



**May 24th, 2026
"Protection"
Jazz Ensemble**

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/unioneffs. 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- Carol Pope; 10:30am- Donna Christman

Greeters

Jim & Leanna Lane, Sharon Maletsky

Ushers

8:00am- Cliff James, Carol James, Daniel & Michael Haffl

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

Sound

Dawn Dengler

"Prayer is a small fire lit to keep cold hands warm. Prayer is a practice that flourishes both with faith and doubt. Prayer is asking and prayer is sitting. Prayer is the breath. Prayer is not an answer, always, because not all questions can be answered. Prayer can be a rhythm that helps us make sense in times of senselessness, not offering solutions, but speaking to and from the mystery of humanity."

- Pádraig Ó Tuama, *Daily Prayer with the Corrymeela Community*

"Prayer is..." How would you finish this sentence? Prayer is such a personal, and often ambiguous, practice. Are we not "pray-ers" if we don't start with "Dear God..." and end with "Amen?" Can prayer be simply an attitude, a heightened moment of attention to our surroundings, or a gasp of gratitude when beauty crosses our path? Yes and yes and yes. Prayer is many things. Even the disciples needed some coaching from Jesus about how to pray.

Prelude Music

God Bless America

**Jazz Ensemble: Blake Hoppes-piano, Mike Baer-guitar,
Andy Hill-trumpet, Mitchell Roth-Trumpet, Malcolm MacKenzie-bass**

THE WHEN WE GATHER

Welcome & Announcements

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

Threshold

Leader: Today in our series on prayer, we dwell with practices of prayer that help us grapple with evil and seek deliverance. In his prayer template, Jesus draws on ancient Judeo-liturgical tradition from the Psalms of lament... "deliver us." Just as his Hebrew ancestors did before him, he calls on God to come, to stand with, to offer strength in time of trouble. The crowds take on this same chant, "save us" (Hosanna) as Jesus processed along the entrance road to Jerusalem, hoping for justice. "Protection" is our focus about prayer today. How does our prayer help us wrestle with the evil we experience in the world?

"Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying"

ALL SUNG:

Lord, listen to your children praying,

Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying,

send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

We arrive fully into this moment, Holy One.
We open to sense your presence among us.

We hear you say,
“I will keep your life.”

We need you, Jesus, to help us.
We come to you as your first disciples did.

We hear you say,
“I will keep your life.”

Spirit of Divine Love,
come to us with your healing waters.

We hear you say,
“I will keep your life.”

ALL SUNG:

**Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place.
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us pow’r, send us grace.**

Leader: I invite us to a few moments of silence. Feel your rhythms slow a bit. I invite you to simply hold the prayer beads in your hands. Begin to feel the warmth of God’s love and protection spread within you, as tender as the beads in your hands.

Silence

Leader: Take a deep breath [pause]. There is no hurt or harm that God can’t hold with you. We can tell the truth of our grappling with the evil around us and among us and how it impacts us. And we can cry out for help. God is here, with us, as close as these beads. Let us worship God, follow Christ, and revel in the Spirit of Presence in this place.

The Peace

Leader: No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey,
ALL: You are welcome here.

Leader: Welcome to this place and time of worship, prayer, and service.

***Please rise in body or spirit to greet each other with Christ’s welcome and for the first song.**

***Hymn** It is Well With My Soul
#495 Gold/Hymnals for the Family of God

**When peace like a river attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
"It is well, it is well with my soul."**

Refrain
It is well with my soul;
it is well, it is well with my soul.

**My sin oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
my sin, not in part, but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!**

Refrain

**O Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend;
even so, it is well with my soul**

Refrain

Please be seated.

Music Offering Poor Wayfaring Stranger
Jazz Ensemble

10:30 Children's Time – Invite Children Forward

SONG Alleluia, Praise Ye the Lord

**Allelu, allelu, allelu, alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord!
Allelu, allelu, allelu, alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord!
Praise ye the Lord! Alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord! Alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord! Alleluia!
Praise ye the Lord!**



May 24th -
August 23rd

We invite all youth, ages 3 through 5th grade, to join us this summer as we explore the love and strength of our God. Kids begin worship with their families before being welcomed to Children's Church with Miss Nikki. Children will return before worship concludes.

During our outdoor services this summer, we will hold Children's Church in the Grove.

Returning in September: 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.

