

# UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church Of Christ



Loving God. Loving Neighbor. Building Community.

**January 18, 2026**  
**Second Sunday after Epiphany**  
**Remembrance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

\*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 the  
Message for all Ages.*

*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 – If I Can Help Somebody**

arr. Andre Thomas

*If I can help somebody as I pass along,  
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song;  
If I can show somebody he is trav'ling wrong,  
Then my living shall not be in vain.*

*If I can do my duty as a Christian ought;  
If I can bring back beauty to a world up-wrought;  
If I can spread love's message that the Good Lord taught;  
Then my living shall not be in vain.*

*Then my living shall not be in vain;  
Then my living shall not be in vain;  
If I can help somebody as I pass along:  
Then my living shall not be in vain.*

Kristine Hart & Jeremy Carlisle

## **WELCOME**

Jeremy Whitener

## **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

Rob Middleton

One: Listen, people of God, for the voice of God is calling:

"The ultimate measure of a [person] is not where [they] stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where [they] stand at times of challenge and controversy."<sup>1</sup>

All: **In difficult times, God calls us to join the movement of courageous**

**truth-tellers.**

One: In comfortable times, God calls us to join the movement of silence-breakers.

**All: In times of struggle, God calls us to join the movement toward freedom.**

One: In times of peace, God calls us to join the movement toward justice.

**All: In all times, God calls us to join with the movement of the Spirit.**

One: Listen, people of God, for the voice of God is calling:

“Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.”<sup>2</sup>

**All: Let us worship God, listening for the voice that calls us to join the movement of love.**

**\*HYMN NCH #497 – Guide My Feet**

Words & Music: African-American spiritual, arr. Joyce Finch Johnson

*(see next page)*

## Guide My Feet

African-American traditional; alt.

1 Guide my feet while I run this race, guide my feet  
 2 Hold my hand while I run this race, hold my hand  
 3 I'm your child while I run this race, I'm your child  
 4 Stand by me while I run this race, stand by me

Yes, my God.

while I run this race, guide my feet while I run this race,  
 while I run this race, hold my hand while I run this race,  
 while I run this race, I'm your child while I run this race,  
 while I run this race, stand by me while I run this race,

Yes, my God.

For I don't want to run this race in vain.

*This stanza may be added following stanza 1:  
 Wheel with me while I run this race . . .*

*The words and music of some African-American spirituals have been widely adapted during the twentieth century, especially in the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The alternate words were suggested by a fifth-grade church school class to include those who must "run this race" in a wheelchair.*

Tune: GUIDE MY FEET 8.8.8.10.  
 African-American traditional  
 Arr. Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992

## PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Rob Middleton

**God of many gifts and one Spirit, we confess that sometimes it is easier to celebrate a single prophetic voice, than to honor the complex movements that give rise to freedom. When in our desire to honor leaders, we forget or gloss over all those who make change possible, forgive us. When we lift up Martin Luther King, Jr. as a visionary and leader, and ignore or disbelieve that we have a part to play in making his dreams a reality, forgive us. Empower us to take up our roles in the movement toward racial justice, knowing that each of us has unique gifts to offer, and together, we are the Spirit's movement toward love. Amen.**

## Words of Assurance

Leader: Beloved ones of the Holy One, hear the good news: "unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word."<sup>4</sup> We are forgiven and freed to become God's love together.

**All: Praise God, who equips us to join the movement of the Spirit. "For when people get caught up with that which is right and we are willing to sacrifice for it, there is no stopping point short of victory."<sup>5</sup>**

## PASSING THE PEACE

### Gathering and Sending Music – Where Children Belong

Words: Jeremy Whitener & Leah McCullough

RITCHIE

Music: James Ritchie

**Gathering:**  
*This, this is where children belong,  
Welcomed as part of our worshipping song.  
Gathered in love, God's stories we hear,  
Growing in faith through the years.*

## MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

BJ Carter

**Sending:**  
*This, this is where children belong,  
Welcomed as part of our worshipping song.  
Now go in joy, in wonder and grace,  
Finding God's love in each place.*

## LESSONS/READINGS

Scripture Reading Luke 4:18-19

Rob Middleton

## Reading From "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence"

Karen Whitehaus and Kayann Foster

## \*HYMN NCH #570 – We Shall Overcome

Words & Music: African-American spiritual, arr. J. Jefferson Cleveland

JUSTICE AND PEACE

### We Shall Overcome

570

*United States traditional*

*John 8:31-32; Rom. 12:21; 2 Cor. 13:11*

The musical score consists of four staves of music. The top staff is for the soprano voice, the second for the alto, the third for the tenor, and the bottom for the bass. The piano accompaniment is provided in the bass and treble staves at the bottom. The lyrics are integrated into the music, with some lines appearing above the staff and others below. The music is in common time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano part includes chords and bass notes.

