



October 18th, 2026
Abide in Love

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- Dan Topp

Greeters

Carol Pope, Ron Pope, Johanna & Greg Zellner

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

Dawn Dengler

*"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
- Jesus (The Gospel according to John)*

The scene is set. Jesus gathers at the table with his disciples to break bread and break the news that this is their Last Supper together. Alarming fear, bitter betrayal, and tension-laden uncertainty fill the room. In the midst of this unsettling moment, the Gospel of John records Jesus' "famous last words." Central among these was the commandment to love one another. How do we survive, or even thrive, in times like these? We put love into action, replacing "othering" with "neighboring."

Prelude Music

Be Thou My Vision

Text: Ancient Irish Poem, 8th century; translated by Mary E. Byrne, 1905; versified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912 Tune: Slane. Traditional Irish Melody *Public Domain*

Blake Hoppes

WE PREPARE THE TABLE

Welcome & Announcements

We often share parts of worship responsively.

Phrases in Bold = All Read

Phrases NOT in bold = Leader

The Invitation

Threshold Moment

Leader: The Last Supper with Jesus continues as our series comes to its third week. Jesus' last commandments, and the fruit we must bear, all point to the same thing—love. But the kind of abiding love Jesus commands is not possible without The Vine. As they drink wine over their Last Meal together, Jesus turns to a vineyard metaphor to draw them more closely together. "I am the vine, and you are the branches," he says. We cannot love fully without accepting that we are loved, that we are nurtured, by the Source. And we cannot love fully without pruning those things that create barriers to relationship, with God and with each other. Connection brings joy.

ALL Sung:

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,

we are family.

Let us walk with each other

In perfect harmony.

Your responses are in bold...

We come to the table to share the abundance in our lives.

We are nurtured by God's love, the Source of our joy.

Jesus shared his mercy and compassion like a never-ending stream.

He invites us to keep that flow alive.

The toxic boot-strapping individualism of our modern life needs
pruning,

so that we can build up our communities, together...

as neighbors,

as neighbors.

Not "others."

Not "others."

Leader: Let us pray:

Forgive us when we believe the false idea
that there isn't enough to go around.

Help us to embrace that the Vine provides all we need
if we will only stay connected, stay green, stay alive with hope.

Even though it feels like a difficult thing to do,

help us to share—not grip tightly,

help us to serve—not judge,

help us to reach out—not pull back,

help us to risk reciprocal relationship

so that our love produces a bounty of fruit that feeds all.

In this moment we ponder those we find difficult to understand,
that we consider "others"...

... and in this moment we imagine them as neighbors who,
like us, have needs and fears and the desire for safety, sustenance,
and love.

Jesus, in your name we ask for the freedom to love abundantly,
as you have loved us. Amen.

ALL Sung:

**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.**

SHARING PEACE

Leader: We do the Passing of the Peace each week as a sign of this vow to be peace-makers and love-sharers.

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

***Please rise in body or spirit to greet each other and for the first song.**

***Hymn #500 Abide With Me**

Favorite Hymn: Margie MacKenzie

Gold Hymnal / Hymns for the family of God

Henry F. Lytte; EVENTIDE; William H. Monk

**Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me**

**Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away
Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with me**

**I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness
Where is death's sting?
Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me**

**Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee
In life, in death, o Lord, abide with me**

Please be seated.

WE LAY THE FEAST

10:30 Children's Time – Invite Children Forward

ALL SING:

**This is My commandment that you love one another,
that your joy may be full.**

**This is My commandment that you love one another,
that your joy may be full:**

**That your joy may be full,
that your joy may be full.**

**This is My commandment that you love one another,
that your joy may be full.**

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.

8am & 10:30am Music Offering: Stand By Me

Charles A. Tindley Arr. Larry Shackley © 2005, 2018 Hope Publishing Company
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8am: Heritage Choir

10:30am: Horizon Choir; Matt Gerry, soloist

New Members Welcomed!

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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 Member being welcomed today: **Amanda Merigris**

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.

Sacrament of Baptism

Jayvien Nicholas Monroe Merigris

child of Anthony & Amanda Merigris

Sponsors: Allison Monroe & Andrew Monroe

Lima JoAnn Patricia Merigris

child of Anthony & Amanda Merigris

Sponsors: Jasnely Cruz & Lewis Tucci

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE:

All: We promise our love, support, and care.

All Sung:

I was there to hear your borning cry,

I'll be there when you are old.

I rejoiced the day you were baptized,

to see your life unfold.

I was there when you were but a child,

With a faith to suit you well;

I'll be there in case you wander off and find where demons dwell.

I was there to hear your borning cry,

I'll be there when you are old.

I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.

Scripture Reading

John 15: 1-5; 9b-11

Reader: "I am the true vine, and my Abba is the vine grower who cuts off every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, but prunes the fruitful ones to increase their yield. You've been pruned already, thanks to the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, as I do in you.

*Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself apart from the vine,
neither can you bear fruit apart from me. I am the vine; you are the
branches. Those who live in me and I in them will bear abundant fruit,
for apart from me you can do nothing.*

*Live on in my love. And you will live on in my love if you keep my
commandments, just as I live on in Abba God's love and have kept
God's commandments. I tell you all this that my joy may be yours,
and your joy may be complete.*

The Message: Abide in Love Pastor Kris

WE OFFER OUR GRATITUDE
Prayers of the People

ALL SUNG:

Love, love, love one another
Love one another for God is love.
Love, love, love one another
Love one another for God is love.