THE WHAT WE PROCLAIM

Scripture Reading

Psalm 21

Reader: Our first reading is from Psalm 121. This beautiful expression of trust and assurance of God's protection can help ground us as we face whatever powers and principalities are working against Love in our lives and the world.

*I lift up my eyes to the hills- from where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

God will not let your foot be moved;

God who keeps you will not slumber...

The Lord will keep you from all evil; God will keep your life.

*The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on
and forevermore.*

Second Reading

Matthew 21:6-9

Reader: Our second reading from from Matthew 21:6-9 reminds us that when the people who lined the road during Jesus' entry into Jerusalem cried out "save us" they did so from a context of ongoing and deep oppression alongside violent and deadly repression. Their hosannas were part of being real about the deliverance they needed.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

The Message
Pastor Kris



THE WHERE WE RESPOND

Prayer Song

ALL SUNG:

**You know my words before they're said.
You know my need and I am fed.
You give me life. You know my ways,
my strength, my path, for all my days.
my strength, my path, for all my days.**

Prayers of the People

Leader: Again today we will offer our community prayers in the form of "bidding prayers." Each prayer is a wrestling with the presence of evil in our lives and our hopes for and experiences of deliverance. We are going to share our joys and concerns to bring them top-of-mind and then we will pray with our beads.

What are you thankful for today? We are going to just lift up words or phrases of thanksgiving. I am grateful for _____
What are you grateful for?

What concerns you today? Who needs our prayers? I pray for _____
Who else needs our prayers?

Like each bead on our prayer strands, each prayer is precious to the Holy One, even and especially the ones we cannot speak, but keep close in our hearts. For all these things spoken and the ones spoken in the quiet of our hearts, hear our prayers, O God. Amen.

The Prayer of Protection

Leader: Today, we have focused on prayers of protection as ways of admitting that we need God's presence because life can be hard and unjust. Jesus invites our lament for the evil in the world. We will take a time of quiet music to move through eight beads, reciting each line in our minds, letting each one sink into our hearts as we use our hands to move from one bead to another. You may have many laments and complaints, but pick just one each time you pray this prayer. Do this on your own time, with the words in the quiet of your own heart

Bead 1: So much is wrong.

Bead 2: This is what is grieving me today: _____

Bead 3: I am tempted to hide or to conspire. Lead me another way.

Bead 4: Jesus, hosanna, save me!

Bead 5: Let me join the justice parade in the face of evil.

Bead 6: Give me the courage to raise my lament as long as needed.

Bead 7: Save me from my own apathy.

End Bead: Help me be part of the solution, in your name.

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 SUNG:

You know my words before they're said.

You know my need and I am fed.

You give me life. You know my ways,

my strength, my path, for all my days.

my strength, my path, for all my days

A TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO SERVED

The congregation responded to the invitation to submit names of those who died during military service. We are grateful for all who serve or have served, but on the Memorial Day, we are especially mindful of those who died in military service and whose names are listed here:

PVT Larry W. Bachman, U.S. Army

Ensign Vernon G. Kern, U.S. Navy

W-O David P. Kuhns, U.S. Army-Air Force

SP4 Larry R. Lalan, U.S. Army

Richard Wehr, U.S. Army

All unknown soldiers who gave their lives in service

PRAYER FOR MEMORIAL DAY By Maren C. Tirabassi

**ALL: God, we come with Taps in our hearts
remembering those who have died for others,
soldiers, sailors, air corps, in this country and others,
remembering those who risk life for others,
coast guard, firefighter, law enforcement,
both near and far away,
remembering those who go forth
in emergency response, disaster relief,
and aid to victims of war,
remembering those who witness for justice
in the face of opposition,
and remembering our own losses –
some, fresh wounds,
some, long-familiar sadnesses.
Day is come, not just one,
but a year full of dawns
in the east.
While some rest, we are blest,
given peace. Amen.**

Leader: We remember that Memorial Day began when Confederate war widows decorated the far-from-home graves of Union soldiers.

ALL: We remember – and pray for those who grieve on all sides of a conflict.

Leader: We remember that Memorial Day also began at Charleston's Washington Race Course when newly freed slaves honored prisoners of war.

ALL: We remember – and pray for people everywhere who are seeking freedom or living with the loss of freedom.

Leader: We remember that May 30 was chosen for Memorial Day because it was one day that did not commemorate a particular battle.