1 We shall o - ver - come, we shall o - ver -  
2 We'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in  
3 We are not a - fraid, we are not a -  
4 Our God will see us through, our God will see us

come, we shall o - ver - come some day;  
hand, we'll go hand in hand some day;  
afraid, we are not a - fraid to - day;  
through, our God will see us through some day;

(1-6) Oh, deep in my heart, I do be - lieve,

we shall o - ver - come some day.  
we'll go hand in hand some day.  
we are not a - fraid to - day.  
our God will see us through some day.

5 The truth shall make us free . . . some day.

6 We shall live in peace . . . some day.

*This anthem of the 1960s civil rights movement was frequently sung at mass meetings and marches. Several sources have been cited as its origins, including the spiritual "No more auction block for me" based on the tune known as Sicilian Mariners; an old*

Tune: WE SHALL OVERCOME Irr.  
*United States traditional*  
Harm. J. Jefferson Cleveland, 1981

## **Reading From "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" April 16, 1963**

Tawnya and Pierce Switzer

### **SPECIAL MUSIC – What is Peace? from *Tuvayhun***

Words: Charles Anthony Silvestri

Music: Kim Andre Arnesen

*Peace is not a silent state  
That comes upon us from within –  
Serene, detached, oblivious.*

*Peace requires a strength of will,  
A certain courage, a heart of iron,  
A force abiding to fulfill.*

*Peace is not a force like rain  
That comes, unbidden, from above –  
Gentle, enfolding, natural.*

*Peace is not a foregone fate;  
For peace, like war, must be waged –  
Mindfully, deliberately,  
With arms ever ready, And eyes wide  
open.*

*Peace is fire! Yes, peace is fire!  
And peace is passion!*

Bill Amory, Kristine Hart, Kimberly Martinez, Jeremy Whitener,  
John David Whitener, and Jeremy Carlisle

## **Reading From Dr. King's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech Oslo 1964**

Rob Middleton

### **\*HYMN NCH #369 – Keep Your Lamps**

Words & Music: African-American spiritual

(see next page)

Matt. 25:1-13; Gal. 6:9

African-American spiritual



1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn-ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn-  
 2 It's our faith makes us hap-py, it's our faith makes us hap-  
 3 We are climb-ing Ja-cobs's lad-der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-  
 4 Ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, ev-ery round goes high-er, high-



ing, keep your lamps trimmed and burn-ing, for this work's al-most done.  
 -py, it's our faith makes us hap-py, for this work's al-most done.  
 -der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, for this work's al-most done.  
 -er ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, for this work's al-most done.



Refrain



Sis-ters, don't grow wear-y, broth-ers, don't grow



wear-y, chil-dren, don't grow wear-y, for this work's al-most done.



*By tradition, a leader may call out substitute words for the refrain, such as "Christians don't grow weary, Christians don't grow weary, . . ." etc., or "people," "preacher," or any others that may be appropriate.*

*This spiritual is possibly one of the code songs in which to . . .*

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Tim Crist

### 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

Gerald Walle

### Music for Meditation – MLK

U2, arr. Jeremy Carlisle

Jeremy Carlisle

#### **\*Response of Thanksgiving – Doxology**

Words: Thomas Ken, adapt. William B. Abernathy

*GOODNESS*

Music: Paul M. Vasile

The musical notation consists of three staves of music in 12/8 time, treble clef, and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are as follows:

Praise to our God from whom all blessings flow; Praise to our God all creatures

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

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

#### **\*Prayer of Dedication (unison)**

**God we bring with joy our offerings of commitment and support for the work of Christ's church. Bless these gifts and multiply them for the work of justice, community, and repair. Amen.**

#### **\*HYMN (insert) Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around**

Words & Music: African-American spiritual, arr. J. David Moore

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **Congregational Meeting January 25**

**\*BENEDICTION/Affirmation of Faith "A New Creed" #887** Rob Middleton

**\*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,***

***Keep love's banner floating o'er you. Smite death's threatening wave before you.***

***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 – Hymn to Freedom**

Oscar Peterson

Jeremy Carlisle

\*\*\*

***Praying a Movement: Worship Resources created by Dr. Sharon R. Fennema***

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love*, 1963.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. March for Integrated Schools, April 18, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

<sup>4</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr. Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, Oslo, Norway, 1964.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech, April 3, 1968.

