



September 13th, 2026
Is this just for us?

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 Reader

8:00am - Ron Pope, 10:30am- Doug Kuntz

Greeters

Kim & Sean Flueso, Geoff & Sara Jane Brace

Ushers

8:00am- Kerry Snyder, Tom Anderson, Larry Todd, Lorie Hackett

10:30am- Janice Metzger, Julie Johnson, Karen Nuschke, Ralph & Connie Gioielli, Carol James

Sound

Dawn Dengler

Worship Theme: The Gospel of Luke – The Ministry of Jesus

This September we continue the journey through the texts written by Luke: both his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. Worship will include some beloved and familiar songs and some new ones. The pastors hope our time together in God's word and this place of worship will give you the space you need to move through your days and weeks knowing that this community travels with you and that God holds, nudges, and carries you as well.

Let's settle in and sink into God's love and grace as Spirit gathers us here.

Prelude Music

Blest Be the Tie That Binds Us Together

Bob Gillman 1974 © 2001 Kingsway's Thank You Music
Arr. Mark Hayes CCLI License #1523377

Blake Hoppes

Welcome & Announcements

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

Call to Worship

Leader: We gather in the spirit,

All: ready or unready for her arrival.

Leader: We gather in love,

All: ready or unready for love's grace.

Leader: We gather in hope,

All: ready or unready for its unveiling.

Leader: Can any of us be ready

All: for the gift of grace,

the kindling of the spirit,

the call of God.

Leader: We gather in worship

All: ready or unready to encounter God.

Prayer of Adoration And Confession

Faithful God,
you call us to live awake.

Not fearful. Not anxious.

Awake.

You invite us to pay attention to the world around us,
to notice the neighbour in need,
the quiet cry for justice,
the weary soul carrying more
than they can say aloud.

Yet so often we drift through our days
distracted and comfortable.
We convince ourselves
that someone else will speak,
someone else will act,
someone else will carry the responsibility.
Forgive us for the times
we have known what was right
and still chose silence.
Forgive us for the moments
when faith became performance
instead of practice.
You do not ask us to be perfect,
but to be honest, compassionate,
and ready to love with integrity.
Wake us again to lives shaped by
mercy, courage, and kindness.
Help us become people who live faithfully
whether anyone is watching or not.
So be it.
Amen.

God's Open Arms and Our Union UCC Welcome

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 and for the first song.**

***Hymn #468 Be Thou My Vision (Dan Topp Favorite Hymn)**

Gold Hymnal / Hymns for the Family of God

Eleanor Henrietta Hull, Mary Byrne c. Arr. © 1989 Hope Publishing Company Public Domain
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**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me save that thou art.
Thou my best thought by day and by night;
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word;
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.
Thou my great Father, I thy dear child;
Thou in me dwelling, with thee reconciled.**



Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise;
Thou mine inheritance, now and always.
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven's joys, O bright Heav'ns Sun!
Heart of my heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Please be seated.

10:30 Children's Time – Invite Children Forward

SONG God's Children

Written by Union UCC member, Malcolm MacKenzie

We are all God's children

Yes, One and all

It doesn't matter, if you're big or small

It doesn't matter, if you're young or old

We are all God's children

Yes, one and all.

(Repeat)

Children's Church • Ages 3 to Grade 5 • Sundays at 10:30 a.m.

Summer Children's Church returns on September 13th! Children begin worship with their families and are invited forward for Children's Time with Ms. Nikki. They then leave with Ms. Nikki and return to worship with their families before the service ends.

Summer Children's Church will continue into Fall Children's Church with Ms. Nikki beginning September 27th

Education Hour • Ages 3 to Grade 7 • Sundays 9:15–10:15 a.m.

Education Hour returns September 20! Children are invited to join Ms. Nikki and our Education Hour leaders in Fellowship Hall.

Our Nursery is Open! Parents are welcome to stay with their little ones in our nursery during church. Listen To and watch worship together while you snack, play, and rest.