ALL: We remember — and pray for a time when every day is an anniversary of peace.

Leader: We remember ANZAC Day, when Australians and New Zealanders memorialize not only those in combat, but nurses, stretcher bearers, conscientious objectors, and those who bear home front burdens.

ALL: We remember – and pray to be aware of the gifts of many in our common causes.

Leader: We remember Christmas Eve truces and paper cranes, amnesties and poppies, folded flags and the desperate need of veterans for gratitude made real in support.

ALL: We remember — and pray for a memorializing, not confined to a holiday but alive in the spirits of young and old, enlisted and civilian, brand new Americans and those with deep hometown-roots, people of every faith, no faith and people willing to leave their politics outside the door in order to embrace everyone. God, be with us as we remember. Amen.

Taps played by **Mitchell Roth**

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

May Mission Collections

This year, the Mission Committee is partnering with Lehigh Conference of Churches by organizing a special collection of items needed for families in the local community. In honor of Mother's Day, we will be collecting baby supplies, feminine hygiene products, incontinence products, and more.

A special baby crib will be set up in the foyer for you to drop off donations during the whole month of May. Items needed are baby wipes, diapers, lotion, soap, feminine hygiene products, depends, shampoo and conditioner for women, and toilet paper. These may seem like simple little items but are truly needed to improve the lives of people and families that are served through Lehigh Conference of Churches.

Please share your love to the community and drop off these items during our special May mission collection.



Dreaming God's Dream
NO GIFT TOO SMALL. NO DREAM TOO BIG.

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: America the Beautiful
Jazz Ensemble

Please stand in body or spirit.

Offering Response

Doxology

Tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**Like strands of beads, we offer gifts,
that one by one, your love will lift.**

Alleluia, alleluia!

**That all may have just what they need,
by this we're bless'd and truly freed.**

Hear our prayers, God.

Be our guide, Lord.

Holy Spirit, come and fill us.

Alleluia!

THE WHY WE GO FORTH

Benediction

Note: Take your prayer beads home to use throughout the week and then bring them back next week as we continue to learn new ways to pray.

And now hear this word of blessing:

God knows our words before they're said.

knows our need and we are fed.

God gives us life, knows our ways,
our strength, our path, for all our days.
our strength, our path, for all our days.

Go into the world with the assurance
that God goes with you,
Jesus prays for you,
and the Spirit breathes through you, all your days.
Let the people say, **Amen!**

Shepherd Me, O God

Psalm 23

128

Marty Haugen

Refrain

Shep-herd me, O God, be-yond my wants, be-yond my fears, from

1-3, 5, Final to Vss 1-3, 5 4 to Verse 4
 death in - to life. life.

Verses 1-3

1. God is my shep-herd, so noth-ing shall I want, I
2. Gen - tly you raise me and heal my wea-ry soul, you
3. Though I should wan-der the val - ley of death, I

1. rest in the mead-ows of faith-ful - ness and love, I
2. lead me by path-ways of righ-teous-ness and truth, my
3. fear no e - vil, for you are at my side, your

1. walk by the qui - et wa - ters of peace.
2. spir - it shall sing the mu - sic of your Name.
3. rod and your staff, my com-fort and my hope.

Verse 4

4. You have set me a ban-quet of love in the face of

4. ha-tred, crown-ing me with love be-yond my pow'r to hold.

Verse 5

5. Sure - ly your kind-ness and mer-cy fol-low me all the days of my

5. life; I will dwell in the house of my God for-ev - er - more.

Postlude: Chitlins Con Carne

Jazz Ensemble: Blake Hoppes-piano, Mike Baer-guitar,
Andy Hill-trumpet, Mitchell Roth-Trumpet, Malcolm MacKenzie-bass

Worship Theme: c. Worship Design Studio
Worship Design Team: Deb Topp, Pastor Kris
Prayer Beads: Thank you Susan Glosan!

Prayer Beads

Since the early church, Christians have used common, ordinary, everyday objects - including pebbles, knotted rope, crosses, and strings of beads - to help them in prayer. Prayer beads can be a wonderful prayer tool helping us feel connected to God and providing some structure for our prayer time.

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER If you are using a prayer bead strand with introductory beads before the seven smaller beads, simply move along those, settling and asking God to open your heart. If you have a prayer bead strand with a different number, that's ok. It doesn't matter... simply moving up and down your prayer bead strand with each line.