**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.

**THANK YOU** to the Lay Worship Leaders, Sunday Welcome Team, Bill Amory, Kristine Hart, Kimberly Martinez, Jeremy Whitener, John David Whitener, and Jeremy Carlisle

**LIVESTREAM VIDEO:** Nkenge Jones

**SOUND OPERATOR:** Joe Cristiani

**TODAY**

**11:30AM YOUTH GROUP (Guild Room)**

**TOMORROW, MONDAY, JANUARY 19**

**11am Worship With The Montclair Community At Union Baptist Church**

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 service will be offered in person only.

***Please note that the church office will be closed tomorrow, Monday, Jan. 19.***

**New Book For Daytime Bible Study!**

The group will meet this Tuesday in the Guild Room to begin discussions of "Who Stole My Bible? Reclaiming Scripture as a Handbook for Resisting Tyranny," which was written by Rev. Jennifer Butler. Butler is a Presbyterian Church (USA) minister and was the founder and CEO of Faith in Public Life. All are welcome to Daytime Bible Study. All reference resources, translations, and interpretations are welcome.

For more info, reach out to Paul ([pnishimo@gmail.com](mailto:pnishimo@gmail.com)).

**SMALL GROUPS THIS WEEK**

**Tuesday, January 20th**

**12:30pm Daytime Bible Study Begins A New Book (Guild Room)**

**7pm-8:30pm "Holy Hangout," A Family-Friendly Evening Bible Study**

All are welcome. Email Seo Hee Koh ([seoheekoh@gmail.com](mailto:seoheekoh@gmail.com)), or Sarah ([sarah4carter@gmail.com](mailto:sarah4carter@gmail.com)), or BJ Carter ([bjcarter@unioncong.org](mailto:bjcarter@unioncong.org)) for location and details.

**Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>**

**10:30am Gentle Yoga** alternates taking place in person and on Zoom. Reach out to the church office to confirm location.

**Noon Union Sages (Guild Room)**

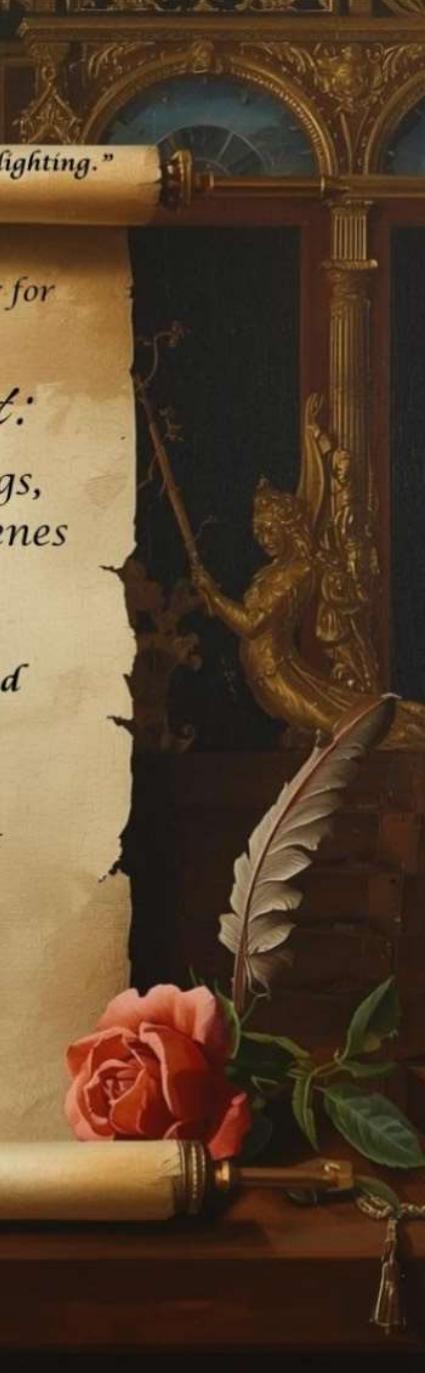
Email Sara O. at [sarahols@aol.com](mailto:sarahols@aol.com) for more information.

**7pm UCC Ringers Handbell Choir rehearsal in the Sanctuary.**

New folks always welcome. All skill levels. Questions? Click here to email Jeremy Whitener ([jeremy@unioncong.org](mailto:jeremy@unioncong.org)).

**Join UCC Players' For A One-Night-Only Fundraiser of Shakespeare this Saturday, January 24th at 7pm 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 to elevate upcoming performances. 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 the UCC Players for a fun night for a great cause.



