



UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
United Church Of Christ

Loving God. Loving Neighbor. Building Community.



Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
An LGBTQ+ Open and Affirming Congregation

176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, NJ

973-744-7424

www.unioncong.org

August 31st, 2025

*Please rise in body or spirit.
You are invited to join in the liturgy **in bold type.**

Childcare and Sunday School are not available today. Children are welcome to the children's bulletins, activity sheets, and fidgets that are available in the back of the sanctuary.

If you would like to use the assistive listening system, please see an usher or the table in the back of the sanctuary.

PRELUDE – Hymn Medley

Christine D. Anderson
Jeremy Whitener & Laurie Walle

WELCOME

Jeremy Whitener

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Jeremy Whitener

One: Welcome this day to the house of our God.

All: We are greeted in peace and in love.

One: Welcome this day to the worship of our Creator.

All: We worship in hope and with grace.

One: Welcome this day to our community of faith,

All: Where we are siblings in Christ.

One: Friends, let us worship God.

***OPENING HYMN #22 – Sing Praise to God** *LOBE DEN HERREN*

Words: Joachim Neander

Music: William S. Bennett

(see next page)

Sing Praise to God, Who Has Shaped

Ps. 68:4, 32; Ps. 105

Joachim Neander, 1683
Transl. Madeleine Forell Marshall, 1991

1 Sing praise to God, who has shaped and sus - tains all cre -
 2 Praise God, our guard - ian, who lov - ing - ly of - fers cor -
 3 Sing praise to God, with sin - cere thanks for all your suc -
 4 Sing praise, my soul, the great name of your high God com -

a - tion! Sing praise, my soul, in pro - found and com -
 rec - tion, Who, as on ea - gle's wings, saves us from
 cess - es. Mer - ci - ful God ev - er loves to en -
 mend - ing. All that have life and breath join you, their

plete ad - o - ra - tion! Glad - some re - joice— or - gan and
 sin - ful de - jec - tion. Have you ob - served, how we are
 cour - age and bless us. On - ly con - ceive, what god - ly
 notes sweet - ly blend - ing. God is your light! Soul, ev - er

trum - pet and voice— join - ing God's great con - gre - ga - tion.
 al - ways pre - served by God's pa - ren - tal af - fec - tion?
 strength can a - chieve: strength that would touch and car - ess us.
 keep this in sight: a - men, a - men nev - er end - ing.

Joachim Neander was a dedicated, caring pastor of the Reformed Church in Düsseldorf, Germany. This was the most familiar of his fifty-six hymn texts, which were published along with many of his original tunes in 1680, the year of his death.

Tune: LOBE DEN HERREN 14.14.478
 Erneuerten Gesangbuch, Strabund, 1665
 Adapt. and harm. William S. Bennett, 1863

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (responsive) Jeremy Whitener
The apostle Paul once wrote, "I do not do the good I want." That is the beginning of confession, for Paul and for all of us. Let us come before God with the truth of our lives.

One: For not loving You with all our heart, O God;

All: For not loving our neighbor in the same way;

For not loving You with our whole soul, O God;

For not loving our neighbor in the same way;

For not loving You with our minds, O God;

For not loving our neighbor in the same way;

For not loving You with all our strength, O God;

For not loving our neighbor in the same way:

Forgive us, and show us Your kindness, that we might do the same.

One: Let us offer God our prayers in silence.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE (responsive) Jeremy Whitener

One: God is not hate, God is not wrath, God is not apathy.

All: God is love.

One: And that means that God forgives, again and again.

All: Thanks be to God! Alleluia, Amen.

PASSING THE PEACE

Jeremy Whitener

SCRIPTURE – Micah 4:1-5, 6:6-8; Luke 6:27-36

Tim Crist

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

BJ Carter

SERMON – Justice: What's the right thing to do? Jade Holmgren

***HYMN #576 – For the Healing of the Nations** WESTMINSTER

Words: Fred Kaan

Music: Arr. Ernest Hawkins

(see next page)

For the Healing of the Nations

Fred Kaan, 1965

1 For the heal - ing of the na - tions, God, we pray with
 2 Lead us for - ward in - to free - dom; from de - spair your
 3 All that kills a - bun - dant liv - ing, let it from the
 4 You, Cre - a - tor God, have writ - ten your great name on

one ac - cord; for a just and e - qual shar - ing
 world re - lease, that, re - deemed from war and ha - tred,
 earth be banned; pride of sta - tus, race, or school - ing,
 hu - man - kind; for our grow - ing in your like - ness

of the things that earth af - fords; to a life of
 all may come and go in peace. Show us how through
 dog - mas that ob - scure your plan. In our com - mon
 bring the life of Christ to mind, that by our re -

love in ac - tion help us rise and pledge our word.
 care and good - ness fear will die and hope in - crease.
 quest for jus - tice may we hal - low life's brief span.
 sponse and ser - vice earth its des - ti - ny may find.

