

UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church Of Christ



Loving God. Loving Neighbor. Building Community.

January 11, 2026

Baptism of Christ / First Sunday after Epiphany

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

You are invited to join in the liturgy **in bold type.**

*Childcare is available on the first floor of this building for children ages 0-4.
Children K-5th grade are invited to attend Sunday School after this morning's
Baptism.*

*Please wear a name tag so we can greet one another by name
(There are blank name tags in the back of the sanctuary).*

PRELUDE – Breathe on Me, Breath of God

arr. Jason W. Krug

Jeremy Whitener, handbells, & Jeremy Carlisle

WELCOME

Rev. Katrina Forman

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Come, you who are weary, you who have been bruised by life,
you whose flame has flickered in the winds of the world.

All: We come, longing to be renewed.

One: The Holy One who stretches out the heavens is stretching us now—
stretching our hearts toward courage, our hands toward compassion, our lives
toward gentle justice.

All: We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

One: A voice from heaven says to us, as it said to Jesus:

You are my beloved. This Spirit rests upon us, too.

All: We are God's Beloved, called to bring gentle justice.

One: Come, let us remember who we are.

All: Let us worship God with joy.

***PASSING THE PEACE**

***HYMN (insert) – God Welcomes All**

South African traditional

God welcomes all, strangers and friends;

God's love is strong and it never ends.

BAPTISM of Rowan William Saulnier

Parents - Jenna and Daniel Saulnier

Godmother - Tara Rossine; Godfather - Matthew Saulnier

Congregational Assent

Question: Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the one(s) about to be baptized, as she/ they live(s) and grow(s)?

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

Children are invited to leave for Sunday School after the baptism.

*HYMN NCH #325 – Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

STUTTGART

Words: Ronald Cole-Turner

Music: Christian F. Witt

HOLY BAPTISM

325

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

1 Child of bless-ing, child of prom-ise, bap-tized with the Spir-it's sign;
2 Child of love, our love's ex-pres-sion, love's cre-a-tion, loved in-deed!
3 Child of joy, our dear-est trea-sure, God's you are, from God you came.
4 Child of God your lov-ing Par-ent, learn to know whose child you are.

With this wa-ter God has sealed you un-to love and grace di-vine.
Fresh from God, re-fresh our spir-its, in-to joy and laugh-ter lead.
Back to God we hum-bly give you; live as one who bears Christ's name.
Grow to laugh and sing and wor-ship, trust and love God more than all.

Ronald Cole-Turner, a teacher of theology, is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ. He is an award-winning author on the interface of science and religion.

Tune: STUTTGART 8.7.8.7.
Attrib. to Christian F. Witt (1660-1716), in
Psalmodia Sacra, Gotha, 1715

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 42:1-9

Matthew 3:13-17

Annelie Fahlstedt

SERMON "Transformed and Always Transforming"

Rev. Katrina Forman

BAPTISMAL RENEWAL

Invitation

Acknowledging our need for Renewal

Leader: We have known bruising. We have known moments we wish we could live again. We have known times when our flame burned low.

People: We long to begin again.

Leader: The One who stretches out the heavens is still stretching us—stretching our courage, stretching our compassion, stretching our capacity to love and to be loved.

People: We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

Leader: Hear the good news: Nothing is sealed. Nothing is beyond mending. The story is not over. It has only just begun.

People: All is forgiven. All is being made new.

Leader: Can we begin again?

People: Yes. By the grace of God, we will begin again.

Moment of Silence.

Blessing the Water

The Renewal

You are invited forward to the baptismal font to receive a blessing of remembrance of your baptism and your belovedness as a child of God.

Affirmation of Calling

Leader: We are the Body of Christ— not alone, but together.

People: We are God's beloved.

Leader: The Spirit that was in Christ is in us.

People: We are called to bring gentle justice.

Leader: We will not break the bruised reed. We will not extinguish the smoldering flame.

People: We will walk in compassion, courage, and joy.

Leader: This is our covenant. This is our life together.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC – Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Sanctuary Choir

Words: Robert Robinson

Music: arr. By Craig Courtney

*Come, thou fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;*

*Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.*

*Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
Praise the fount! I'm fixed upon it,
Fount of Thy redeeming love.*

*Here I raise mine Ebenezer;
Hither by Thy help I'm come;
And I hope, by Thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
Wandering from the fold of God;*

*He, to rescue me from danger,
Interposed His wondrous love.*

*Oh, to grace how great a debtor,
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love.
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Katrina Forman

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

Musical Call to Prayer – O Lord, Hear My Prayer **Arr. Jacques Berthier**

One: O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.

All: O Lord, hear my prayer. O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

PASTORAL PRAYER

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

Invitation

Music for Meditation – Arabesque No. 1

Jeremy Carlisle

Rev. Leah McCullough
Debussy

***Response of Thanksgiving – Doxology**

Words: Thomas Ken, adapt. William B. Abernathy

GOODNESS

Music: Paul M. Vasile

Praise to our God from whom all bless-ings flow; Praise to our God all crea-tures

4

here be - low; Praise to our God for all that love has done; Cre -

7

a - tor, Christ, and Spi - rit Our God the Three in One A - men.