*"If all the world's a stage, then we need better lighting."*

*UCC Players present a fundraiser for  
new stage lights*

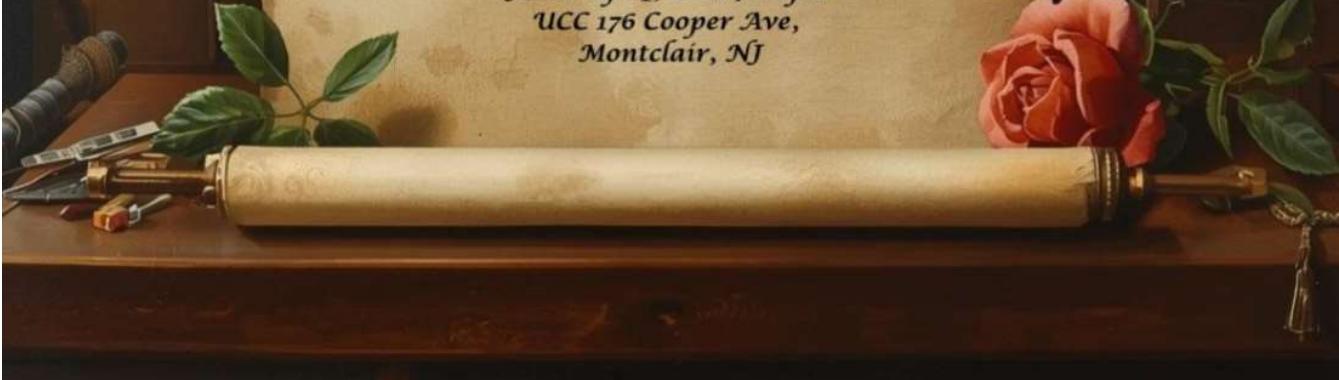
## *List, List, O List:*

*Shakespeare's lists in songs,  
sonnets, soliloquies and scenes*

*Featuring:  
UCC Players plus UCC staff and  
members*

*with  
Jeremy Carlisle, accompanist  
and original music by Bard*

*January 24, 2026 7:00pm  
UCC 176 Cooper Ave,  
Montclair, NJ*



***Please note: Childcare will be provided during the congregational meeting.***



**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

**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.campjb.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 you register, email Rev. Leah at [LMMcCullough@unioncong.org](mailto:LMMcCullough@unioncong.org). Please register by January 26<sup>th</sup>.



# Winter Fun DAY 2026

Faith • Community • Fun

February 1, 2026  
1:00PM - 6:00PM

**Hiking , Football, Zip Lining, Bonfire, Sledding,  
Hot Chocolate Bar and Breakfast For Dinner!**

Register by scanning the QR code  
or go to [www.johnsonburg.org](http://www.johnsonburg.org)

Email Rev. Leah at

[LMMcCullough@unioncong.org](mailto:LMMcCullough@unioncong.org) if you plan to attend.

**RSVP  
by Jan. 26**



## **LOOKING AHEAD IN FEBRUARY:**

### **Sunday Worship, February 8 at 10am:**

Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili will be preaching during worship. You may remember Bishop Songulashvili from when we screened the documentary about the Peace Project in Tbilisi, Georgia, "I Will Build The World From Love."

### **Friday, February 20 at 6pm:**

To celebrate Black History month and address issues of climate justice, we will show the documentary *Descendant* (2022, 1h, 50min). (A link to the trailer for the movie is in today's email.) It documents the search for and historic discovery of The Clotilda, the last known ship to arrive in the United States, illegally carrying enslaved Africans. After a century of secrecy and speculation, the 2019 discovery of the ship turns attention toward the descendant community of Africatown and presents a moving portrait of a community grappling with and fighting to preserve their heritage as well as fighting environmental injustice. The event will take place from 6pm-8:30pm in the Assembly Room.



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

Rev. Katrina Forman, Lead Minister, 973-744-5802, [kforman@unioncong.org](mailto:kforman@unioncong.org)

Rev. Leah McCullough, Minister of Pastoral Care and Faith Formation,  
973-746-4285, [LMcCullough@unioncong.org](mailto:LMcCullough@unioncong.org)

Jon Thomsen, Executive Director, 973-744-7426, [jthomsen@unioncong.org](mailto:jthomsen@unioncong.org)

Kim Crabtree, Member Engagement and Communications Manager, 973-233-4563,  
[kcrabtree@unioncong.org](mailto:kcrabtree@unioncong.org)

Albert Fenske-Williams, Operations and Space Use Manager, 973-417-3408,  
[afenskewilliams@unioncong.org](mailto:afenskewilliams@unioncong.org)

BJ Carter, Children And Youth Ministry Associate, 973-447-4593,  
[bjcarter@unioncong.org](mailto:bjcarter@unioncong.org)

John David Whitener, Co-Director of Music, 973-707-3248,  
[jwhitener@unioncong.org](mailto:jwhitener@unioncong.org)

Jeremy Whitener, Co-Director of Music, [jeremy@unioncong.org](mailto:jeremy@unioncong.org)

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

176 Cooper Avenue, Montclair, NJ 973-744-7424 [www.unioncong.org](http://www.unioncong.org)