

Union Congregational United Church of Christ



At Union, we are all the body of Christ together:
Through our voices, Christ is still speaking
Through our hands, Christ is still serving
Through our hearts, Christ is still loving



March 9, 2025

Our sanctuary is equipped with a hearing loop. You can access the loop by activating the T-coil in your hearing aid. If you do not have a T-coil, you can request a portable receiver from an usher.



Welcome to Union Church!

- Today's service is being live streamed via Facebook and YouTube.
- During the Children's Moments, the live stream will display a graphic, in order to protect our children's privacy.
- Please see an usher if you would like a children's activity packet or if you need help finding the nursery.
- Visitors are encouraged to fill out a visitor card at the usher's station or email office@unionucc.com to receive our weekly email newsletter.
- Visitors, if you would like more information about our church, please take home a yellow "Welcome to Union Church" folder located at either sanctuary door. If you have trouble finding them, ask one of our friendly members to help you locate one!
- We encourage those who are COVID positive or have cold or flu symptoms to worship from home and to consult with your healthcare provider to ensure you are engaging in best practices regarding masking, distancing, and receiving vaccines/boosters, particularly if you or someone you live with have health concerns.

One Great Hour Of Sharing Offering is Today

One Great Hour of Sharing is a churchwide offering to support the disaster, refugee, and development ministries of the UCC. Through this offering, we invest in communities worldwide by providing education and vocational training to girls and boys, supporting microcredit lending and seeing people through to self-sufficiency, empowering families with skills to support themselves and their neighbors, and participating in sustainable solutions that offer dignity to all.

Serving Christ . . . Loving Each . . . Affirming All

First Sunday in Lent

March 9, 2025

10:00 a.m.

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

(*) invites all who are able to stand

PRELUDE:

“Ebenezer”

arr. Mark Hayes

With music and silence we begin worship, praying quietly and opening our hearts to God.

THE LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome! Please share Announcements, Ministry Opportunities, Joys and Concerns.

PRAISING OUR GOD

THE BOND OF UNION (in unison)

Giving our all as we have been given all...

We accept the religion of love and service which Jesus lived and taught, and declare it our purpose to strive to do the will of God, and to make the Christ Spirit dominant in our lives and in all human relations.

*GATHERING PRAYER: (in unison)

God of mercy and compassion and healing and hope, as we begin another Lent, we pray that our observance of this season will serve to clear away the clutter in our lives in order that we might see you more clearly. May our prayer and practices help us to gain clarity and insight and deepen our relationship with you. Grant us greater awareness of the needs and struggles of our neighbors near and far, that we might be agents of Christ’s redeeming grace and love. May our observance of this season transform us and renew our devotion to you and your ways. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION: [based on the Book of the Prophet Hosea] (responsive)

Leader: Come back to God – back from your private enterprises and egotism, back from your personal lives and confidential clauses. The small world you have carved out for yourself may be familiar – but it doesn’t hold a candle to the wide world God offers, the one best shared with your sisters and brothers: Come back to God.

All: Come back to God – back from that dark corner where you hide your guilty secrets; out of the cupboard where you store up your shame – stop beating yourself up and start believing in your infinite worth, built on nothing else but your existence as a creature of God: Come back to God.

Leader: Come back to God – back from wherever it is you are wandering, weary, worn. Life is a journey, yes – an adventure to be sure – but it does not have to be a stumble in the dark, or a lurch from one temporary thing to another: Come back to God.

All: Come back to God with all your heart – and you’ll find yourself free. You’ll find yourself home. As we step into this season of Lent, let us seek Christ’s transformation and healing and grace. Amen.

* ASSURANCE OF PARDON: (responsive)

Leader: Having confessed our sins, may we be as sure of God’s love as was the apostle Paul:

All: Be absolutely convinced that nothing—not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sin—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus has embraced us. Thanks be to God!

* PASSING THE PEACE OF JESUS CHRIST

* HYMN NO. 202:

“O God, How We Have Wandered”
(see page 5)

PASSION CHORALE
The New Century Hymnal

PROCLAIMING GOD’S GOOD NEWS

HOLY SCRIPTURE:

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

p. 179

CHILDREN’S MOMENTS

Children are invited to gather on the chancel steps and bring their offering.

Following Children’s Moments, all children are welcome to remain in worship.

Additionally, parents are welcome to accompany their children to our “prayground” in the south transept to play and pray quietly or to drop them off downstairs to play in the nursery with our paid nursery staff. Activity bags with crayons, etc. are available from an usher.

CHORAL ANTHEM:

“For Where Love Is, There Is God”

Douglas Wagner

HOLY GOSPEL:

Luke 4:1-13

p. 61

THE SERMON:

Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels

RESPONDING IN FAITH

HYMN:

"Hosea"
(see back page)

Gregory Norbet

THE PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

Please join us in praying the Lord's Prayer in these words or a translation meaningful to you.

Our Father 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE OFFERING

Offertory:

"Rorate Caeli"


Jeanne Demessieux

*Praise Response:

"Again We Keep This Solemn Fast"

ERHALT UNS, HERR

To be sung freely



We pray, O bless-ed Three-in-One, our God while end-less a-ges run, That
this, our Lent of for-ty days, may bring us growth and give you praise.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (in unison)

Pour out your Spirit on these gifts, O God, and on our lives.

