



**March 8, 2026**  
**“The Way Around”**  
**Week 3**

**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**

8 am- Ron Pope; 10:30 am- Vicki Mayk

**Greeters**

Brynn & Jon Buskirk, Sally Saltzer, Devon Kuharik

**Ushers**

8 am- Kerry Snyder, Tom Anderson, Larry Todd, Lorie Hackett  
10:30 am- Janice Metzger, Julie Johnson, Karen Nuschke,  
Ralph & Connie Gioielli, Carol James

**Sound**

Patrick Sorg

"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.**

### **FESTIVAL CHOIR SUNDAY**

**Welcome and thank you to our singers and musicians from the community, Union UCC, and the Gerry Music Studio.**

Thank you for filling our church with beautiful music!

**Thank you to the Funds of Lasting Gifts and the Mattern Family Music**

**Fund** for financially supporting additional music staff and programming in our church.

### **GIRL SCOUT SUNDAY**

**COOKIES FOR SALE IN THE LOBBY!**

**Welcome Raegan Minnich and Cali Monahan**

### **Prelude Music**

Eighteenth Variation from Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43  
S. Rachmaninoff

**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:* In our series about this journey called life, we focus today on how the journey changes us. This can lead to not always being understood. Jesus found this out as he pushed against the status quo of his day leading to a fair amount of rejection. Close family, friends and neighbors may cling to an idea of who we are and cannot imagine we have grown beyond that identity. And likewise, we may do the same to them. We are called to move ahead and do what we feel called to do, claiming who we know we are, taking the way around what others think we ought to do and be. And we offer the same steadfast love and encouragement to others.

**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 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**

*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:

“What is a change in plans you've been through in your life?”

**\*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!**

### **WE PROCLAIM**

Discovering Ourselves on The Way

### **First Reading**

*Psalm 32:1-11 (Inclusive Bible)*

*Happiness comes from having your rebellion taken away,  
from having your failure completely covered.  
Happiness comes from YHWH not counting your mistakes,  
from having nothing to hide.*

*As long as I kept my stubborn silence,  
my bones grew weak because of my constant complaints.  
Day and night your hand was heavy upon me;  
my strength was sapped by a summer's heat.*

*Finally I admitted my sin to you,  
and stopped hiding my guilt. I said, "I confess my rebellion, YHWH,"  
and you took away the guilt of my sin.*

*That's why people of faith everywhere  
should pray to you—they'll find you.  
Even when the flood begins rising,  
it will never touch them.*

You are my hiding place;  
you'll protect me from trouble  
and surround me with songs of freedom.

"I'll teach you and show you the way you should walk;  
I will counsel you, and keep watch over you.

Be wise! Don't be like horses and mules,  
who need to be harnessed with bit and bridle  
before they'll come to you."

Wrongdoers are prone to many sorrows,  
but those who trust in YHWH  
are surrounded with unfailing love.

Be glad in YHWH and rejoice, you who love justice!  
Exult, you upright of heart!

**Music Offering:** Siyahamba South African Freedom Song  
**Community Choir – members of the community, Union UCC,  
and the Gerry Music Studio**  
**Directed by Matt Gerry**

### **Second Reading**

Luke 13: 31-34

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

**Music Offering** City Called Heaven Josephine Poelinitz  
**Community Choir – members of the community, Union UCC,  
and the Gerry Music Studio**  
**Solo: Adriana Danyluk**  
**Directed by Matt Gerry**

**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.

**Music Offering** Psalm of Repentance Lee Dengler  
**Festival Choir – members of Union UCC and the Gerry Music Studio**  
**Instrumentalists: Dan Kane- Trumpet, Mitchel Roth- Trumpet,**  
**Matt Barbieri- Trumpet, Alex Gross - Baritone,**  
**Nancy Gross - Bass Clarinet**  
**Directed by Matt Gerry**

### WE RESPOND

Opening to the Holy on The Way

### A Ritual for Getting Out of Our Own Way

*Leader:* We pause along the way to offer our whole attention to God in prayer. This is especially necessary when bends in the road require decisions about the way we move forward or we find ourselves unsure. Let us meet God in the stillness, offering our most honest selves.

Dear God,  
I am not always sure I know  
what I want for myself.  
I am surrounded by some people  
who want me to be more than I am,  
and others who want me to be less.

What is worse,  
I have those same expectations of others.  
Sometimes that makes it difficult for me  
to get my head and my heart  
having in the same direction.

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:  
Whether or not you have any idea of your next steps,  
or have felt the sting of doubt from others about your journey,  
God will not abandon you in your quest.  
Whether or not you know it, believe it, or feel it,  
Jesus is with you now because Jesus knew rejection,  
and knows just how hard it can be,  
for you and for others in your wake.  
You are forgiven and embraced,  
especially when you think you may have taken a wrong turn.  
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:** Great is Thy Faithfulness Arr. Dan Forrest  
Roni Gerry, Vocals; 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**

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 let others share with you their journey stories,  
and for you to share yours  
so you might come to know each other more fully.  
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 #497 Guide My Feet**  
Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal

**Guide my feet while I run this race.  
Guide my feet while I run this race.  
Guide my feet while I run this race.  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.**

**Hold my hand while I run this race.  
Hold my hand while I run this race.  
Hold my hand while I run this race.  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.**

**I'm your child while I run this race.  
I'm your child while I run this race.  
I'm your child while I run this race.  
For I don't want to run this race in vain.**

**Postlude: Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross**  
Tune: Near the Cross William H. Doane  
**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	96
Calendar Year 2026 (Jan.-Feb)	\$61,191.32	10:30 AM	45
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,
		Blanket Sunday	\$1,912.84
		Souper Bowl Sunday	\$955.80

## Presentations to the Glory of God

**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.