



**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

October 12, 2025

**Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Blessing of the Animals**

*Please rise in body or spirit.

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

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

Childcare is available on the first floor of
this building for children ages 0-4.

*Ushers can help direct you there. Children
through 5th grade are invited to attend
Godly Play Sunday School after the
Message for All Ages.*

PRELUDE – Duetto buffo di due gatti

Rossini

Miau

John David Whitener, Jeremy Whitener, and Jeremy Carlisle

WELCOME

Rev. Leah McCullough

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (inspired by Psalm 148)

One: All God's family, come and praise our Creator!

All: We come with eyes to see, and ears to flap and hear,

All creatures lift your voices in singing, mewling and barking.

We come to celebrate God's marvelous creation!

With dogs and cats, hamsters and snakes

We come to thank the Giver of all life!

All creatures that crawl, all sea serpents that swim and feathered friends that fly

We come to praise our Creator!

SPECIAL MUSIC – Jesus and the Animals

Children's Choir

At Jesus' little farm joy is ev'rywhere.

The lion plays the drum, the lamb taps with flare.

The bunny claps it's paws, the duck says quack quack!

And Jesus smiles so brightly always here never lacks!

Jesus loves the animals and he loves you too!

With his love he leads us making all things bright and new!

The kitty sings, the puppy spins, the bear strums on guitar!

In the orchestra of love Jesus is the star!

The tall giraffe plays flute, with love and sweet devotion.

The monkey drums with joy, full of joyful motion.

The cow says moo with love, with passion from her heart!

And Jesus smiles so brightly always here never lacks!

Little fishies in the stream, sing their happy tune

Birds fly high above, whistling to the moon.

And at the end of day, Ev'ryone will pray!

And Jesus smiles so brightly always here never lacks!

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (unison)

Rev. Katrina Forman

Creator of all creatures, great and small, we sometimes fail to see ourselves as one small part of your creation. When we forget our connectedness and resort to self-centredness, forgive us. When we lack trust and refuse your loving guidance and instruction, forgive us. Help us to find our place again as stewards and siblings of your creation. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

PASSING THE PEACE

***HYMN Black Hymnal #28 – For the Beauty of the Earth**

DIX

Words: Miriam Winter

Music: Conrad Kocher

(next page)

GOD

28

For the Beauty of the Earth

*St. 1-3, Folliott S. Pierpoint, 1864; alt.
St. 4, Miriam Therese Winter, 1993*

1 For the beau-ty of the earth, for the splen-dor of the skies,
2 For the won-der of each hour of the day and of the night,
3 For the joy of hu-man love, broth-er, sis-ter, par-ent, child,
4 For the good that love in-spires, for a world where none ex-clude,

For the love which from our birth o-ver and a-round us lies,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,
Friends on earth, and friends a-bove, for all gen-tle thoughts and mild,
For a faith that nev-er tires, and for ev-ery heart re-newed,

Refrain
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grate-ful praise.

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is primarily in the Soprano and Alto parts, with the piano providing harmonic support. The lyrics are arranged in four stanzas, with the first stanza being a four-part setting and the subsequent stanzas being single-line settings. The refrain is a single-line setting.

Folliott S. Pierpoint, author of numerous hymns, penned these verses near his native city of Bath, England, on a late spring day when flowers were in full bloom and all the earth seemed to rejoice.

*Tune: DIX 7.7.7.7. with refrain
Conrad Kocher, 1838
Adapt. William H. Monk, 1861*

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 6:25-34

Della Smith

SERMON

"Lessons Learned from Our Fur Babies"

Jeremy Whitener

***HYMN (insert) – The Creatures We Love**

Amanda Udis-Kessler

(next page)

They bark and me - ow. They
fins and with fangs, with
leap from the chair. They

run and they sleep. They scam - per and jump and they lie on the couch. They ni - cker and
fea - thers and fur, they rest in their ca - ges and swim in their tanks. Each squeak and each
prowl in the woods. They knead and they cud - dle. They snug - gle and sigh, the es - sence of

neigh. They sli - ther and creep. They pounce and they scur - ry. — They crawl and they crouch.
squawk, each jud - der and purr joins in with cre - a - tion — in of - fer - ing thanks.
proof cre - a - tion is good, a bles - sing we cher - ish — for all of our lives.

The crea - tures we love are a sa - cred de - light with eyes that are bright and with
The crea - tures we love bring us won - der and joy. They help us get through when the
The crea - tures we love are an in - stant of grace. The ti - ny, the gi - ant; each

tongues that are rough. They brigh - ten our days and they wake us at night. Our prai - ses we
go - ing is tough. They o - pen our hearts e - ven when they an - noy. Our prai - ses we
one is e - nough, a part of the ul - ti - mate ho - ly em - brace. Our prai - ses we

1. 2. 3.
sing for the crea - tures we love.* With
sing for the crea - tures we love.* They crea - tures we love. Our
sing for the —

prai - ses we sing for the crea - tures we love.*

PRAYERS OF THE CREATURES

Joys and Concerns

Josh Robeson

Jonathan Grevatt

Leana Greene

Rev. Leah McCullough

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

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 – Celebrating Creation Justice Ministries