Fred Kaan's most widely published text was first sung at Pilgrim Church in Plymouth, England, at a service of worship marking Human Rights Day in 1965. It has been used for many subsequent occasions, including the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

Tune: WESTMINSTER ABBEY 8.7.8.7.8.7.
 Henry Purcell, c. 1680
 Arr. Ernest Hawkins, 1842

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Jeremy Whitener

Joys and Concerns

Hohn and Stover Families

Lee Montgomery

Roseann Wallace, mother-in-law of Marcie, mom to Dave

Jordon Bronson

Joan and Bill Icklan

Doris Brett

Litany of Intercession NCH 878 (responsive)

Lord's Prayer (unison)

Our {name for God}, 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

OFFERTORY

Jeremy Whitener

Announcements

Invitation

One: Let us present with joy our offerings of commitment and support for the work of Christ's church.

All: Let us prepare Christ's table with the offerings of our life and labor.

Music for Meditation – Praise God!

Craig Courtney

*Praise God, from whom all
blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here
below;
Praise God for all that love has
done;*

*Creator, Christ, and Spirit, one.
Praise God in Their sanctuary;
Praise God for Their mighty
acts.
Praise God in the firmament of
Their power.*

*Praise God according to Their
excellent greatness.
I will extol the Lord, My God,
And I will bless God's name
forever.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to
be praised.
God is righteous and holy.*

*The Lord is gracious and kind;
Full of compassion, slow to
anger.
God's tender mercies are over
all Their works.
The Lord is good to all.*

Jeremy & John David Whitener, Laurie Walle

***Response NCH 562 – Take My Gifts (vs. 3)** *TALAVERA TERRACE*
Words: Shirley Erena Murray Music: Colin Gibson

***Take whatever I can offer – gifts that I have yet to find,
Skills that I am slow to sharpen, talents of the hand and mind,
Things made beautiful for others in the place where I must be:
Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved
me.***

***Prayer of Dedication & Thanksgiving (unison)**
**God, we present these offerings that they may be used to
extend your liberating reign. With them, we offer our varied
ministries in the days ahead that each of us may be part of
your answer to the cries of the world. Amen.**

The Service of Release

Leader: Our church family is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities.

**People: It is important and right that we recognize these times
of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share the
time of farewell with a friend who is leaving.**

Leader: In December 2024, this congregation hired Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi to serve as Minister of Visitation and Pastoral Care.

Marie: I thank Union Congregational Church, its members, and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these past 9 months. I am grateful for your warm welcome and all the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned and your warmth, love and care.

People: We receive your thankfulness, and express our gratitude for your time among us, and accept that you now leave to minister elsewhere.

Vows of Release

Leader: Do you, the members and friends of Union Congregational Church release Rev. Marie Bacchiocchi from the duties of Minister of Visitation and Pastoral Care?

People: We do, with the help of God.

Leader: Do you offer your encouragement for her ministry soon to begin at First Congregational Church of New Milford, Connecticut?

People: We do, with the help of God.

Leader: Do you, Marie, release our congregation from turning to you and depending on you?

Marie: I do, with the help of God.

Leader: Do you offer your encouragement for the continued ministry here and the return of Reverend Katrina, and the arrival of Reverend Leah?

Marie: I do, with the help of God.