***Prayer of Dedication**

Rev. Leah McCullough

***HYMN NCH #82 – Go, My Children, with My Blessing**

AR HYD Y NOS

Words: Jaroslav Vajda

Music: Traditional Welsh melody

(see next page)

Go, My Children, with My Blessing

Jaroslav J. Vajda, 1983, 1990; alt.

1 Go, my chil-dren, with my bless-ing, nev - er a - lone;
2 Go, my chil-dren, fed and nour-ished, clos - er to me;

Wak - ing, sleep-ing, I am with you, you are my own;
Grow in love and love by serv-ing, joy - ful and free.

In my love's bap - tis-mal riv - er I have made you mine for - ev - er,
Here my Spir - it's pow-er filled you, here with ten - der com-fort stilled you;

Go, my chil - dren, with my bless-ing, you are my own.
Go, my chil - dren, fed and nour-ished, joy - ful and free.

For marriage services, this stanza may be sung between stanzas 1 and 2 above.

In this un-ion I have joined you hus-band and wife,
Now, my chil-dren, live to-geth-er as heirs of life:
Each the oth-er's glad-ness shar-ing,
each the oth-er's bur-dens bear-ing,
Now, my chil-dren, live to-geth-er as heirs of life.

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Katrina Forman

***CHORAL BENEDICTION NCH #81 – God Be with You**

Words: Jeremiah E. Rankin

Music: William G. Tomer

***God be with till we meet again; By good counsel guide, uphold you,
With a shepherd's care enfold you: God be with you till we meet again.
Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet
Till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.***

POSTLUDE – Beach Spring

arr. James Koerts

Jeremy Carlisle

Stretched Them Out: Service Prayers for The Baptism of Christ/Epiphany

1A was written by Rev. Michael Anthony Howard who serves as Minister of Faith in Action for Living Water Association.

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. Please stay for coffee hour in the Assembly Room immediately following the service.

TODAY AFTER WORSHIP

SECOND HOUR WITH KAYANN FOSTER (Assembly Room)

Join us for a Second Hour with Kayann Foster where we will screen a documentary, "Truth to Transformation," in which Kayann is featured and Q and A afterward. Kayann is a longtime friend of Union Congregational Church, after working as the Volunteer Coordinator at CUMAC for many years. Kayann now works for the Passaic County Department of Human Services. Her wisdom and life experience was recently featured in a documentary, "Truth to Transformation", which documents the stories of three individuals – Tamia Govan, Dashaan Jennings, and Kayann Foster – who have lived experience through New Jersey's child welfare system and are using that experience to inform their efforts as co-designers for the Powerful Families, Powerful Communities NJ (PFPC-NJ) initiative, a public-private partnership that DCF is leading to reshape child welfare in New Jersey.

YOUTH PARENT MEETING (Guild Room)

Please join Rev. Leah and youth parents in the Guild Room after worship for an opportunity to get to know one another, share your hopes for what the youth program at Union Cong, and talk more about the spring and summer calendar.

THANK YOU to the Sunday Welcome Team and Sanctuary Choir!

TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS are given by Amy Hohn Stover in loving memory of Dr. Raymond Stover.

LIVESTREAM VIDEO: Veronica Heffron

SOUND OPERATOR: Joe Cristiani

LATER TODAY

2pm-4pm Pride Choir Rehearsal Resumes

Pride Choir resumes their third season today from 2pm-4pm in the Assembly Room and Sanctuary for a social, orientation, and mini rehearsal. Beginners, new folks, and regulars welcome (as long as you are over 18 years old). Pride Choir is preparing for their Friday, June 5 and Saturday, June 6 concerts under the theme "Wonderous Journeys." Pride Choir provides a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community to gather, be celebrated, and make music together. Union Cong is a presenting sponsor of the choir and many congregational members have supported the choir in various ways.

SMALL GROUPS THIS WEEK

Monday, January 12th

7pm Racial Justice Ministry Team Monthly Meeting On Zoom

Please find the link in Thursday's email or in the calendar listing on the church website. Questions? Email Catherine Spinella at cspinella99@gmail.com.

Tuesday, January 13th

12:30pm Daytime Bible Study (Guild Room). Questions? Reach out to Paul N. at pnishimo@gmail.com.

SMALL GROUPS THIS WEEK CONTINUED...

Tuesday, January 13th continued...

7pm-8:30pm Holy Hangout Bible Study (at the home of the Black family)

All are welcome. Kid-friendly. Current study is the Book of John. Email Seo Hee Koh (seoheekoh@gmail.com), or Sarah (sarah4carter@gmail.com) or BJ Carter (bjcarter@unioncong.org) for location and more details.