Bob Kent

Music for Meditation

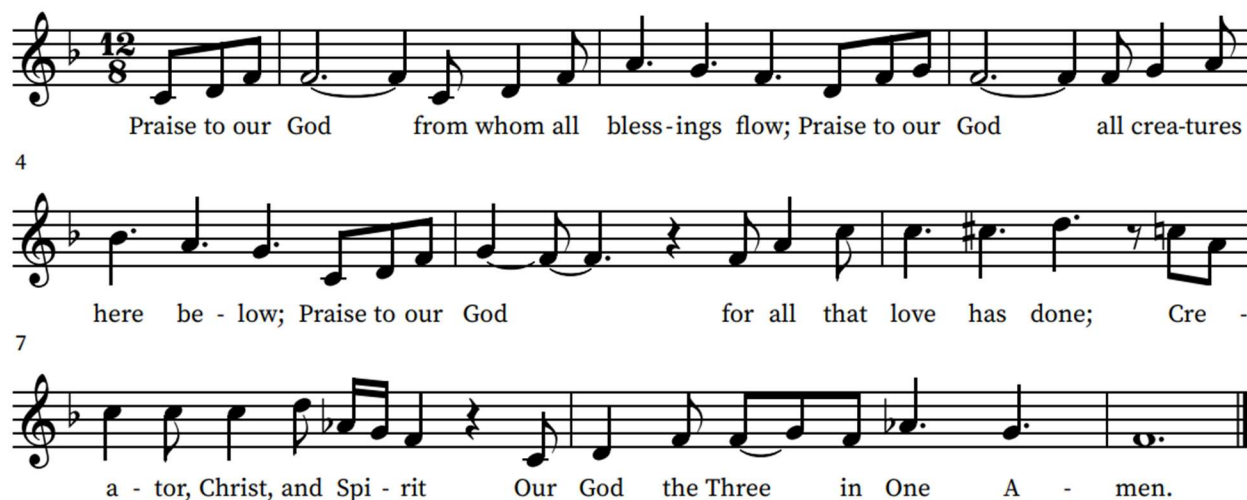
Jeremy Carlisle

*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

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CLOSING HYMN (insert) – O Day of Peace

JERUSALEM LMD

Words: Carl P. Daw, Jr.

Music: Charles H. Parry

(next page)

Unison D G D G

1 O day of peace that dim-ly shines through all our
 2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the

D Bm G D Bm

hopes and prayers and dreams, guide us to jus - tice,
 fierce de - vour the small. As beasts and cat - tle

F#m Bm F#m E7 A

truth, and love, de - liv - ered from our self - ish schemes.
 calm - ly graze, a lit - tle child shall lead them all.

Harmony Em Am Em

May swords of hate fall from our hands, our hearts from
 Then en - e - mies shall learn to love, all crea - tures

G/D D G Em A

en - vy find re - lease, till by God's grace our war - ring
 find their true ac - cord. The hope of peace shall be ful -

D G D G A7 D 2

world shall see Christ's prom-ised reign of peace.
 filled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.

2

***BENEDICTION**

***CHORAL BENEDICTION #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

Jeremy Carlisle

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 QR code on the pew in front of you.

TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS were donated by Jeremy Carlisle, the day after National Coming Out Day, in honor of his 30th year as an out gay man, in celebration of the courage of LGBTQ+ lives made visible, and in compassion for those that can't yet be.

STAY AFTER WORSHIP TODAY FOR FELLOWSHIP AND A SECOND HOUR ABOUT THE P2 LOT SALE (IN PERSON AND ON ZOOM)

You can find the Zoom link in today's email, on the homepage of the church website, and in the online calendar listing. There will be no childcare.

THANK YOU Children's Choir, Kristine, Della, Jeremy, the Sunday Welcome Team, the Sanctuary Choir, and all of the animals!

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

TODAY AT 2PM: Union Film Group "Is Paris Burning?" In The Guild Room

PLEASE STAY AFTER WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY FOR A QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING AND VOTE IN THE SANCTUARY AND ON ZOOM

There will be a discussion and congregational vote about selling the P2 lot and updates about the Building Renewal project. Lunch will be provided.

THIS WEEK

Rev. Leah's "Caring Connections"

Porch Time at the Parsonage (P1)
Thurs., Oct. 16, 10am–11:30am

Play Time At Brookdale Park Playground
Sun., Oct. 19, 2pm-4pm

Women's Breakfast: Saturday, October 18, at 9am, Gabe and Roxanne Talk About Family Promise's "Circles" Program In The Assembly Room

Gabe will give an interactive presentation on the root causes of poverty and why the Circles methods perfectly suited to eradicating poverty for participants, their extended families, neighbors, and friends. Roxanne will speak about her experience of volunteering, the joys of connecting with the families involved with Circles, and the deep meaning this mission has held for her in her life. Breakfast (donation \$7). RSVP to Karen E. at karen.ermiler@gmail.com, 973-820-6112.

Daytime Bible Study Continues Tuesdays At 12:30pm in the Guild Room

Union Cong Chair Yoga Alternates Classes In Person And On Zoom on Wednesdays at 10:30am. Reach out to Sara T. or the Church office.

Union Sages: This Wednesday, October 15th at Noon in the Guild Room

The UCC Ringers Rehearses Wednesdays at 7pm In The Sanctuary

SAVE-THE-DATE FOR THE WOMEN'S RETREAT: JANUARY 16-18, 2026!

At Trinity Retreat Center in Cornwall, Connecticut. More details soon!

12 FREE TICKETS FOR NORTHEAST EARTH COALITION FUNDRAISER

Event is Saturday, October 25. To RSVP, contact Kim at kcrabtree@unioncong.org.

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

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