



**March 22 2026**  
**“The Free Way”**  
**Week 5**

**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**

8am- Michael Roth; 10:30am- Janice Metzger

### **Greeters**

Eric Minnich, Martha Lutz

### **Ushers**

8am- Cliff & Carol James, Michael & Daniel Haftl

10:30am- Eric Minnich, Gene Thrash, Jason Klinger, Marlene & Dale Blose, Kim Pentland, Andy Dyszel

### **Sound**

Karl Klinger

"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**

Bell Prayer A Steve Taranto

**Chimers:** Dan Haftl, John Fabian, Debbie Romig, Susan Glosan, Sandy Daumer, Bonnie Herzog, Barbara Carinci, Ron Pope, Margie Mackenzie, Dawn Dengler, Carol Pope, Tami Wassum, Malcolm Mackenzie

**Director: Edie Fella**

### **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:* Our worship series leads us along the path of our faith journey in a way that leads to new life in Jesus Christ, the message of Easter that we move towards. New paths are possible through freedom in Christ. And these ways can be made plain before us if we have eyes to see. Yes, we will strain against adversity—such is life. We don't reach Easter until we've been through the agony of Holy Week that will soon be upon us. But new paths are always possible. New horizons are ours through relationship with God and with each other. There will be both stumbling blocks and stepping stones along the way. But God is our rock and our redeemer—God is with us in our every step.

### **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 our Rock,  
be with us on The Way.  
At times we are not sure how we will  
carry the burdens of grief and disappointment  
that accumulate in life.  
We come asking for help  
in lightening the load  
so that we can be free to move in new directions.  
Help us to help each other as Jesus asks us to do.  
Amen.**

### **Greeting Each Other**

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 feels heavy to you this day?”

**\*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

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**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:** Morning Has Broken Gaelic Tune

Arr. Sondra K. Tueker

**Chimers:** Dan Haffl, John Fabian, Debbie Romig, Susan Glosan, Sandy Daumer, Bonnie Herzog, Barbara Carinci, Ron Pope, Margie Mackenzie, Dawn Dengler, Carol Pope, Tami Wassum, Malcolm Mackenzie

**Director: Edie Fella**

### **The Installation and Ordination of Those Newly Elected to the Consistory**

Thank you to those finishing terms: **Donna Christman, Lorie Hackett, Jason Klinger, Eric Minnich, Kerry Snyder**

Giving thanks to those returning for a second term: **Marianne Kitzmiller, Ron Pope**

Giving thanks to those beginning their first term: **Deana Correll, Edie Fella, Ralph Gioielli, Dan Haffl, Leanna Lane**

### **WE PROCLAIM**

Discovering Ourselves on The Way

### **First Reading**

*Isaiah 43:16-19*

*Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.*

*I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.*

**Second Reading**  
Philippians 3: 12-14

*Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.*

**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:* Let us pause along the way to turn towards the Holy One, the One whose way is freedom from fear. We come with our honesty about just how difficult it is to trust the path, trust our instincts, trust our inner compass. And we remember that God meets us even here.

O God,  
There are times  
when I feel hopeless and afraid.  
I become confused and unsure  
as to how to face the next moment.  
What difference does my life make  
in the midst of such a vast universe?

Sometimes the thought of my own death  
stirs up feelings of doubt and uncertainty.

I feel as though I am on a treadmill,  
rather than moving toward a destination.

Worst of all, in the midst of my anxiety,  
I become impatient and angry with those  
who mean the most to me.

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**

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Today, inspired by the ritual action of pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago, we will bring our rocks forward to place at the foot of the cross, offering gratitude for the presence of Christ on our journeys and the gift of relieving our burdens. You may want to think of a specific burden that you would like to lay down at this moment or it could simply be a sense of tiredness or fear or anxiety. I invite you to come when you are ready

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

Hear this: You are already free because Jesus makes it so.  
Whether or not you know it, believe it, or feel it quite yet,  
your burden is shared by Jesus,  
who is gentle and humble of heart.  
You are forgiven and freed,  
especially when your way needs the relief of less weight.  
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.**

### **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.



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:** All Night, All Day Arr. Susan Geschke

**Chimers:** Dan Haffl, John Fabian, Debbie Romig, Susan Glosan, Sandy Daumer, Bonnie Herzog, Barbara Carinci, Ron Pope, Margie Mackenzie, Dawn Dengler, Carol Pope, Tami Wassum, Malcolm Mackenzie

**Director:** Edie Fella

**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**

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 let go of those things that no longer serve you,  
and be on the lookout for ways to encourage the  
same in those you meet.

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.**

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

**\*HYMN** Just a Closer Walk with Thee

**I am weak but Thou art strong;  
Jesus, keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long  
As I walk, let me walk close to Thee.**

**Just a closer walk with Thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to Thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**Thro' this world of toil and snares,  
If I falter, Lord, who cares?  
Who with me my burden shares?  
None but Thee, dear Lord, none but Thee.**

**Just a closer walk with Thee,  
Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
Daily walking close to Thee,  
Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.**

**Postlude:** He Hideth My Soul Fanny Crosby & William Kirkpatrick  
**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	\$5,910.00	8 AM	53
Calendar Year 2026 (Jan.-Feb)	\$61,191.32	10:30 AM	126
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan.-Feb)	\$59,944.00	Sunday School	-
Change from Last Year	<b>2.1%</b>	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%	<b>2026 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:</b>	
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		Last Week	\$100, 150 Lbs
		YTD	\$200, 900 Lbs,
		Easter Mission	\$2,001.00

## Presentations to the Glory of God

### Nadine Rauch

**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.