**Blessing of the Backpacks, Devices, Students, Educators,
School Staffs, and all Learners and Growers!**

AND A GIFT FROM THE PASTORS AND MS. NIKKI

If you brought your backpack or device, bring it forward with you,
If you don't have it, we will bless you!

Prayer

Pastor: God of fresh starts and new beginnings, we bring ourselves, our big feelings, and our backpacks to you. In our backpacks, we carry blank pages, sharpened pencils, and pointy crayons, and in our hearts, we carry big feelings, unanswered questions, and hopeful expectations. There are endless possibilities of what this new year might bring— of what we might learn, who we might meet, and who we might become. God, our friend who is always with us, be with us through it all. Be with us as we ride the bus. Be with us as we walk. Be with us as we buckle seat belts, zip-up jackets, and tie shoes. However we get there, and whatever we wear, bless this journey into something new. For the grown-ups going back to school, With-Us God, be with them too. Thank you for our teachers, helpers, caregivers, and leaders, and for all they do to help us learn and grow. God, our friend who's full of wonder, fill their hearts and bless their hands.

Youth: God, bless these backpacks and the children and youth who carry them as they begin yet another year of school. Give them peace when they feel nervous, focus when they feel distracted, energy when they feel tired. Open their minds to the lessons they will learn both in and outside the classroom. Help them to make friends that build one another up, and be friends to those who need them. Guide them in making good choices as they grow in wisdom and maturity. Be ever-present with them in the classroom, on the school bus, on the playground, and at home, and may they feel your loving care in all they do.

Teacher: Lord, bless those in the ministry of teaching future generations. As they embark on a new school year, grant them energy, passion, discipline, and endurance for their daily tasks. Infuse their classrooms with an atmosphere of care and mutual respect, that all interactions there will be bathed in patience and understanding. Help their lessons to grow pupils in both knowledge and character, and help us all to support the work these teachers do building up our community and our future.

Youth: God, bless our donations of backpacks and school supplies and the children who will use them. Let these physical gifts be symbols of the love and support we give to the children of our community throughout the year. Help us to look upon

every child in our community as one of our own, helping them to grow in character and knowledge.

Put your hand on the shoulder of someone next to you and say, “God loves you and so does your church! Have a great start to your school year!”

Scripture Reading
Luke 12:35-48, 57-59

‘Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

‘But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.’

Peter said, ‘Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for everyone?’ And the Lord said, ‘Who then is the faithful and prudent manager whom his master will put in charge of his slaves, to give them their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. But if that slave says to himself, “My master is delayed in coming”, and if he begins to beat the other slaves, men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and put him with the unfaithful. That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. But one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.

'And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? Thus, when you go with your accuser before a magistrate, on the way make an effort to settle the case, or you may be dragged before the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer throw you in prison. I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny.'

Song

**ALL: Open our hearts, open our minds.
Open our lives to you,
O loving God.
(Repeat)**

Open Our Hearts Jim Strathdee
#28 Sing! Prayer and Praise

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The Message: is it just for us? Pastor Kris

Reflective Prayer

Keep The Lamp Burning

There are many kinds of waiting.
Waiting for answers.
Waiting for healing.
Waiting for hope.
Jesus does not tell us to count the days.
He simply says,
"Keep your lamp burning."
Keep kindness alive
when the world feels hard.
Keep faith alive
when prayers seem unanswered.
Keep hope alive
when the way ahead is unclear.
A lamp does not light the whole world.
It simply shines where it is.
Perhaps that is enough.



So we keep watch,
not with anxious eyes,
but with open hearts,
ready to recognise Christ
in ordinary moments,
ordinary people,
and unexpected places.
And perhaps we will discover
that the One we have been waiting for
has been walking beside us
all along.

