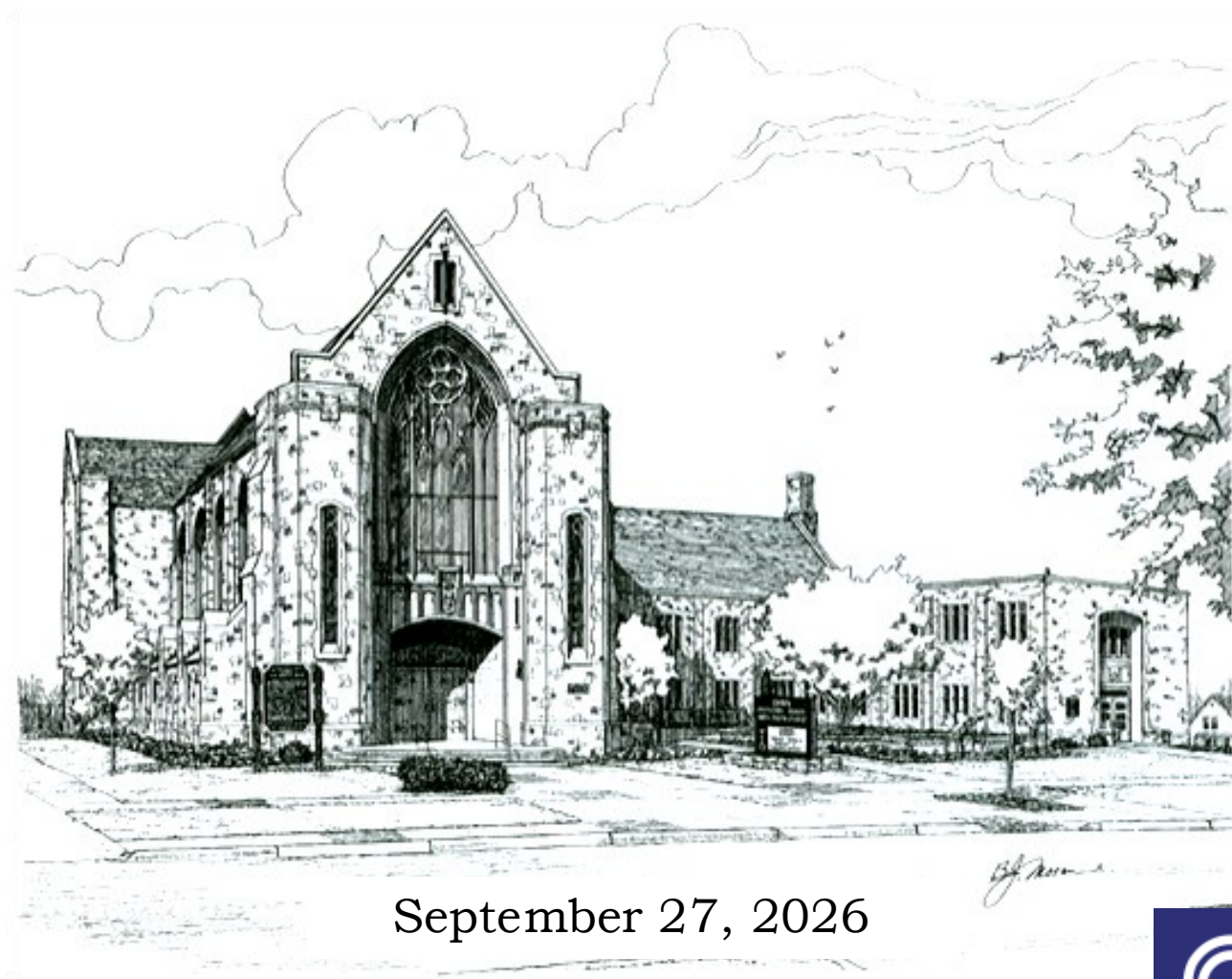


Union Congregational United Church of Christ



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



September 27, 2026

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.

Seeking Pageant Director Understudy

After close to a decade serving as director and assistant director of our annual Christmas Pageant, Christie Reese and Heather Collins are looking to pass the baton. They plan to organize the 2026 pageant and would love to have a couple of understudies work with them this year with the intention of picking up the reins next year.

Directing the pageant includes recruiting church members and friends for the roles, working with the church music staff to coordinate the music for the service, tweaking the script if need be, recruiting costume managers, and running the rehearsal the weekend of the pageant. It's a fun, rewarding way to offer your time, and is one of the highlights of the church year.

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

18th Sunday after Pentecost

September 27, 2026

10:00 a.m.

GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

(*) invites all who are able to stand

PRELUDE:

"Meditation from Thais"

Massenet

Dr. Taylor Giorgio, violin

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.