Wednesday, January 14th

10:30am Gentle Yoga "Slow-ga" (Guild Room or Zoom). Reach out to the church office or email Sara T. to confirm location.

7pm UCC Ringers Handbell Rehearsal (Sanctuary). All levels and new folks are welcome. Email Jeremy at jeremy@unioncong.org for more information.

Friday, January 16th-Sunday, January 18th

Women's Retreat (Trinity Retreat Center And Donkey Sanctuary)

Women's Retreat is at capacity. If you have registered and have questions, reach out to Sara Olson (sarahols@aol.com) or Karen Ermler (karen.ermler@gmail.com).

UCC Players' Fundraiser: Saturday, January 24th, 7pm (Assembly Room)

The UCC Players' goal is to raise funds so they can replace their antiquated, energy-wasting lights with more modern, energy-efficient LED lights. The theme of the evening is "*List, List, O List: An Evening of Shakespeare's Soliloquies, Sonnets, Songs and Scenes*". Many congregation members and clergy will be performing.



UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Quarterly Congregational Meeting
Sunday, January 25, 2026
11:15 a.m.

This meeting will take place in person in the Assembly Room and on Zoom immediately following worship.

Agenda Highlights

- **Updates on the Campus and Building Renewal Plans**
 - **Discussion of Missional Priorities**
 - **Open forum to share ideas and concerns**

Submitted by:
Barbara Ross, Secretary

176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, New Jersey 07043
www.unioncong.org 973-744-7424 contact@unioncong.org

NEXT WEEKEND, WE HONOR THE LEGACY OF REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. – TWO WAYS TO WORSHIP:

At Union Congregational Church At 10am Next Sunday, January 18

Lay leaders will lead a service centered around readings from Dr. King's speeches and sermons, and music of the movement.

**JOIN THE MONTCLAIR AFRICAN AMERICAN CLERGY ASSOCIATION &
MONTCLAIR INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION**
ON MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2026
@11:00 A.M. (IN-PERSON)
2026 ANNUAL REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
WORSHIP CELEBRATION
THEME:
"A Legacy of Hope: Raising a Standard"
UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF MONTCLAIR
12 MIDLAND AVENUE, MONTCLAIR, NJ 07042
Rev. Dr. Campbell B. Singleton, III – Senior Pastor
GUEST PREACHER:
REV. DR. OBERY HENDRICKS



**Worship With Other Interfaith Houses Of Worship At Union Baptist Church
On Monday, January 19th At 11am (in person only)**

Join The Montclair African American Clergy Association And Montclair Interfaith Clergy Association at Union Baptist Church (12 Midland Avenue, Montclair) for the 2026 Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. worship celebration entitled "A Legacy Of Hope: Raising A Standard" with guest preacher Rev. Dr. Obery Hendricks. This year's theme, "A Legacy of Hope: Raising a Standard," calls our community to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy with renewed commitment and collective action.

The Church Office Will Be Closed On Monday, January 19th.

**Save-The-Date: Join UCC Players' For A One Evening Fundraiser of
Shakespeare on Saturday, January 24th In The Assembly Room**

Their goal is to raise funds so they can replace their antiquated, energy-wasting lights with more modern, energy-efficient LED lights. The evening will be called: "List, List, O List: An Evening of Shakespeare's Soliloquies, Sonnets, Songs and Scenes." Many members (and clergy) will be performing. Join us for a fun night for a great cause.

Sign Up For Coffee Hour Fellowship

Offering hospitality during Coffee Hour is one way we create space to be in community with one another and welcome visitors. We need your help! Sign up on the paper sign up at the back of the Assembly Room or go to the church website (www.unioncong.org) and click on the Members tab, and scroll down to Sign Ups on the Members' tab to sign up online.

**Sign Up For The All Church Winter Fun Day At Johnsonburg Camp And
Retreat Center (February 1, 2026 from 1pm-6pm)**

Let's play! We've discovered a great new partner, Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center, where we can gather in a "Sacred Place/Open Space" to build community, connect with creation, grow spiritually, and play together. There will be opportunities for hiking, football, zip-lining, bonfire, and sledding (if there is snow), as well as an all-day hot chocolate bar and breakfast for dinner. Come have some fun with our church family. (Cost: Ages 6-Adult - \$25; Ages 0-5 - Free). Go to <https://www.campjburg.org/> and click *Register Now* to set up an account and register for the February 1 Winter Fun Day. Call the church office and talk to Kim if you need help registering. Once registered, let Rev. Leah know (LMcCullough@unioncong.org).

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

Rev. Katrina Forman, Lead Minister, 973-744-5802, kforman@unioncong.org

Rev. Leah McCullough, Minister of Pastoral Care and Faith Formation,
973-746-4285, LMcCullough@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, Children And Youth Ministry Associate, 973-447-4593,
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John David Whitener, Co-Director of Music, 973-707-3248,
jwhitener@unioncong.org

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

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

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