(Silence for your own reflections)

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

God of wisdom and grace,
we pray for a world
longing for trustworthy leadership.
We pray for those entrusted with power,
political leaders, teachers, employers,
church leaders, parents, and carers.
Grant them humility, compassion,
and a willingness to listen.
We remember those whose responsibilities
feel overwhelming today:
emergency workers carrying difficult memories,
exhausted medical staff,
people caring for ageing parents,
and those trying to hold families together
while quietly struggling themselves.
We pray for people living under
violence and oppression,
for communities where truth is manipulated
and fear is used as a weapon.
Help us not to look away.
Teach us that faith is not simply
about waiting for heaven,
but about living with integrity here and now.
Where people feel forgotten,
bring companionship.
Where people feel ashamed,
bring gentleness.

Where people feel trapped by past choices,
bring courage for a new beginning.
And where we ourselves
have become weary or cynical,
renew our hearts with hope and purpose.
So be it.
Amen.

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.**

SEPTEMBER SUNDAYS Favorite Hymns

During the greeting the Pastors will gather 2 favorite hymns from you to be sung at this time. We'll sing 2 verses of the selection.

If your favorite hymn is not from the Gold or Black Hymnal, we will save it for another Sunday when you are here and we can put the words in the bulletin.
Enjoy!

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

Ambassadors (everyone!): Share our news, events, and spirit on social media and with your friends, family, and neighbors.
That's what keeps us relevant, and growing!



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Relevant • Engaged • Growing

Offering Information on Next Page --->



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).



Vanco Mobile



Venmo



Electronic Giving

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.

Music Offering: Let There Be Praise Dick Tunney, Melodie Tunney

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Blake Hoppes

Please stand in body or spirit.

***Song**

Here are our hearts,
Here are our hands,
Here are our lives,
Use them as you can.
Show us those who hurt,
Show us those in need,
Show us how to serve,
Teach us how to see.

Here Are Our Hearts Drake, Jennings
#178 Sing! Prayer and Praise

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Prayer of Dedication

**ALL: Generous God,
we offer these gifts as signs of gratitude and trust.
Take what we bring,
our money, our time,
our compassion, our energy,
and use them to build communities
marked by justice, mercy, and welcome.
Shape us into people
whose lives reflect the generosity of Christ
in ordinary and meaningful ways.
So be it.
Amen.**

Sending

Go now with your lamp burning brightly.
May you be watchful without fear,
faithful in the ordinary,
and joyful in the promise
that the Lord is always nearer than we imagine.
And may the blessing of God,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
rest upon you,
remain with you,
and shine through you,
today and always.

***Hymn #683 Let There Be Peace on Earth**

(Gold Hymnal / Hymnal for the Family of God)

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Favorite Hymn- Marianne Kitzmiller

**Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be.**

**With God our Creator,
Family all are we,
Let us walk with each other,
In perfect harmony.**



Let peace begin with me,
Let this be the moment now;
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

Postlude Music: To God be the Glory

Words: Fanny J. Crosby, 1875 Music: William H. Doane, 1785

Public Domain

Blake Hoppes

Worship Theme: spill the beans worship and learning resources for all ages
issue 59, www.spillthebeans.org.uk © 2026 Spill the Beans Resource Team

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week		8 AM	Welcome Back!
		10:30 AM	81
Calendar Year 2026 (Jan.–Aug.)	\$261,653.00	2026 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan.–Aug.)	\$246,542.00		
Change from Last Year	6.1%		
Budget FY 2026 (July–Aug.)	\$61,752.00	Last Week	\$300, 165 Lbs
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July–Aug.)	\$60,366.00	YTD	\$600, 2,905 Lbs
Difference in Giving vs.Budget	-2.2%	FMSC	
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		\$1, 248.00	
		MEDICAL DEBT FUNDRAISER	
		\$48,000+ !!!	

Presentations to the Glory of God

Spread the Good News

**In loving memory of grandparents,
Eleanor and Norman Peters and Iva Geiger-Kern**
Love, Ann.

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.