*CALL TO WORSHIP: (responsive)

One: Come, you who are thirsty for something more than the world can offer.

All: Come, you who have questions, doubts, hopes, and dreams.

One: Come, you who have said "yes" to faith and those who are still wondering what that yes might mean.

All: Today we gather around the waters of baptism, remembering that God's grace meets us wherever we are and calls us into a life of love.

One: We gather as a community of faith, ready once again to ask what it means for our lives, our resources, and our congregation to become instruments of God's work in the world.

All: Come, let us worship the God who provides what we need, calls us to live what we believe, and invites us to become part of something larger than ourselves.

*** PRAYER OF CONFESSION: (in unison)**

Gracious God, we confess that sometimes our words come more easily than our actions. We say that we trust you, yet we are often afraid there will not be enough. We say that we believe in generosity, yet we can cling tightly to what we have. We say that we want to follow your ways, yet we sometimes hesitate when following requires us to change, to risk, or to make room for someone else.

Forgive us for the times our faith remains safely in our heads or on our lips rather than taking root in our lives. Remind us that your grace is not something we earn and your love is not something we have to protect. Teach us to trust your abundance, to notice the needs around us, and to respond with courage, generosity, and joy. Shape us into people whose lives say “yes” to your love. Amen.

*** ASSURANCE OF PARDON: (in unison)**

Hear the good news: God’s grace does not depend upon our getting everything right. We are loved before we have anything to prove and forgiven before we have anything to earn. In the waters of baptism, we remember that God’s grace claims us and calls us by name. So let us live with confidence, trusting that we belong to a God whose mercy is greater than our missteps and failings and whose love is always making us new. In Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

*** PASSING THE PEACE OF JESUS CHRIST**

*** HYMN:**

“God Is Here! As We Your People Meet”

(see page 6)

ABBOT’S LEIGH
The New Century Hymnal

PROCLAIMING GOD’S GOOD NEWS

HOLY SCRIPTURE:

Exodus 17:1-7

p. 64

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 “playground” 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.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Today it is our joy to celebrate the sacrament of baptism with:

Evelyn Joan Alexander-Wolf

Evelyn's Parents: **Ben and Aaron Alexander-Wolf**

Evelyn's Godparents: **Nicole Ann Dufek and Mariah Thiry**

WELCOME

One. Members and friends in Christ, we gather now to celebrate the gift of grace in the sacrament of baptism.

All. **There is one body, one God, and one Spirit. There is one hope in God's call to us.**

QUESTIONS OF PARENTS AND SPONSORS

CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT

Evelyn, we welcome you with joy into the household of faith. We promise you our friendship, help, and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ.

May you find guidance and encouragement for your journey in the Christian community, and by the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in knowledge and love of God and as witnesses of our risen Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

BLESSING THE WATER OF BAPTISM

THE BAPTISM: Evelyn Joan Alexander-Wolf

THE BAPTISMAL CANDLE

PRAYER OF BLESSING

One. We give you thanks, O Holy One, mother and father of all the faithful, for this your beloved child and for the grace acknowledged here today in water and the Holy Spirit. Embrace us all in the household of your love. Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this new member of the body of Christ.

All. **Give to Evelyn the strength for life's journey, courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life. Through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.**

HYMN:

"Baptized in Water"
(see page 7)

BUNESSAN

HOLY GOSPEL:

Matthew 21:23-32

p. 23

THE SERMON:

Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels

SPECIAL MUSIC:

"Sonata in F Major, Allegro"

Handel

RESPONDING IN FAITH

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:

"Salut D'Amour"

Elgar

*Praise Response:

"Imela"

traditional Nigerian

I - me - la, i - me - la, i - me - la, O - ka - ka.

I - me - la, Chi - ne - ke. I - me - la On - y'o - ma.

Translation

Thank you, great God.

Thank you because you are good.

Pronunciation Guide:

ee-meh-lah Oh-kah-kah

ee-meh-lah Chee-neh-keh

ee-meh-lah Ohn-yoh-mah

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

Generous God, everything we have and everything we are is a gift: the water that sustains us, the people who love us, the communities that hold us, the opportunities we are given to make a difference in the world. Receive these gifts we bring today, and bless them for the work of your love. As we begin our annual pledge campaign, remind us that stewardship is more than balancing a budget or keeping the lights on. It is one of the ways we say yes to the kind of community we believe God is calling us to be. Use what we offer to strengthen this congregation, to welcome those who are searching for a spiritual home, to nurture one another, to serve our neighbors, and to carry hope and justice beyond these walls. Make us generous, that your abundance has room to flow. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SENT INTO ALL THE WORLD

*HYMN:

"Take My Gifts"
(see page 8)

TALAVERA TERRACE
The New Century Hymnal

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE:

"Concerto in G Major, Movement 1"

Vivaldi

Thanks to all who helped lead today's service including our reader, **Michael Stepp**,
Megan Gleason, who offered our Children's Moments,
and **Dr. Taylor Giorgio** for her musical contributions.

