

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."¹

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."²

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)

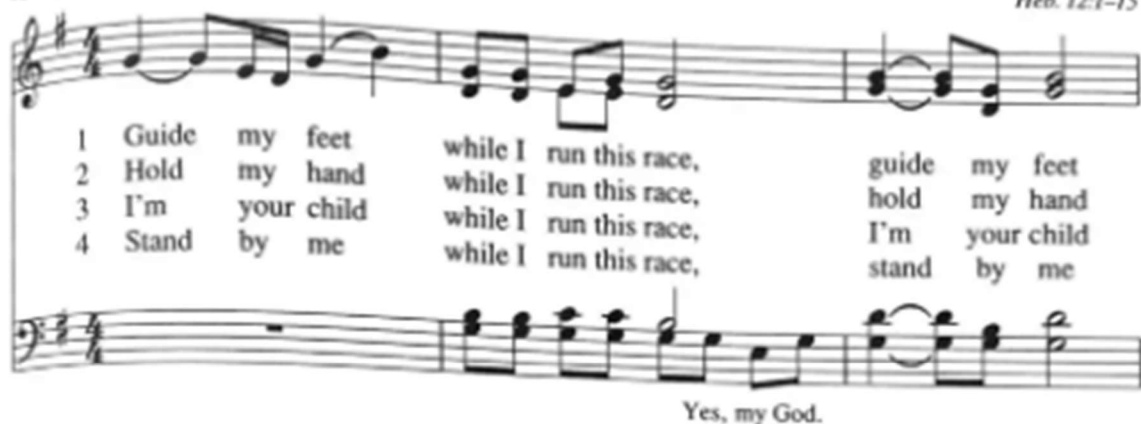
Guide My Feet

African-American traditional; alt.

DISCIPLESHIP

497

Heb. 12:1-15



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."⁴ 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."⁵

PASSING THE PEACE

Gathering and Sending Music – Where Children Belong

RITCHIE

Words: Jeremy Whitener & Leah McCullough

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

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;
 fraid, 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 Arr.
 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)

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning

Mat. 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-cob'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-

Last time, end

-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 learn

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**

GOODNESS

Words: Thomas Ken, adapt. William B. Abernathy

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 (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

Leader E Am E7

1. Ain't gon-na let__ no - bod - y turn me 'round, turn me 'round,

SA Turn me 'round, turn me 'round,

B Turn me 'round, turn me 'round,

Am E7

turn me 'round. Ain't gon-na let__ no - bod - y turn me 'round, I'm gon-na keep on a - walk-in',__

turn me 'round. Turn me 'round, keep on a - walk-in',__

keep on, keep on a -

Am/E On repeat Am Last time Am

keep on a - talk-in',__ march-ing up to free-dom land.____ 2. Ain't gon-na

keep on a - talk-in',__ march-ing up to free-dom land.____

walk-in', keep on a - march-ing up to free-dom land.____

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

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr. *Strength to Love*, 1963.

² Martin Luther King, Jr. March for Integrated Schools, April 18, 1959.

³ Martin Luther King, Jr. Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963

⁴ Martin Luther King, Jr. Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, Oslo, Norway, 1964.

⁵ 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).

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), or Sarah (sarah4carter@gmail.com), or BJ Carter (bjcarter@unioncong.org) for location and details.

Wednesday, January 21st

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 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).

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.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 you register, email Rev. Leah at LMcCullough@unioncong.org. Please register by January 26th.



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
Email Rev. Leah at

LMcCullough@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

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,
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Albert Fenske-Williams, Operations and Space Use Manager, 973-417-3408,
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Union Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
An LGBTQ+ Open and Affirming Congregation
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