



February 22, 2026
“The Wandering Way”
Week One

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

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

Lay Readers

8 am- Sue Steinmann; 10:30 am- Tami Wassum

Greeters

Andy & Jan Dyszel, Gene & Christina Thrash

Ushers

8 am- Cliff & Carol James, Michael & Daniel Haffl
10:30 am- Eric Minnich, Gene Thrash, Jason Klinger, Marlene Blose,
Dale Blose, Kim Pentland, Andy Dyszel

Sound

8 am- Karl Klinger; 10:30 am- Mike Baer

"You don't choose a life, you live a life." — *The Way* (2010)
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert- Isaiah 43:19

Lent is a time of reflection, and there's nothing like a pilgrimage to conjure that up. Making intentional journeys has been a ritual of humankind across time and traditions. Inspired by passages in the Judeo-Christian scriptures that talk about the journeys, roads, and pathways of life, we will make our way together through this season. The popular and poignant movie, *The Way*, about a father's pilgrimage in honor of his late son on the famed Camino de Santiago in France and Spain, accompanies us as our modern-day inspiration to live the life we've been given to the fullest.

Prelude Music

Savior, Like A Shepherd Lead Us Tune: Bradbury, William B. Bradbury
Blake Hoppes

WE GATHER

Meeting One Another on The Way

Welcome & Announcements

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

Preparing Together

A Wilderness Wandering People Jim and Jeanie Strathdee

Leader: Today we begin a new worship series called "The Way." Making intentional journeys has been a ritual of humankind across time and traditions. Inspired by passages in the scriptures that talk about the journeys, roads and pathways of life, we will make our way together through this time. The popular and poignant movie, *The Way*, about a father's pilgrimage in honor of his late son on the famed Camino de Santiago in France and Spain, accompanies us as our modern-day inspiration to live the life we've been given to the fullest.

Jesus went on a pilgrimage into the wilderness after his baptism by John in the Jordan River. A common practice among spiritual leaders of his day, this was a time to dig deep into the humanity of his soul. Along the way he encounters what we all encounter along the paths of life—temptations to stray from the path that God has intended for us. But "all who wander are not lost," as the saying goes, for it is in the wandering often that we find our true selves.

All Sung:

**We are a wilderness wandering people
on a journey of the soul.
May we find our destination
in our longing to be whole.
Our Holy God is calling to us.
With Jesus by our side**

may compassion be our compass;
may the Spirit be our guide,
on The Way,
on The Way,
on The Way.

Prayers for the Path

ALL:
God of the Pilgrimage,
be with us on The Way.
At times, we don't know if we are on the path
you would have us travel.
How do we know the direction for our lives?
We come seeking your guidance,
as Jesus showed us to do.
Help us to be at home even in our wanderings,
knowing that you are ever with us.
Amen.

Greeting Each Other

Leader: The best part of having companions on The Way is the sharing that we get to do that makes us feel just a little less alone. During this series, we will share answers to a common question with each other. I invite you to turn to someone you did not come to church with and answer this question: "When was a time you've gotten lost on a road or in a place? "

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

***Hymn** Bless Now, O God, the Journey
Words: Sylvia G. Dunstan, © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE #A - 730053

**Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
The path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountains round,
Then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.**

**Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way;
Your hope burns through the terrors, your love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound;
Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.**

**Divine eternal lover, you meet us on the road.
We wait for lands of promise where milk and honey flow,
But waiting not for places' you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.**

Please be seated.

10:30 Children's Time- Invite Children Forward

SONG I Have Decided

All Sing:

I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus

No turning back, no turning back.

Forward with Love: A Time with Ms. Nikki and the Pastors

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. Nikki 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.

Also on Sundays 9:15-10:15 am, ages 3 to grade 7. Kids are invited to the Education Hour with Ms. Nikki and Leaders.

Watch for God First Wednesdays and other events too!

Music Offering Shine on the World

Patricia Mock & Johann Heerman, Arr. Faye Lopez

8:00am Heritage Choir; 10:30am Horizon Choir

WE PROCLAIM

Discovering Ourselves on The Way

First Reading

Psalm 1 (Inclusive Bible)

*Happiness comes to those
who reject the path of violence,
who refuse to associate with criminals
or even to sit with people who belittle others.*

*Happiness comes to those
who delight in the Law of YHWH
and meditate on it day and night.*

*They're like trees planted by flowing water—
they bear fruit in every season,
and their leaves never wither:
everything they do will prosper.*

*But not wrongdoers!
They're like chaff that the wind blows away.
They won't have a taproot to anchor them
when judgment comes,
nor will corrupt individuals be given a place
at the Gathering of the Just.
YHWH watches over the steps
of those who do justice;
but those on a path of violence and injustice
will find themselves irretrievably lost.*

Second Reading

Luke 3:21; Luke 4:1-13

Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him."

Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you, and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Message Pastor Kris

Resources for you for this season leading you on The Way to Easter:

Movie: The Way (2010) When his son dies while hiking the famed Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route in the Pyrenees, Tom flies to France to claim the remains. Looking for insights into his estranged child's life, he decides to complete the 500-mile mountain trek to Spain. Tom soon joins up with other travelers and realizes they're all searching for something. The Friday and Sunday classes will be watching the movie. You can also stream it on several sites.

Book: Wisdom Walking: Pilgrimage as a Way of Life Gil Stafford
The Friday and Sunday adult classes are reading this. Join us! Extra copies are available on the table in the lobby.

Journals: Packets that include scripture, prayer, and reflections questions are available on the table in the lobby.

Small Groups Book: *The Pauses of Len: 40 Words for 40 Days* by Trevor Hudson. Contact Sue Matta to participate in or lead a group.

WE RESPOND

Opening to the Holy on The Way

A Ritual for Getting Out of Our Own Way

Leader: Because this series is about our life journeys, we will take our time of prayer as a kind of “pitstop” along the way. We cannot always be moving forward. We have to rest. We have to take time to pause in the stillness and reassess and remember to breathe. And so during this series, we will begin with a confessional prayer and a time of personal reflection and then lift our concerns and joys. Our musicians will help us find that stillness with a repeated song throughout the season that can take us deeper into the guiding presence of God.

Dear God,
I am full of anxious questions.
I am short on reasonable answers.
I am trapped by my own inability
to make a decision.
I am reluctant to express my feelings.
I am afraid of the consequences.
I want a guarantee that everything
will work to my benefit.
There are times when I hope that
someone will take over for me.
There are times when I know
I must do it myself.
That is when I am fearful that
I am not strong enough.
I am not wise enough.
I am not caring enough.
If it is possible,
let that cup pass from me,
but if not...
Amen.

Stillness
Lindy Thompson, Mark Miller

All Sung:
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive

Time for Contemplation
Pause, enjoy the music as you silently pray.

Hear this: No matter what juncture you find yourself on in your journeys, you are never alone in your "wondering while wandering."

Whether or not you know it, believe it, or feel it, Jesus is with you now because Jesus has been on this road and knows just how hard it can be.

You are forgiven and carried, especially when you think you are at the end of the road. May it be so.

**All Sung:
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Be the air I breathe
Meet me in the stillness, Lord
Free me to receive**

Praying for Others Along the Way

Leader: We continue our prayers with intercessions for those whose journeys are difficult in this moment...

And as we think about the difficulties of life, we also are reminded that there is so much good along the journey of life. We give thanks for...

We pray all these things spoken aloud, and the ones lifted in the quiet of our hearts, and conclude our prayers with the one that Jesus taught us, saying...

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.**

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

Easter Mission Offering : You can support this by using the Easter Mission Offering envelope in your envelope packet, or a blank envelope marked - Easter Mission, or donate electronically by using any of the options below and noting "Easter Mission."

Habitat for Humanity Founded in 1989, Habitat Lehigh Valley brings together people from all walks of life to help others. Habitat Lehigh Valley works by partnering with local businesses, individuals and faith-based groups to build and renovate housing for families in need in

our community. Their objective is to provide families with a decent home in a safe neighborhood. Additionally, families help to revitalize neighborhoods and increase the local tax base.

Meals on Wheels For over 50 years, Meals on Wheels has been passionately committed to serving seniors and adults. Their mission is simple yet profound: to provide nutritious meals and foster social connection across the Greater Lehigh Valley. They have become an integral part of the lives of over 2,000 seniors and adults with disabilities.

Offering



Thank you for all the ways that you help us make God's dream a reality at Union UCC.

ELECTRONIC GIVING <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-Z51X/home> or QR code. Single or ongoing donation with credit/debit card. Help with fees if you can.

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

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 Sunday's offering plate with a member offering envelope or guest envelope (in the seat racks).

