



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 24th, 2025

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

Childcare and Sunday School are not provided today. Children are welcome to the activity sheets, children's bulletins, and fidgets 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 – Psalm 84

*Lord, how beautiful you are;
How radiant the places you
dwell in.
My soul yearns for your
presence;
My whole body longs for your
light.
Even the wren finds a house
And the sparrow a nest for
herself.
Take me home, Lord;
Guide me to the place of Perfect
repose.*

Rob Middleton

*Let me feel you always within
me;
Open my eyes to your love.
Happy are those who trust you
And merge their will in your will.
They let go of all desires.
And give up everything they
know.
Until they finally enter
The innermost temple of the
heart,
Where there is no self; no other,
Nothing, but only you.*

Kristine Hart & Jeremy Carlisle

WELCOME

Lisa Blankenship

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Lisa Blankenship

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 (insert) - There's a Spirit of Love**

Words & Music: Mark Miller

$\text{♩} = 60$

Fm^7/Bb $A\flat add^9$ $A\flat/E\flat$ $B\flat/E\flat$ $E\flat$

1. There's a

$E\flat$ $Dm^7(\flat^5)$ G^7/B $E\flat^7sus/B\flat$ $E\flat^7$ $A\flat$ F/A

spir - it of love in this place, there's a spir - it of love in this
pres - ence of peace in this room, there's the pres - ence of peace in this

$B\flat sus$ $B\flat$ Fm^{11} $E\flat/G$

place. You can't see it, but it's there, just as
room. In God's ten - der - ness is found peace that

F/A G/B Cm $Fm^7/B\flat$ $A\flat add^9$

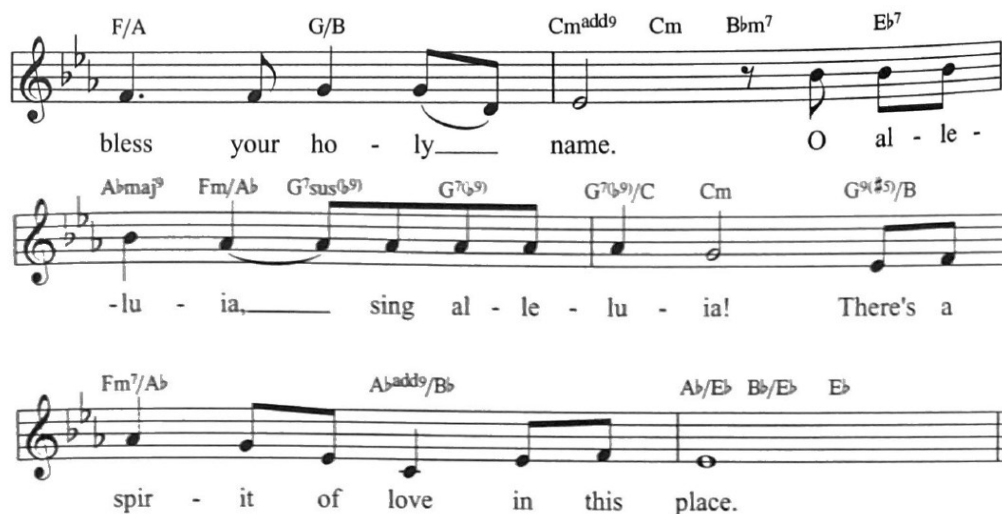
pre - cious as the air. There's a spir - it of love in this
pass - es hu - man bounds. There's the pres - ence of peace in this

$A\flat/E\flat$ $B\flat/E\flat$ $E\flat$ $A\flat/E\flat$ $E\flat$

1. place. 2. There's the room. O al - le -

$A\flat maj^9$ $Fm/A\flat$ $G^7sus(\flat^9)$ $G^7(\flat^9)$ $G^7(\flat^9)/C$ Cm $Cm/B\flat$

- lu - ia, — sing al - le - lu - ia! We



PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION (responsive) Lisa Blankenship
 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) Lisa Blankenship

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

Lisa Blankenship

SCRIPTURE – Isaiah 58:9b-14

Rob Middleton

MESSAGE FOR ALL AGES

Jeremy Whitener

SERMON

Rev. Margarette Ouji

***HYMN #571 – O God of Love, O God of Peace** *HESPERUS L.M.*
Words & Music: Henry W. Baker

(next page)

O God of Love, O God of Peace

Isa. 2:2-4

Henry W. Baker, 1861; alt.

1 O God of love, O God of peace, make wars through-out the
 2 Re - mem-ber, God, your works of old, the won - ders that our
 3 Whom shall we trust, O God, but you? For you are con - stant,

world to cease; The wrath of hu - man wrong re - strain:
 peo - ple told; Heal ev - ery mal - ice, harm, and pain:
 strong, and true. None ev - er called on you in vain:

Give peace, O God, give peace a - gain!

Both words and music of this hymn were composed by Henry W. Baker. A priest of the Church of England, Baker was the first committee chair for Hymns Ancient and Modern, which sold sixty million copies in fifty years.

