



Hearts Overflowing

May 11, 2025

8:00am & 10:30am

Celebrating the Women of our Church and Mothers

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.

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 Readers: 8am Rosalie Snyder, 10:30 Brynn Buskirk

Ushers: 8am Kerry Snyder, Tom Anderson, Larry Todd, Lorie Hackett

10:30 Janice Metzger, Julie Johnson, Karen Nuschke, Donna Christman, Gloria Toner, Carol James

Greeters: Brynn and Jon Buskirk, Sally Saltzer, Devon Kuharik

Sound: Doug Albert

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number... — Acts 2

The life and death of Jesus had one strong message that was both overt and inherent: love one another. The heart of the matter was love. Time and again we hear Jesus offer the disciples a post-resurrection message of empowerment to give to the world what he had given to them. This Easter Season we will encourage one another to truly live out the heart of the matter.

SIGNS OF LOVE

Please send Pastor Kris (pastorkris@unionucc.org) or Pastor Kayli (pastorkayli@unionucc.org) pictures of you and your friends or family or pets or favorite scenery with their hands in the heart position. We'd like to show them in our slides in worship and on Facebook so that we can see each other, give thanks for each other, and pray for each other.

Prelude Music

The Rose Amanda McBroom

Blake Hoppes

Welcome to Union UCC!

Welcome & Announcements

Be sure to get a prayer stone (or worry or heart stone or cross) at the door when you arrive. You can keep it in your pocket and bring it back with you each week or get a new one. <3

Call to Worship

Leader: We continue with our Easter Season because Easter isn't just one day. We have an abundance of days to celebrate new life. The early church shared the abundance they had in this way:

*"Day by day, as they **spent much time together** in the temple, they **broke bread at home** and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, **praising God** and **having the goodwill** of all the people." (Acts 2: 46-47a)*

We remember today that the earliest Christians spent time in the temple, but also worshiped in their homes before they had churches, and so this season we meet around tables both here at church and at home, taking time to worship and talk about what is important—the "heart of the matter"—connecting with each other through the Spirit that makes us one in love.

"Worry Stone" or "Heart Stone" Invitation

L: In the account of the resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew, after the stone is rolled away from the tomb, the angel sits on the stone and gives the women this message, "Don't be afraid." Throughout the Season of Easter, we invite you to use a "worry stone," which is a stone you carry about with you to rub when you are feeling anxious or worried or to just remember you're not alone.

You can get a stone or cross here at church or you can find your own stone or even paint a stone. It will remind you of this angel's message which Jesus then repeats, "Do not be afraid."

If you're have your stone, hold onto it now. Or get one as you leave today or look for one this week for next Sunday.

Opening Act of Centering Our Hearts

Leader: We are going to center our hearts as one to begin. Let's take a deep breath together.

I invite you to place your hand on your heart and
let's lightly tap together in a slow heartbeat rhythm
Holy Living God,
Heartbeat of Creation,
help us to take this time to center on you,
for you made us,
you gave us life,
and you continue to be with us
every moment...
every breath...
every step.

Hear this assurance from God:

Tune: Amazing Grace

ALL Sing:

**Be still, O heart, you're not alone,
your beat is shared with me.
Come now, and calm, and center here,
you're mine, secure and free.**

Let's take another deep breath, making sure our shoulders
and any tension we feel in our bodies is letting go
with the breath.

Let us pick up our heart stone, sometimes called a "worry
stone," and let our touch on its surface remind us that God's
touch is within us, between us, and around us.

As close and real as this object is in our hands right now,
is how close Love is to us always.

Let us imagine letting go of our worries for now into God's
heart of love.

We offer a prayer song of letting go:

ALL Sing:
Into your care, we offer now,
our worries, fears and strife.
We turn to you and know you're near—
Your light, our love and life.

The Peace

The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

I invite you to share the peace of Christ with those around you, [remembering to greet those online with a wave to the camera].

***Please rise in body or spirit to greet each other and for the first song.**

***Opening Hymn #351 I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry**
Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal
I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.

I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
In a blaze of light you wandered off
to find where demons dwell.

When you found the wonder of the Word
I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living Lord,
to whom you now belong.
If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme

from dusk 'till rising sun.

In the middle ages of your life,
not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.
When the evening gently closes in,
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been
with just one more surprise.

I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.

Please be seated.

10:30 Music Offering The Mom Song
Kid's Choir

10:30 Children's Time

Kids, as you come forward and sing with us please find 3 people to shake hands with or wave to.