Prayer

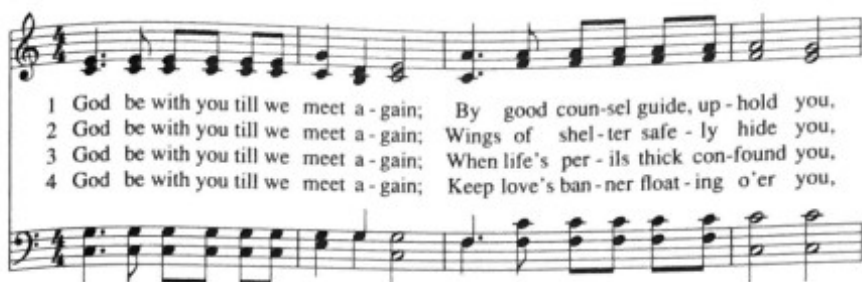
Leader: Holy Creator, help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. During our time together we shared our laughter and tears, and our hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories and move in new directions, in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Go now, surrounded by our love. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN #81 – God Be with You**

Words: Jeremiah Rankin
(next page)

Music: William G. Tomer

God Be with You

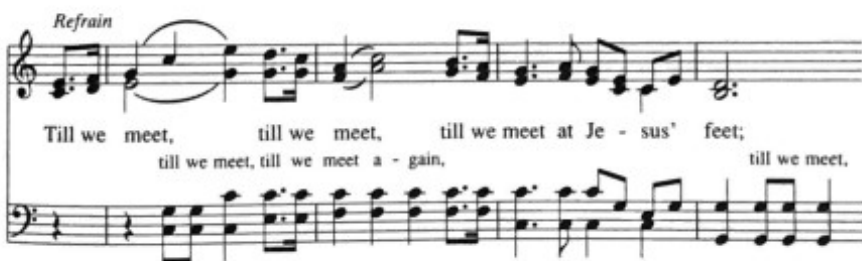
Jeremiah E. Rankin, 1880; alt.


1 God be with you till we meet a - gain; By good coun-sel guide, up - hold you,
 2 God be with you till we meet a - gain; Wings of shel-ter safe - ly hide you,
 3 God be with you till we meet a - gain; When life's per - ils thick con-found you,
 4 God be with you till we meet a - gain; Keep love's ban - ner float - ing o'er you,



With a shep-herd's care en - fold you: God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 Dai - ly man - na still pro - vide you: God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 Put un - fail - ing arms a - round you: God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 Smite death's threat-ening wave be - fore you: God be with you till we meet a - gain.

Refrain



Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Je - sus' feet;
 till we meet, till we meet a - gain, till we meet,



till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet a - gain.
 till we meet, till we meet a - gain,

Written during his last pastorate, at First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C., Jeremiah Rankin's hymn spread quickly throughout America and England by way of Moody and Sankey's revival meetings. Rankin later served as the seventh president of Howard University.

Tune: GOD BE WITH YOU 9.8.8.9, with refrain
 William G. Tomer, 1880

***BENEDICTION**

Jade Holmgren

One: O God, source of all righteousness, teach us Your way to justice.

All: Shape our hearts with Your truth, and lead our steps in mercy.

One: Give us humility to listen, courage to act, and wisdom to discern what is right.

All: Let justice not be our pride, but our offering to You.

One: Go now, with grace in your hands and reverence in your walk.

All: For in seeking justice, we draw nearer to the heart of God.

Together: Amen.

POSTLUDE – Violin Concerto, III. Allegro

Vivaldi

Laurie Walle

RESOURCES USED IN TODAY'S LITURGY:

Adapted from Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, 'Hold Fast to What Is Good'. Used with permission. Reprinted from *Book of Worship* © 2006 by United Church of Christ, Cleveland, Ohio.

THANK YOU for joining us for worship this morning. Please sign a welcome card if you are visiting and put it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher as you leave. You can also find an electronic Welcome Card by scanning this QR code or at <https://www.unioncong.org/welcome-card/>



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US AFTER WORSHIP IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM: stay for coffee, snacks, and fellowship immediately following the service.

PLEASE JOIN US NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH, FOR WELCOME

BACK SUNDAY

Join us as we welcome back Rev. Katrina! Welcome Back Sunday includes worship, a picnic, and the Worship/Music/Christian Education Sign Up Fair. Sunday School and Childcare will be provided during worship.

THANK YOU Sunday Welcome Team, Jade, Jeremy, Laurie, Tim, BJ, and the music ministry!