Tune: HESPERUS L.M.
 (QUEBEC)
 Henry W. Baker, 1854

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

Lisa Blankenship

Announcements

Parting Blessing for Alison Beringer and Rick Wright

"The Path" by Ray Simpson

All: God bless the path on which you go.

God bless the earth beneath your feet.

God bless your destination.

God be a smooth way before you,

A guiding star above you,

A keen eye behind you

This day, this night, and forever.

God be with you whatever you pass.

Jesus be with you whatever you climb.

Spirit be with you wherever you stay.

**God be with you at each stop and each sea,
At each lying down and each rising up,
In the trough of the waves,
on the crest of the billows
each step of the journey you take.**

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 – Baiao

Jean Francaix

Rob Middleton & Jeremy Carlisle

***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.**

***HYMN #76 – Sent Forth by God's Blessing**

THE ASH GROVE

Words: Omer Westendorf

Music: Welsh folk melody

(next page)

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Omer Westendorf, 1964

Descant

2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the

Unison

1 Sent forth by God's bless-ing, our true faith con - fess-ing, the
2 With praise and thanks - giv - ing to God ev - er liv - ing, the

tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er

peo - ple of God from this dwell-ing take leave. The ser - vice is
tasks of our ev - ery - day life we will face. Our faith ev - er

shar-ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil-dren of

end-ed, O now be ex - tend-ed the fruits of our wor-ship in
shar-ing, in love ev - er car - ing, em - brac - ing God's chil-dren of

Omer Westendorf, author of numerous hymns, compiler of several hymnals, and founder of World Library Publications, included this hymn in *People's Mass Book, 1964*, the first vernacular Roman Catholic hymn and service book to implement the decrees of Vatican II.

Tune: THE ASH GROVE 6.6.11.6.6.11.D.
Welsh folk melody
Harm. Leland Sateren, 1972
Descant, The New Century Hymnal, 1993

each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with
 all who be - lieve. The seed of the teach - ing, re -
 each tribe and race. With your grace you feed us, with

your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this
 cep - tive hearts reach - ing, shall blos - som in ac - tion for
 your light now lead us, u - nite us as one in this

life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -
 God and for all. God's grace did in - vite us, and love shall u -
 life that we share. Then may all the liv - ing with praise and thanks -

giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.
 nite us to work for God's realm and to an - swer the call.
 giv - ing give hon - or to Christ and that name which we bear.

***BENEDICTION**

Rev. Margarette Ouji

One: We have worshiped God together.

All: As our worship ends, our service begins.

One: May the spirit which has blessed us here

All: Continue to bless us in each day that comes! Amen.

POSTLUDE

Jeremy Carlisle

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

ALTAR FLOWERS have been donated today by Karen Daviou in remembrance of her parents.

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

THANK YOU Sunday Welcome Team, Rev. Margarette, Lisa, and our music ministry!

PRIDE CHOIR REHEARSAL TODAY AT 2PM/CHOIR 101 AT 1:45PM IN THE SANCTUARY

THIS TUESDAY, AUGUST 26TH, AT 7PM: INTERFAITH CLIMATE ACTION GROUP MEETING IN THE CHAPEL

NO CHILDCARE OR SUNDAY SCHOOL THIS SUNDAY, AUGUST 31.

**OUR SUMMER CONGREGATIONAL READ FOR RACIAL JUSTICE -
*Just Action: How to Challenge Segregation Enacted Under the
Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein and Leah Rothstein**

**JOIN US NEXT SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, AS WE SAY FAREWELL TO
REV. MARIE**

We will be celebrating Rev. Marie's time with us and wishing her well on her final Sunday. Her last day in the office will be Wednesday, September 4th.

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

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

Rev. Marie A. Bacchiocchi, Minister Of Visitation And Pastoral Care,
973-746-4285, mbacchiocchi@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

ABOUT UNION CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Union Congregational Church exists to provide opportunities for anyone who wants to connect with God through worship, service, education, and small groups. Typically, you'll find members and friends seeking wisdom, searching for movements of the Spirit, serving others, and having fun together. Anyone is invited to join us, ask questions, and most importantly, be yourself. Union Congregational Church is a congregation of people from all walks of life and faith traditions.

The church community commits to welcoming, including, and celebrating people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions. Union Congregational Church proudly embraces LGBTQ+ people into the full life and ministry of the church. As part of the United Church of Christ, our denomination, this is called being an "Open and Affirming" church.

Children's Book Drive

We need kids' books!

Donate to Toni's Kitchen during hours open to the public. **No chapter books**, please! We most commonly see kids ages 1-10 (who often speak both Spanish and English). Blank workbooks, baby books, and card games also accepted.



August 1st -
September 10th
73 South Fullerton
Ave, Montclair, NJ

Instagram:
@mhs_friendsoftonis
kitchen

Contact:
friendsoftoniskitchen
@gmail.com

