



**September 20th, 2026
set free**

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 - Michael Roth 10:30am- Tami Herzog

Greeters

Nancy Jones, Eric Minnich, Jake & Sara Puia

Ushers

8:00 AM- Edie Fella, Dixie Gross, Debbie Romig

10:30 AM- Donna Christman, Deana Correll, Deb Wenner, Doug Brace, Marianne Kitzmiller, Brian Horwith, Maryann Puia

Sound

Mike Baer

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

Invocation Bill George, Dino Kartsonakis, John Chisum
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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 come as we are,

**All: carrying all we are
that makes us who we are.**

Leader: God knows us

All: as we are.

Leader: And gathers us here

All: as we are.

Leader: And calls us now

All: into who we are yet to be.

Leader: Let us worship.

Prayer of Adoration And Confession

God of freedom and healing,
you are always drawing people toward life.

Again and again,
Jesus stepped across boundaries
to restore dignity to those
who had been pushed aside, silenced,
or overlooked.

You loosen what binds us.
You open doors we thought were locked forever.
Yet we confess that we often prefer

comfort to transformation.
We cling to familiar habits,
narrow assumptions,
and easy judgements.
We speak of grace
while quietly deciding who deserves it.
Forgive us for the ways
we have made faith smaller than your love.
Forgive us for resisting the difficult work
of change within ourselves.
Lead us through the narrow places
that teach us humility,
compassion, and trust.
When the path feels challenging,
remind us that growth rarely happens
without courage.
And when we lose heart,
help us remember that your kingdom
is still unfolding among us,
often in unexpected people
and surprising places.
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** In Christ There is No East or West

#686 Gold Hymnal / Hymns for the Family of God

Samuel Wolcott; ITALIAN HYMN Felice de Giardini *Public Domain*

**In Christ there is no east or west,
In him no south or north,
But one great fellowship of love
Thru'out the whole wide Earth.**

**In him shall true hearts ev'rywhere
Their high communion find.
His service is the golden cord
Close binding humankind**



Join hands, then, children of the faith,
Whate'er your race may be!
Who serves my Father as a child
Is surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,
In him meet south and north;
All Christly souls are one in him,
Thru'out the whole wide Earth

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.

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.

8:00am Music Offering: When the Roll is Called up Yonder

James M. Black (1893); Arr. John Coates, Jr.; *Public Domain*

Heritage Choir

Scripture Reading

Luke 13: 10-35

Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called

her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured and not on the Sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it to water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame, and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things being done by him.

He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."

And again he said, "To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, "Lord, will only a few be saved?" He said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able. Once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.' Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from; go away from me, all you evildoers!' There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out. Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and take their places at the banquet in the kingdom of God. Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

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.' "

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: set free Pastor Kris

Reflective Prayer

There Is Still Room

Bent low by the weight of years,
she had forgotten
what it felt like
to look people in the eye.
She came anyway.
She came with hope worn thin,
with prayers whispered so often
they had become part of her breathing.
And Jesus saw her.
Not as a problem.
Not as an interruption.
Not as someone to be overlooked.
He saw a beloved child of God,
and called her into the middle.
One touch.
One word.
And she stood tall.
There will always be voices that say,
"Not now."
"Not here."
"Not for people like you."
But Jesus keeps making room.

He speaks of a kingdom
that begins like a tiny seed,
almost invisible,
yet grows beyond imagination.
He speaks of yeast,
hidden in the dough,
quietly changing everything.
He speaks of a narrow door,
not to frighten us,
but to remind us
that following him
is more than standing nearby.
It is choosing to step through.
And then comes the surprise.
The table is larger
than anyone expected.
People arrive
from east and west,
from north and south.
Those who thought themselves first
find themselves learning humility.
Those who feared there would be no place
discover a welcome.
The kingdom of God
is still growing.
Still healing.
Still making room.
And the invitation
is still open.

(Silence for your own reflections)

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

God of mercy,
we pray for all who long to be set free.
We remember those living with illness,
chronic pain, anxiety, grief, or addiction,
burdens that slowly wear down the spirit.
We pray for people trapped
by poverty, discrimination,
violence, or systems that deny their dignity.



Bring healing where bodies are hurting
and hope where despair has settled deeply.

We pray for your church
when it becomes more concerned
with control than compassion.
Challenge us whenever rules matter
more than people.

Help communities of faith
become places where wounds
are tended and outsiders are welcomed.
We pray for those facing difficult decisions,
narrow paths, and uncertain futures.
Give courage to people making costly choices
for justice, truth, and reconciliation.

And for ourselves,
when we are tempted toward apathy or comfort,
keep drawing us toward lives
that are generous, brave,
and open-hearted.

May we never stop growing
into the people you created us to be.

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



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).



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.

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

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: God of abundance,
receive these gifts
and receive our lives alongside them.
Use what we offer to bring healing
where there is hurt,
hope where there is discouragement,
and welcome where people have felt excluded.
Teach us that generosity is not obligation alone,
but participation in the widening grace of your kingdom.
So be it.
Amen.**

Sending

**Go in the freedom Christ gives.
May you recognise God's kingdom
growing in quiet and unexpected ways.
May you have courage to follow where Christ leads,
and grace to make room for others.**

***Hymn** His Eye is on The Sparrow

#475 Black Hymnal / New Century Hymnal

Civilla D. Martin, c. 1905; Tune: SPARROW Irr. Charles H. Gabriel, 1905

Favorite Hymn: Lucy Boyer

**Why should I feel discouraged, why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for Heaven and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant Friend is He:**

**His eye is on the sparrow, and I know watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.**

**"Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leads me, but one step I may see;**

**His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.**

**Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,
When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,
I then draw close to my Savior, from care I am set free:**

**His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.
I sing because I'm happy, I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.**

Postlude Music: In the Garden

Charles Austin Miles, Mark Hayes

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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	
		8 AM	41
		10:30 AM	84
Two Weeks Ago	\$8,653.06	2026 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Calendar Year 2026 (Jan.–Aug.)	\$261,653.00		
Calendar Year 2025 (Jan.–Aug.)	\$246,542.00		
Change from Last Year	6.1%		
Budget FY 2026 (July–Aug.)	\$61,752.00		
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July–Aug.)	\$60,366.00	Last Week	\$300, 165 Lbs
Difference in Giving vs.Budget	-2.2%	YTD	\$600, 2,905 Lbs
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>		FMSC	
		\$1, 248.00	
		MEDICAL DEBT FUNDRAISER	
		\$52,400	

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.