



March 15, 2026
“The Way Home”
Week 4
Youth Sunday

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

Youth

Greeters

Kim & Sean Flueso, Geoff & Sara Jane Brace

Ushers

8 am- Connie Goielli, Dixie Gross, Debbie Romig

10:30 am- Donna Christman, Gloria Toner, Deb Wenner, Doug Brace,
Marianne Kitzmiller, Brian Horwith, Maryann Puia

Sound

Doug Albert

"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

Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen / All Day, All Night
Traditional Spirituals

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

Miranda Brown: We continue our worship series that invites us to contemplate our journeys in life. Yet even in the midst of journeys, we never lose a desire for "home." No matter what we call "home" in this physical world, we yearn for a spiritual home within that offers serenity, acceptance, and belonging without question. The extravagant acceptance of the father for the son in Jesus' parable of the wandering son is difficult for us to believe sometimes—that no matter what we have done, who we are, how far we are from what we want to become, we are welcomed home by the Loving Parent.

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
Juliette Kareha**

ALL:

**God of the Bending Road,
be with us on The Way.**

**We find ourselves changed
by the things we encounter and the people we meet.**

**We want to grow and yet sometimes
the growing pains can be disorienting for everyone.**

**Help us as we navigate the twists and turns,
and help us see that others are doing the same.**

Amen.

Greeting Each Other

Juliette Kareha: 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: "What does 'home' feel like to you?"

***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.

Music Offering, 8am Peace Be With You Eugene Butler
Heritage Choir

Music Offering, 10:30am Trust In God Christopher Joel Brown, Steven
Furtick, Michael Lake & Mitch Wong
Kids Choir

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!

Joyful Noise Collection

The children of our congregation will be collecting a special offering during the 10:30 am service, and everyone is invited to join in the joy. Bring your spare change—we'll provide the metal pails—and together we'll shake our coins as a reminder that God can use even the smallest gifts to do big things. As we make a little "joyful noise," our children will choose a charity or cause to receive the offering, learning that kindness and generosity are ways we live out our faith.

Note: at 8am service, please drop your change on the way out.

WE PROCLAIM

Discovering Ourselves on The Way

First Reading

Jocelyn Kareha:

Psalm 25:4-10 (NRSVUE)

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.*

*Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.*

*Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old. 4*

*Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of your goodness, O Lord!*

*Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right
and teaches the humble his way.
All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.*

Second Reading

I AM (From the Gospel of John)

Eleanor Pentland, Reid Buskirk, Wesley Buskirk, Nolan Buskirk

*I am the bread of life (John 6:35)
I am the light of the world (John 8:12)
I am the gate for the sheep (John 10:7)
I am the good shepherd (John 10:11)
I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:5)
I am the true vine (John 15:1)*

Message

High School Seniors

Savannah Kareha, Parkland High School

Parker Haydt, Northampton High School

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

Cali Monahan: Our prayer song in this series asks God to “be the air I breathe.” When God is our very breath, we are always Home, even in the midst of feeling lost. We ask to be freed to receive this sense of home that is Love.

Dear Lord,
You have shown me
what a bridge Love is across my wild rivers
of anger and my deep valleys of mistrust;
how it can tame that uncompromising beast, Guilt,
and its constant companion, Anxiety.
You have shown me how Love
warms without burning,
cools without chilling,
holds without crushing.

Whenever I may be hungry,
Love can fill my emptiness.
Whenever I may be wounded,
Love can heal.
However down I may feel,
one touch of its pleasure
can make me a saint.

There are times, though, when Love
expects more of me than I have to give.
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.

Isaac Brace: Hear this: No matter how worthy you feel of God's acceptance, you have it because that is just the way Love works. Whether or not you know it, believe it, or feel it, Jesus is with you now because Jesus knows God's welcome and shared it without hesitation. You are forgiven because Love is Home, no matter how far you think you've strayed. 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

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: Standing on the Promises R. Kelso Carter
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.**

WE GO FORTH

Continuing with Jesus on The Way

Benediction Raegan Minnich

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
to love in ways you never thought possible,
so that Home is anywhere you go.

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 do 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.

On Sunday, March 22 you will have a chance to release a rock or burden on the altar if you'd like.

*HYMN #497 Go Make a Diff'rence #199 Sing! Prayer and Praise

$\text{♩} = 56$
Dm

Asus A ♩ Dm B \flat C
Go make a diff - 'rence. We can make a diff-

Dm F Asus A
— 'rence. Go make a diff - 'rence in the world, —

Dm B \flat C Dm
Go make a diff - 'rence. We can make a diff - 'rence.

B \flat maj 7 Asus A Dm Am Am
Last time, Fine 1. 2.3.
Go make a diff - 'rence in the world, — 1. We are the
2. We are the

Dm B \flat C Dm
salt of the earth, — called to let the peo - ple see — the
hands of — Christ — reach - ing out to those in need, — the

F Asus A Am Dm
love of God — for you and me, — We are the light of the world,
face of God — for all to see, — We are the spir - it of hope;

— not to be hid-den but be seen... Go make a diff-
 — we are the voice of peace. Go make a diff-

-'rence in the world. 3. So let your love shine on,
 -'rence in the world.

— let it shine for all to see... Go make a diff - 'rence in the

world. And the spir - it of Christ will be with us as we

go... Go make a diff - 'rence in the world.

Postlude: Precious Lord, Take My Hand Thomas A. Dorsey
 Blake Hoppes

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 | \$6,727.00 | 8 AM | 75 |
| Calendar Year 2026 (Jan.-Feb) | \$61,191.32 | 10:30 AM | 131 |
| Calendar Year 2025 (Jan.-Feb) | \$59,944.00 | Sunday School | - |
| Change from Last Year | 2.1% | God First | - |
| Budget FY 2025-2026 (July-Feb) | \$290,630.00 | Faith on Tap | - |
| Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Feb) | \$290,041.00 | Breathe | - |
| Difference in Giving vs. Budget | -0.2% | 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, |
| | | Easter Mission | \$733.00 |

Presentations to the Glory of God

Our Youth Are Awesome! 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 Sarah to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.