The Prayer of Protection

Jesus invited us to lament the evil of the world. There is nothing too hard for God to hear—especially our grief. The Psalmists knew this and they pleaded in their prayers, asking God “please come to our aid!” We can do the same. A prayer of protection is a way of admitting that we need God's presence because life can be hard and unjust. Taking our grief to God is one way that we begin to open the door to possibilities and new life.

Bead 1: So much is wrong.

Bead 2: This is what is grieving me today: _____

Bead 3: I am tempted to hide or to conspire. Lead me another way.

Bead 4: Jesus, hosanna, save me!

Bead 5: Let me join the justice parade in the face of evil.

Bead 6: Give me the courage to raise my lament as long as needed.

Bead 7: Save me from my own apathy.

End Bead: Help me be part of the solution, in your name.

*These prayers have been created by Dr. Marcia McFee,
www.worshipdesignstudio.com,
for the series on prayer, “All My Days.”*

Using Beads to Talk with God Prayer beads can help us feel comfortable talking with God. This might look like:

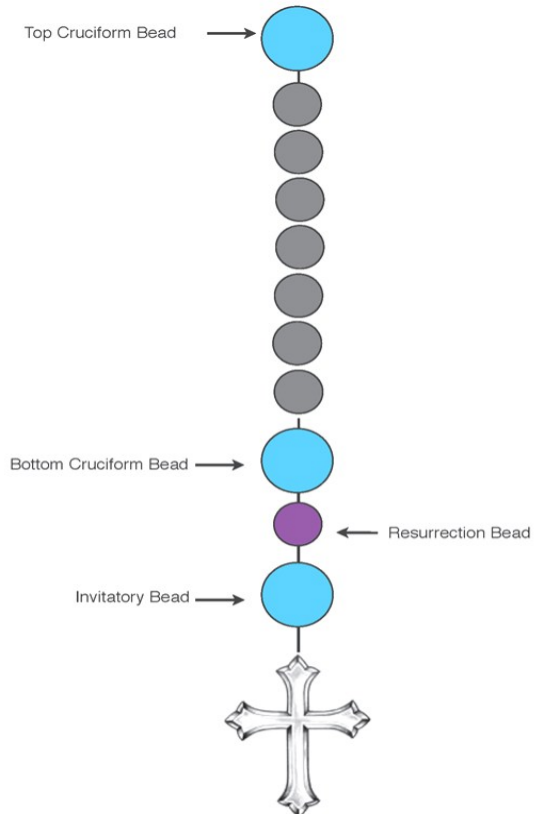
- Using each bead to name something you are thankful for.
- Using each bead to bless someone.
- Using each bead to offer up a prayer concern.
- Using each bead to share what you are feeling.
- Using each bead to tell God about your day.

Using Beads to Listen to God Prayer beads can also help us get quiet and listen to what God has to say to us. They can ground us when we are feeling scared or anxious. When we hold them, we are reminded that God is as close to us as the beads between our fingers. This might look like:

- Using each bead to take a deep breath.
- Using each bead to repeat a phrase, such as “Jesus loves me,” or “Please, God, help me.”
- Sitting with the beads while you listen to a song or a Bible story being read. What did you hear? What do you think God is saying to you through the song or story?
- Holding the beads when you are scared or sad, remembering that God is with you.

It's important to remember...

- There is no right or wrong way to use beads in prayer.
- Feel free to experiment with different ways to use your beads.
- You can use beads with prayers your family already uses or create or learn new ones.
- You can follow the beads to say your prayers, or you can hold them in your hands and feel God's deep love for you.



EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
		8 AM	39
Last Week	\$9,107.00	10:30 AM	84
<i>Calendar Year 2026 (Jan. - Apr.)</i>	\$136,714.00	God First	-
<i>Calendar Year 2025 (Jan. - Apr.)</i>	\$132,469.00	Faith on Tap	30
Change from Last Year	3.2%	2026 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Budget FY 2025-2026(<i>July-Apr.</i>)	\$365,930.00	Last Week	\$300, 100 Lbs
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (<i>July-Apr.</i>)	\$364,201.7.11	YTD	\$600, 2,400 Lbs
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-0.5%	Mother's Day Donations (Phoebe Home)	
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		\$922.00	

Presentations to the Glory of God

Children's Bulletin

In Memory of Michael's Grandparents, Franklin and Anna Haftl
by Dan Haftl

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.