Leader: Sharing at tables is a way to replenish our storehouses of love.
For it is in sharing that we receive back more than we imagined.
Prayer is a part of our ability to share. We come to God in prayer to
remember that this is the connection that feeds our souls. And so let
us prepare our hearts for prayer by being reminded that love comes
from God.

Love, love, love one another
Love one another for God is love.
Love, love, love one another
Love one another for God is love.

"Love One Another" | Words and music by Tommy Walker.
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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



OUR OFFERINGS to GOD

*Thank you for all that you do and all that you are
to help create a church that is relevant, engaged, and growing!*

Ways to give financially:

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 Pastor Kris if you have questions or if you'd like to learn more about other giving options like legacy or estate gifts to Union UCC.

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also..." - Matthew 6:21

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

Music Offering: Widmung (Dedication)

Robert Schumann, Op. 25, No. 1, arr. Franz Liszt (S. 566 / R. 253)

Blake Hoppes

Please stand in body or spirit.

All Sung:

Praise God, the Source who makes us one,

Praise Jesus Christ, beloved Son.

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Our gifts we give as we've been led,

all bodies, minds, and spirits fed.

Help us show love,

Here as above,

alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

(Tune LASST UNS ERFREUEN)

Dedication Prayer

Leader: Matthew 6: 21 says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Electronic Giving



Vanco Mobile



Venmo



All: Generous God, we know that faithful stewardship is not primarily about money—it is about placing our hearts in your hands, trusting that where our hearts go, our lives, choices, and resources will follow. Together, as a community shaped by grace, we will ask: Where is our treasure? How can our hearts more fully align with yours? Let our giving reflect our deepest values and commitments. Align our actions with our commitment to love and serve wholeheartedly. Transform, heal, and renew our hearts. May our generosity be rooted, joyful, and Spirit-led we pray, Amen.

The Mandate: Love in Action

Leader: As we prepare to go from this place with our closing hymn/song, we remember that we are connected to the Source of Love, which means that love will never run out. We can share it widely and abundantly with joy. Let us say Jesus' words together:

**“The truth of the matter is,
anyone who has faith in me will do the works I do—
and greater works besides.”**

The Blessing

Leader:
Receive this blessing:

God, who created you ready for relationship,
be with you as you seek to love in the midst of difficulty.

Jesus, who showed you the way,
be with you as you seek to love like him.

The Spirit, who will never leave you lonely,
give you capacity for love that surprises even you.

In the name of the Three-in-One,
go out to be Love-in-Action
this week and for all time. Amen.

***Hymn #4 Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You**

Favorite Hymn: Sue Steinmann

Black Hymnal/New Century Hymnal

Henry van Dyke, 1907; Tune: HYMN TO JOY Ludwig van Beethoven, 1824;

Adapt. And harm. Edward Hodges, 1846

Joyful, joy-ful, we adore you,
God of glo-ry, God of love;
Hearts un-fold like flow-ers be-fore you,
Praising Thee, their sun ab-ove.
Melt the clouds of sin and sad-ness;
Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of im-mor-tal glad-ness,
Fill us with the light of day!

All your works with joy sur-round you,
Earth and Heav'n re-lect Thy rays,
Stars and an-gels sing around you,
Center of un-brok-en praise:
Field and for-est, vale and mount-ain,
Blooming mea-dow, flash-ing sea,
Chanting bird and flow-ing fount-ain
Teach us what our praise should be.

You are giv-ing and for-giv-ing,
Ever bless-ing, ev-er blest,
Well-spring of the joy of liv-ing,
Ocean-depth of hap-py rest!
Loving Spirit, Father, Mother,
All who love belong to you;
Teach us how to love each oth-er,
By that love our joy renew.

Mortals, join the migh-ty chor-us,
Which the morn-ing stars be-gan;
Boundless love is reign-ing o'er us,
reconciling race and clan.
Ever sing-ing move we forward,
Faithful in the midst of strife,
Joyful mu-sic leads us on-ward
In the tri-umph song of life.

Postlude Music: This Is My Father's World

Words: Maltbie D. Babcock (1901) Music: English Folk Melody; adap. Franklin L. Sheppard (1915), Tune: Terra Patris Public Domain

Blake Hoppes

Altar Design Team: Kathy Bonsell, Claire Kern, Deb Topp,
Pastor Kris

Worship Theme: "Adapted from www.worshipdesignstudio.com/
neighbor in collaboration with [https://](https://campaignforkindness.com/)
campaignforkindness.com/."

EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY

Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)		Attendance Last Week	
Last Week	\$5,717.00	8 AM	31
Calendar Year 2026 (Jan.-Sept.)	\$ 289,863.00	10:30 AM	63
Calendar Year 2025(Jan.-Sept.)	\$ 274,871.00	Confirmation Class	8
Change from Last Year	5.5%	Faith on Tap	45
Budget FY 2026 (July-Sept.)	\$ 89,702.00	Breathe	12
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date (July-Sept.)	\$ 88,570.00	2026 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:	
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	-1.3%		
Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes		Last Week	\$25, 450 Lbs
		YTD	\$625, 3,520 Lbs
		FMSC	
		\$1, 863.00	

Presentations to the Glory of God

Spread the Good News

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.