ALL SING:

**Shake another hand shake the hand next to you
Shake another hand and sing this song
Shake another hand shake the hand next to you
Shake another hand and sing, sing this song.**

**Al la la la la la le luia
Al la la la la le luia
Al la la la la la le luia
Al la la la la LA le luia**

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. They will return to worship before it's over and if not, please pick up your children in Room 100.

If you want your child to stay in worship with you, please let them know.

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

Keeping the Faith as Members and Disciples of Union UCC for 20-39+ Years

Video Highlight: Karen Nuschke

8:00 Music Offering Softly and Tenderly
Will Lamartine Thompson & Carl J. Nygard, Jr.
Heritage Choir

Contemporary Reading

During this series we will use readings from Mark Nepo's book *More Together Than Alone: Discovering the Power and Spirit of Community in our Lives and in the World*. He draws from historical events, spiritual leaders, and the natural world to show how, in every generation, our tendency is to join together to accomplish our greatest achievements, from creating education and preserving the arts to providing clean drinking water.

"An old friend drove me into the Santa Fe National Forest to see the aspen tree grove. Aboveground, aspen trees grow as individual trees, but below ground they're enlivened by one interconnected set of roots. They are the most expansive growth of trees to share a common root system. This means they are one living organism and one living

community – at the same time! This is a powerful metaphor for how inextricably knit the life of the individual is with the life of the community. What happens to one tree happens to all aspens in the grove... As one living root system, the aspen grove treats each of its trees as a shoot or limb called a ramet. When an individual tree dies, it's as if the grove loses a branch. The grove then rushes nutrients to the damaged area the way immune cells rush to the site of an infection. The huge root system allows the ramets that are close to water to absorb and send that nourishment of the other connected trees. When we can accept that all humans share the same invisible root system, we too, can rush nutrients to others who are damaged or suffering. Quaking aspen trees, a particular species that grows where avalanches, mudslides, and fires have occurred, is nature's example of relational resilience. The grove roots and regenerates most strongly after disaster. This is one of nature's gritty forms of resurrection....In the Fishlake National Forest in Utah, there is an aspen grove considered to be one of the largest groves in the world, it contains about 47,000 individual trees and is estimated to be about 80,000 years old. Shared roots live longer..."

Scripture Reading

Leader: Jesus used the metaphor of a shepherd several times in his ministry. We will hear a song using the most famous instance from Psalm 23 later in our worship. In this passage from the Gospel of John, the sheep know that the Shepherd really cares about them and offers what they need—good, abundant, green pastures to eat in. They recognize this Shepherd who takes care of them as they hear his voice. Hear this reading from **John 10: 1-10**.

Reader: I assure you that whoever doesn't enter into the sheep pen through the gate but climbs over the wall is a thief and an outlaw. The one who enters through the

gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The guard at the gate opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Whenever he has gathered all of his sheep, he goes before them and they follow him, because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger but will run away because they don't know the stranger's voice." Those who heard Jesus use this analogy didn't understand what he was saying.

So Jesus spoke again, "I assure you that I am the gate of the sheep. All who came before me were thieves and outlaws, but the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief enters only to steal, kill, and destroy. I came so that they could have life—indeed, so that they could live life to the fullest.

Leader: There are so many ways to live life to the fullest right now—or, as another version of the scripture calls it—"living life abundantly." Being together, either physically or virtually, is one important way for us in this moment. This next scripture is an extended version of our theme scripture for our Easter Season series and shows us the value the early Christians, some of whom had to gather in secret and isolation, were supporting one another "abundantly." Hear this passage from **Acts 2: 42-47**.

Reader: The believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the community, to their shared meals, and to their prayers. A sense of awe came over everyone. God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles. All the believers were united and shared everything. They would sell pieces of property and possessions and distribute the proceeds to every-

one who needed them. Every day, they met together in the temple and ate in their homes. They shared food with gladness and simplicity. They praised God and demonstrated God's goodness to everyone. The Lord added daily to the community those who were being saved.

Leader: In these two scriptures we see the desire of God for us to be taken care of, for us to live to the fullest, and for us to support one another in having abundant life and community, food and gladness. The "thief" in the first passage could be anything that robs us of those things. Our hearts overflow with the grace and guidance we know from the Shepherd and we want that goodness for everyone. Glad and generous hearts overflow with love in so many ways.

The Heart of the Matter Message Pastor Kris

Breaking Open Our Lives with Each Other

Leader: Our theme scripture says, "they ate their food with glad and generous hearts." One way we can be glad and generous is to share about how we are finding strength, hope, love and peace in these days. This is part of "breaking bread" with each other as we break open our hearts to one another as well. In this week's scripture, Jesus talks about listening to the Shepherd, not to the things that "rob" us of our well-being.

