to The Easter Bunny, his helper, and the Mimosa and Snack Team.**

**Thank you Union UCC family for being love and light in here and out there!**

# EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$9,691.00	8 AM	82
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan.-Feb.)	\$ 59,944.00	10:30 AM	158
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-Feb.)	\$ 70,110.00	Online Views	318
Change from Last Year	-14.5%	Sunday School	8
Budget FY 2024-25 (July-Feb.)	\$ 275,550.00	God First	25
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Feb.)	\$ 284,375.00	Faith on Tap	30
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	3.2%	Breathe	15
Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes		2025 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
		Last Week:	\$, 1000lbs
		Total YTD:	\$700, 1870lbs

Easter Mission: \$2,128.72

## Presentations to the Glory of God

### Happy Easter! Pastor Kris

**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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