May they be put to service in your redemption of the world,

bringing hope and healing, peace and patience, to our neighbors near and far.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SENT INTO ALL THE WORLD

*HYMN NO. 211:

“Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days”
(see back page)

ST. FLAVIAN
The New Century Hymnal

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE:

“Shall We Gather at the River”

arr. John Carter

Thanks to all who helped lead today’s service including our reader, **Pat Shafer**,
and **Brittany Hendrix Malone** who offered our Children’s Moments.

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Sunday Morning Adult Education March 16 at 9 a.m. in Bagby Chapel

Why do we have crosses in our churches and sometimes around our necks? What does the cross symbolize? The cross, of course, is a reminder that Jesus died by crucifixion. And the most dominant interpretation of that event is that Jesus’s tortured death somehow paid for humanity’s sins. However, some Christians balk at the idea that a loving God would choose this method of forgiveness. Interestingly, if one understands the historical context of why Jesus was crucified, the cross can take on an entirely different meaning. Equipped with this knowledge, one can see that the cross symbolizes a way, a path of transformation, both personal and political. Julie Harder will explore the historical realities that led to Jesus’s arrest and execution, and the insights that result.

O God, How We Have Wandered

Melody by Hans Leo Hassler, 1601
Harm. J. S. Bach, 1729 202

Kevin Nichols, 1980; alt. Tune: PASSION CHORALE 7.6.7.6.D. (HERZLICH TUT MICH VERLANGEN) Luke 15:11-32; 2 Cor. 5:16-20

1 O God, how we have wan - dered and hid - den from your face;
2 And now at length dis - cern - ing the e - vil that we do,
3 O God of all the liv - ing, both ban - ished and re - stored,

In fool - ish-ness have squan - dered your leg - a - cy of grace.
By faith we are re - turn - ing with hope and trust in you.
Com - pas - sion-ate, for - giv - ing, our peace and hope as - sured.

But how, in ex - ile dwell - ing, we turn with fear and shame,
In haste you come to meet us, and home re - joic - ing bring,
Grant now that our trans - gress - ing, our faith-less-ness may cease.

As dis - tant but com - pell - ing, you call us each by name.
In glad-ness there to greet us with calf and robe and ring.
Stretch out your hand in bless - ing, in par - don, and in peace.

Text: Based on Hosea 6:1, 3-3, 2:16,21; Joel 2:12; Gregory Norbet, b.1940
 Tune: Gregory Norbet, b.1940; arr. by Mary David Callahan, b.1923
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Hosea

Verses

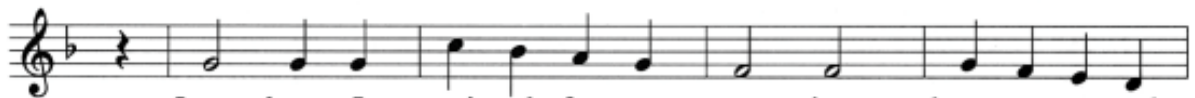


1. Come back to me with all your heart.
 & Trees do bend, 'though straight and tall;
2. The wil - der - ness will lead you
 In - teg - ri - ty and jus - tice,
3. & You shall sleep se - cure with peace;

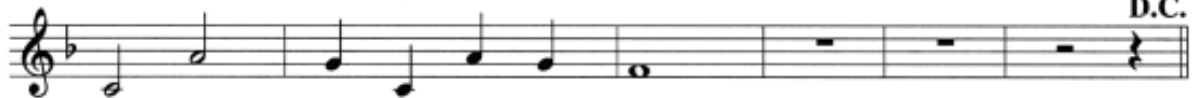


Don't let fear keep us a - part.
 so must we to oth - ers' call.
 to your heart where I will speak.
 With ten - der - ness, & you shall know.
 faith - ful - ness will be your joy. (To refrain)

Refrain



Long have I wait-ed for your com - ing home to me and



liv - ing deep - ly our new life.

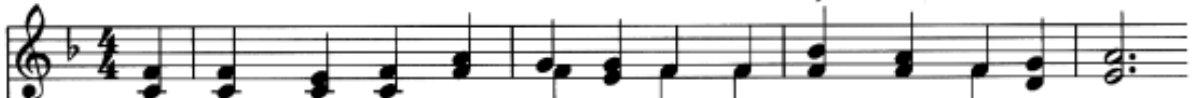
Lord Jesus, Who through Forty Days

211

Claudia F. I. Hernaman, 1873; alt.

Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13

Tune: ST. FLAVIAN C.M.
 Day's The Whole Booke of Psalms, 1562



- 1 Lord Je - sus, who through for - ty days for us did fast and pray,
- 2 As you with Sa - tan did con-tend, and did the vic-tory win,
- 3 And through these days of pen - i - tence, and through this Pas-sion - tide,
- 4 A - bide with us, till when this life of suf - fering shall be past,



Teach us with you to mourn our sins, and close by you to stay.
 O give us strength to per - se - vere, in you to con-quer sin.
 Yes, ev - er - more, in life and death, O Christ, with us a - bide.
 An Eas - ter of un - end - ing joy we may at - tain at last.