Who or what have you found to be a "voice of the Shepherd," giving you a sense of well-being and abundance in this time?

What things are "thieves," threatening to rob you of a sense of calm and trust?

Or if you can't think of something from this week,
what do you have in your memory as something that offers
abundance?

We'll take a few minutes to talk.

Breaking Open our Hearts with God

Leader: When we gather, we believe that we can bring people not with us closer by lifting up their names in prayer. Take a moment and say out loud the names of people you wish were right here with you today or who are on your mind and heart. As we name them, they are present with us in our hearts and in God's heart.

We also want to call to mind, the people we cannot name, whose names we do not know. But we know they need our prayers and God's comfort.

For those who are grieving.
For those who are sick and recovering.
For those who are caregivers.
For those who are feeling alone and isolated.
For those who are struggling to find friends, food,
and comfort.
For those who are afraid.
For this church.
For this community.
For people and leaders around the world.

Leader: Let us take another breath of Spirit as our "Amen."
We know that God sends out our prayers and the Spirit,
Breath of God, is blowing from within us outward, as a Spirit
of Compassion and Presence.

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.**

**All Sing:
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me
Melt me mold me
Fill me use me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall fresh on me**

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



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Neffs, Pennsylvania

OFFERING

**Thank you to everyone who helped with our Easter Offering.
We raised \$3,185.00 which will be divided and given to The
Chemo Bag and World Central Kitchen.
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.



Venmo

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

Wind Beneath My Wings Larry Henley and Jeff Silbar
Blake Hoppes

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

*** Offering Response** Every Step of the Way
#66 Sing! Prayer and Praise

All Sing:

**Help me do the justice to be done today.
Help me love kindness in all I do and say.
Help me walk humbly with you, O God I pray
Every step of the way, every step of the way.**

PRAISE GOD!

The Easter Season is a time of celebration, no matter what is happening in the world and in our lives, there are things to be grateful about. Let's start with this affirmation, repeating after me:

We know Jesus is present among us...
in our church and in our homes...
We will not let fear be louder than love...
but with glad hearts and rejoicing souls...
we will sing God's praise...
for we are Easter People...!

HAVE GOODWILL

Let's decide to send some energy out to the world that needs it! What message does the world need? Perhaps you will decide to create a way to let more and more people know the message of Christ, "You are not alone. I am here. Peace be with you." What can we do to create more peace in our household, in our family, and in our relationships? How can we offer abundance to those feeling short on calm? Make your own plan today.

Benediction

(based on Psalm 16)

As we close this time together, remember:
God is always with you. No matter what you face,
no matter what trials or hardships come your way,
God is right beside you, always filling your cup to
overflowing,
guiding and directing your path.
So, acknowledge your fear and your worry
and know it is as true and holy as any feeling,
including joy and hope and love.
Take heart! This is the heart of the matter.

Amen.

***Hymn** Day of Peace #287 Spirit & Song
I dream of a morning in springtime, bright with sunshine.
And here in the heart of this very land,
God's delight, hand in hand.

I know there will be a day of peace.
For this, let us all work and pray.

I dream of a winter's night, fair and calm,
streets are dark, but all are home,
and weary, but thankful, for another day;
chance to work, love and pray.

I know there will be a day of peace.
For this, let us all work and pray.

O peace, when will I see you?
O peace, will I ever see your dawning?
O peace, in a world of pain and longing,
your day is not today. And yet,

I dream of a night when all children slumber safe,
warm and fed,
and rise to a day of possibility,
each one loved, each one free.

I know there will be a day of peace.
For this, let us all work and pray.

Oh, let us work, oh let us pray, oh, let us live for peace.
Oh, let us work, oh let us pray, oh, let us live for peace.

Postlude Music

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go George Matheson and
Albert L. Pace
Blake Hoppes

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$8,751.00	8 AM	42
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan-April)	\$ 132,469.00	10:30 AM	77
Calendar Year 2024 (Jan.-April)	\$ 141,275.00	Online Views	263
Change from Last Year	-6.2%	Sunday School	8
Budget FY 2024-25 (July-April)	\$ 359,440.00	God First	32
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-April)	\$ 357,048.00	Faith on Tap	30
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-0.7%	Breathe	15
Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes		2025 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
		Last Week:	\$100, lbs
		Total YTD:	\$800, 2070lbs

Presentations to the Glory of God

In memory of Ruth Rothrock by daughters Lucille Kuhns, Lana Reitz, and Leoma Kern

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.

CCLI LICENSE # 1523377 / Streaming # 20407732

One License #A714125 / Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from *ONE LICENSE*, License #A714125