



September 27th, 2026
jesus challenges received wisdom
Harvest Home
New Members Received

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 - Rosalie Snyder 10:30am- Janice Metzger

Greeters

Brynn and Jon Buskirk, Sally Saltzer, Devon Kuharik

Ushers

8:00am- Cliff James, Carol James, Michael Haftl, Daniel Haftl

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

Sound

Doug Albert

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

Were'er You Walk from Semele, HWV 58

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) Arr. Clair W. Johnson *public domain*

8:00 Blake Hoppes; 10:30 Craig Knauss, Clarinet with 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: The invitation is spoken:

All: come all and gather.

Leader: The invitation is spoken:

All: come all and know God's grace.

Leader: The invitation is spoken:

All: come find your place here among us all.

Leader: The invitation is spoken:

All: let us worship as all God's people.

Prayer of Adoration And Confession

God of the open table,
God of the widened room,
God whose mercy crosses every line
we draw between us and them,
we come to worship you.
You meet us not only in holy places,
but at tense tables,
in awkward silences,
among those watched too closely,
among those pushed aside,
among those whose need
makes others uncomfortable.
You come near with healing,
with truth, with welcome,
and with a love

that refuses to leave anyone
outside the reach of love.
And yet we confess
that we still divide the world too easily.
We confess that we notice who fits
and who does not;
who belongs easily
and who has to explain themselves;
who is expected at the table
and who is treated as a surprise.
Forgive us
when we have watched people closely
instead of loving them freely.
when we have made kindness conditional,
hospitality cautious,
and community smaller
than your kingdom.
In Jesus Christ,
heal what is narrow in us.
Humble what is proud in us.
Open what is closed in us.
Teach us again
that your table is not ours to control,
but yours to offer.
And may we find ourselves there,
not above others,
not apart from others,
but together,
beloved, forgiven, and made new
in your loving grace.
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** Come, Ye Thankful People Come

#392 Gold Hymnal/Hymns for the Family of God

Henry Alford; ST. GEORGE'S WINDSOR George J. Elvey, Arr. By John Ness Beck *Public Domain*

**Come, ye thankful people, come,
Raise the song of harvest home!
All is safely gathered in
Ere the winter storms begin**



God, our Maker, doth provide
For our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come,
Raise the song of harvest home.

We ourselves are God's own field,
Fruit unto His praise to yield;
Wheat and tares together sown,
Unto joy or sorrow grown.
First the blade, and then the ear,
Then the full corn shall appear;
Lord of harvest, grant that we
Wholesome grain and pure may be.

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.

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

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.

Music Offering: Great is Thy Faithfulness

Words by Thomas O. Chisholm; Music by William M. Runyan

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8:00am- Heritage Choir; 10:30am- Horizon Choir

New Members Welcomed!

The Mission Statement of Union UCC

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Welcome and Reception (ALL in unison)

ALL: We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

Greeting of Christian Love

New Members being welcomed today: **Larry & Barbara Ritter, Timothy Rehrig, Jean Brazuk**

WECLOME HOME! ~ John Roedel

Left Side:

You are somebody's front porch to God.

You are someone's doorway to mercy.

You are the world's threshold to kindness.

You are my entrance to letting go of regret.

Right Side:

No pressure, but...

Your life is a gateway to peace

for both strangers and friends alike.

Whether you realize it or not...

ALL:

Empathy has chosen you to turn your heart into a welcome mat for others.

This is the purpose of your life...

To let your existence become a candlelit veranda of hope

for the rest of us to gather on to hold each other during the long dark night.

Leader:

We are somebody's front porch to God.

Welcome home to God, welcome home to Union.