LIVESTREAM VIDEO: Nkenge Jones, **SOUND OPERATOR:** Joe Cristiani



Loving God, Loving Neighbor,
And Building Community In

September

September 7: Welcome Back Sunday
Picnic With Members And Friends After Worship
Worship + Music and Christian Ed. Sign-Up Fair

September 14: Be The Church
Honoring Members Of 40+ Years;
Congregational Care + Small Group Sign-Up Fair

September 21: Loving Community
Justice + Community Engagement Sign-Up Fair

DAYTIME BIBLE STUDY RESUMES THIS TUESDAY AT 12:30PM WITH A DISCUSSION OF OUR SUMMER CONGREGATIONAL READ FOR RACIAL JUSTICE – *Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the Color of Law*

The Daytime Bible Group resumes this Tuesday, September 2nd, at 12:30pm in the Guild Room. Sally St. John will lead a discussion of our summer congregational read. All are welcome to attend. This forceful book addresses how communities and activists can begin to undo the damage caused by segregated housing and offers programs that community members can undertake to redress inequity in their own

communities. This group will continue to discuss *Just Action* on September 9th.

UNION SAGES MEETS THIS WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD AT NOON IN THE GUILD ROOM

Sages is a group of older members and friends who meet for lunch and conversation. The group aims to build community by providing a forum for discussion of questions that are particularly relevant at this time of our lives, allowing us to reflect on where we have been and where we are now.

UNION CONG CHAIR YOGA REMAINS ON ZOOM FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3rd

Email Sara at sgtamargo@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

THE UNION CONG MUSIC PROGRAM KICK-OFF WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6TH AT 10am

INFORMATION ABOUT THE UPCOMING SIGN-UP FAIRS:

The Worship & Music and Christian Education Sign-Up Fair will take place on Sunday, September 7th after worship. Kim is reaching out to all ministry team and small group leaders to see who is available to work the sign-up fair tables. For more information on our ministry and small groups represented on Sept. 7th:

Worship: <https://www.unioncong.org/worship/>

Music: <https://www.unioncong.org/music/>

Christian Education: <https://www.unioncong.org/christian-education/>

The Congregational Care and Small Group Sign-Up Fair will take place on Sunday, September 14th after worship.

Congregational Care includes Care Teams (formerly Deacons), Communion Delivery, Coffee Hour, and the Memorial Services Support Team. Congregational Connection, including Small Groups, is the embodiment of intentional, member-led gatherings that cultivate a sense of belonging within our congregation, deepen relationships, open the church to the wider community. You can find more information under "Church Life" on the church website: www.unioncong.org.

The Justice And Community Engagement Sign-Up Fair will take place on Sunday, September 21st after worship.

Our Justice And Community Engagement ministry teams help us live out our faith in actionable ways to create a more just and compassionate community. It includes ministry teams devoted to racial justice, creation justice, the "Let's Watch" film series, food security, and refugee resettlement.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.unioncong.org/justice-community-engagement/>

JOIN US FOR "BE THE CHURCH" SUNDAY HONORING MEMBERS OF 40+ YEARS ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH!

Join us during worship as we host our annual celebration of our 40+ year members. We will celebrate faithfulness and longevity, and tell stories about what it means to "be the church." It is a blessing to have members who have been steadfast in their commitment, participation, and ministry for so long. After worship, we will continue the celebration in the Assembly Room with cake and a slide show. If you are a 40+ member and have photos from your earlier days in the church, please email them to Kim at kcrabtree@unioncong.org or hand them to Kim at Welcome Back Sunday on September 7th.

WELCOME BACK, REV. KATRINA!

Rev. Katrina will be returning from sabbatical on Tuesday, Sept. 2nd.

WELCOME REV. LEAH McCULLOUGH!

Rev. Leah's first day in the church office will be on Monday, Sept. 8.

CHURCH CONTACT INFO: Church Office: 973-744-7424

Rev. Katrina Forman, Lead Minister, (returning Sept. 2nd)
973-744-5802, kforman@unioncong.org

Jon Thomsen, Executive Director, 973-744-7426,
jthomsen@unioncong.org

Kim Crabtree, Member Engagement and Communications Manager,
973-233-4563, kcrabtree@unioncong.org

Albert Fenske-Williams, Operations and Space Use Manager, 973-417-
3408, afenskewilliams@unioncong.org

BJ Carter, Sunday School Coordinator, bjcarter@unioncong.org

John David Whitener, Co-Music Director, 973-707-3248,
jwhitener@unioncong.org

Jeremy Whitener, Co-Music Director, jeremy@unioncong.org