Please reach out to Don Penrod or Pastor Kris if you have questions or if you'd like to learn more about other giving options or legacy gifts to Union.

Electronic Giving



Vanco Mobile



Venmo



Ambassadors (everyone!): Share our news, events, and spirit on social media and with your friends, family, and neighbors.

That's what keeps us relevant, engaged, and growing!

Watch for Union UCC merchandise soon!



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Relevant • Engaged • Growing

Music Offering: As the Deer Martin Nystrom
Blake Hoppes, Piano

Please stand in body or spirit.

Offering Response

ALL SUNG:

Amazing grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost, but now I am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come,
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home.

WE GO FORTH

Continuing with Jesus on The Way

Benediction

Our blessing, or "benediction," for this season is a call and response form.

Your response is:

"We will follow on The Way."

"We will follow on The Way."

The Creator God filled you with breath,
inviting you to this journey called Life.

We will follow on The Way.

Jesus, our Guide, showed us what it means
to make a new way with Love.

We will follow on The Way.

The Spirit gives us strength to move forward
with Courage and Compassion for all we meet.

We will follow on The Way.

May this week be filled with opportunities to choose
good over evil; humility over pride;
and loving God over loving the things that do not last.

May it be so. Amen.

"Buen Camino!"

At the doors: Pick up a scallop shell or a pebble.

The scallop shell has long been a symbol of St. James, the apostle whose cathedral in Galicia, Spain is the final destination for many pilgrims who walk the El Camino. Many of the trail markers along the Camino bear the image of scallop shells to assure travelers that they are on the right path. Please take a shell any Sunday you'd to remind you of this journey we walk with God and each other and to remember you are not alone.

Carrying a small stone has been one of the traditions along the Camino de Santiago. The stone is often treated as a physical symbol of the pilgrim's burdens in life – perhaps a sadness in need of soothing, or a wound in need of healing. Travelers may choose to release their stones anywhere along the journey that feels right, but there is one site that pilgrims often choose at the foot of the Cruz de Ferro (the Iron Cross).

You are welcome to hold onto your shell and/or rock through this season that leads to Easter.

***HYMN** The Summons John L. Bell c. 1987 Lona Community

**Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, Will you let my name be known
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?**

**Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?**

**Will you let the blinded see, if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen,
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?**

**Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around
Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?**

Postlude: Holy, Holy, Holy Tune: Nicaea John B. Dyke
Blake Hoppes, Piano

**Worship Theme: c. Worship Design Studio
Worship Design Team: Kathy Bonsell, Claire Kern, Deb Topp, Pastor Kris
Easter Flower Set Up: Rick and Kathy Bonsell
Special thanks to Kerry Snyder, Ron Snyder, Pastor Kayli, and Nikki
Pentland for altar decoration supplies.**

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$4,523.00	8 AM	50
Calendar Year 2026 (Jan)	\$25,139.32	10:30 AM	98
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan)	\$31,482.00	Ash Wednesday	47
Change from Last Year	-20.1%	God First	-
Budget FY 2025-2026 (July-Jan)	\$261,240.00	Faith on Tap	40
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Jan)	\$253,989.00	Breathe	-
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-2.8%	2026 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		Last Week	\$100, 150 Lbs
		YTD	\$200, 900 Lbs,
		Blanket Sunday	\$1,893.00
		Souper Bowl Sunday	\$826.00

Presentations to the Glory of God

In Memory of Walt Disney

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 Sarah to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.

Worship Schedule

Sundays at 8am and 10:30am at church and online.

March 1- Lent 2

March 8- Lent 3 Girl Scout Sunday and Festival Choir

March 15- Lent 4 Youth Sunday

March 22- Lent 5 Chimes

Holy Week and Easter

Sunday, March 29- Palm Sunday 8am and 10:30 am at church and online.

Come receive a palm or palm cross to start your week journeying to Easter.

April 2- Maundy Thursday Potluck and Communion at 6pm Memorial Hall/Basement – no online.

Bring a casserole, salad, side, or dessert to share. We'll gather around tables like Jesus and the disciples and celebrate our first Holy Communion group.

April 3- Good Friday 7pm Worship and Communion sanctuary and online.

April 5- Easter Sunday & Communion 6:30am Sunrise Grove and online, 8am and 10:30am sanctuary and online.

Mimosas and snacks with the Easter Bunny on the Front Lawn After Church