Scripture Reading

Luke 14:1-24

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely. Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had edema. And Jesus asked the experts in the law and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to cure people on the Sabbath or not?" But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him and sent him away. Then he said to them, "If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a Sabbath day?" And they could not reply to this.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.' So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.' "

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: jesus challenges received wisdom Pastor Kris

Reflective Prayer

Jesus,
you sit at the table
and notice everything.
You notice the watching eyes,
the careful silence,
the person in need,
the scramble for honour,
the host protecting the guest list,
the excuses made by those too busy
to receive the invitation.
And you notice me.
You see the lines I draw,
the assumptions I inherit,
the people I find easy to welcome
and the people I find harder to love.
Meet me here with mercy and truth.
Show me where I have made others explain their belonging.
Show me where I have mistaken comfort for peace.
Show me where I have called people guests
whom you have already called your own.
And then widen me.
Widen my seeing.
Widen my welcome.
Widen my courage.
Widen my love.
And when I am tempted
to divide the world again
into us and them,
bring me back
to your table,
your kingdom,
your promise:
there is still room.
Amen.



(Silence for your own reflections)

Prayers For Others And Ourselves

Generous God,
we thank you that there is still room:
room in your love for the poor and the powerful,
the certain and the questioning,
the familiar and the stranger,
the wounded and the weary,
the overlooked and the afraid.

We thank you
for every sign of your kingdom among us:
for meals shared across difference,
for welcome that becomes justice,
for communities learning humility,
for people who make space
without needing praise,
for love that crosses the distance
between one life and another.
We pray for your world.
For all who are treated as "them":
refugees and migrants,
people living in poverty,
people judged by race, religion, gender, sexuality,
class, accent, history, or appearance.
May they know dignity, safety, justice, and joy.
We pray for those who feel watched but not welcomed,
present but not recognised,
included in theory but excluded in practice.
Give them courage, companionship,
and the deep assurance
that they already belong to you.
We pray for those known to us
who need healing, hope, or strength today:
those who are ill,
those who are grieving,
those who are lonely,
those carrying private pain,
those facing hard decisions,
those waiting for news,
those who wonder
whether there is room for them.
Hold them close
in the compassion of Christ.

And we pray for ourselves.
When we cling to status,
teach us humility.
When we are tempted to protect our place,
teach us trust.
When we divide the world into us and them,
show us again
the wideness of your mercy.
For in your kingdom
there is no guest list we control,
no table we own,
no grace we can ration.
There is only your invitation,
and still there is room.
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.**

★ Dreaming God's Dream Moment: Jacob Roth ★

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





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



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Venmo



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.

Music Offering: Climb Ev'ry Mountain

Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II © 1959 Williamson Music, Inc.
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8:00 Blake Hoppes; 10:30 Craig Knauss, Clarinet with 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: Gracious God,
take what we offer today
and use it for your kingdom.**

**Take our money
and turn it into welcome.**

**Take our time
and turn it into care.**

**Take our buildings,
our tables,**

**our conversations,
our worship,
and our plans,
and turn them outward
towards mercy,
justice, and hope.
Amen**

Sending

Easy assumptions have been challenged,
the door to the Kingdom's feast flung wide,
so we go with God's invitation on our lips
for there is room for each of us.

***Hymn** We Plow the Fields and Scatter

#395 Gold Hymnal / Hymns for the Family of God

Mathias Claudius, Tr. Jane M. Campbell, WIR PFLUGEN Johann A. P. Schulz
Public Domain

**We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand.
He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.**

Refrain:

**All good gifts around us are sent from heav'n above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love.**

**He only is the maker of all things near and far;
He paints the wayside flower, He lights the evening star.
The wind and waves obey Him, by Him the birds are fed;
Much more to us, His children, He gives our daily bread.**

[Refrain]

**We thank You, our Creator, for all things bright and good:
The seedtime and the harvest, our life, our health, our food.
Accept the gifts we offer for all Your love imparts;
Accept what You most welcome: our humble, thankful hearts!**

[Refrain]

Postlude Music: Tis' So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

Text: Louisa M. R. Stead, 1882; Tune: William James Kirkpatrick *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 Two Weeks (9/13, 9/20)	\$13,474.00	8 AM	37
		10:30 AM	81
		Confirmation Class	8
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	
Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes		\$1, 863.00	
		MEDICAL DEBT FUNDRAISER	
		\$52,400	

Presentations to the Glory of God

Good News

Giving God Thanks for the Harvest! - Pastor Kris

Children's Bulletin

In Memory of Walt Disney

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.