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God Is Here! As We Your People Meet

Tune: ABBOT'S LEIGH 8.7.8.7.D. Cyril V. Taylor, 1941 Fred Pratt Green, 1978; alt.

1 God is here! As we your peo-ple meet to of - fer praise and prayer,
2 Here are sym-bols to re - mind us of our life - long need of grace;
3 Here our chil-dren find a wel-come in the Shep - herd's flock and fold;

May we find in full - er mea-sure what it is in Christ we share.
Here are ta - ble, font, and pul - pit, here the cross has cen - tral place.
Here as bread and wine are tak - en, Christ sus - tains us as of old.

Here, as in the world a - round us, all our var - ied skills and arts
Here in hon - es - ty of preach-ing, here in si - lence, as in speech,
Here the ser - vants of the Ser - vant seek in wor-ship to ex-plore

wait the com-ing of the Spir - it in - to o - pen minds and hearts.
here, in new-ness and re - new-al, God the Spir - it comes to each.
what it means in dai - ly liv - ing to be - lieve and to a - dore.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a treble and bass staff for the piano accompaniment and a single staff for the voice. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four systems, each corresponding to a line of lyrics. The first system includes three numbered lines of lyrics. The second system includes three lines of lyrics. The third system includes three lines of lyrics. The fourth system includes three lines of lyrics. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands, providing a harmonic and rhythmic foundation for the voice.

Baptized in Water

C Am Dm G F G C

1 Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, cleansed by the
 2 Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, one in the
 3 Bap-tized in wa - ter, sealed by the Spir - it, marked with the

Em Am Em F G C Am F C/G

blood of Christ our King; heirs of sal - va - tion, trust-ing the
 life of Christ our King; one with his ris - ing, freed and for -
 sign of Christ our King; born of the Spir - it, we are God's

Am G C G/B Am G7 C

prom - ise, faith - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.
 giv - en, thank - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.
 chil - dren; joy - ful - ly now God's prais - es we sing.

*Alternate harmonization, no. 664.
 This harmonization may be played
 with the alternate harmonization.*

TEXT: Michael A. Saward, 1981
 MUSIC: Gaelic melody; arr. Dale Grotenhuis, 1985
 Text © 1982 The Jubilate Group (admin. Hope Publishing Co.)
 Music Arr. © 1987 Faith Alive Christian Resources

BUNESSAN
 5.5.8.5.5.9

Take My Gifts

Tune: TALAVERA TERRACE 8.7.8.7.D.

Colin Gibson, 1991

Alternate tune: HOLY MANNA

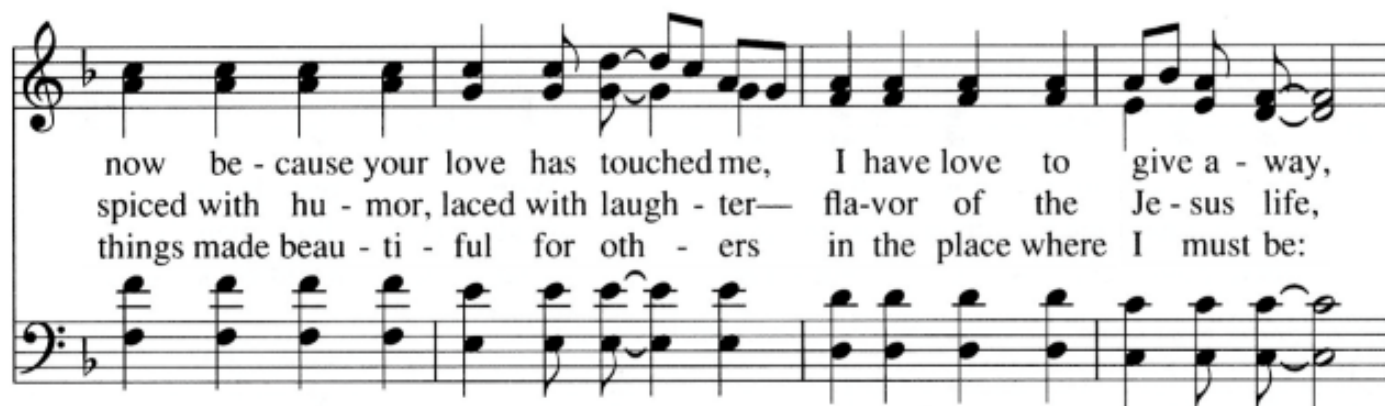
Shirley Erena Murray, 1991



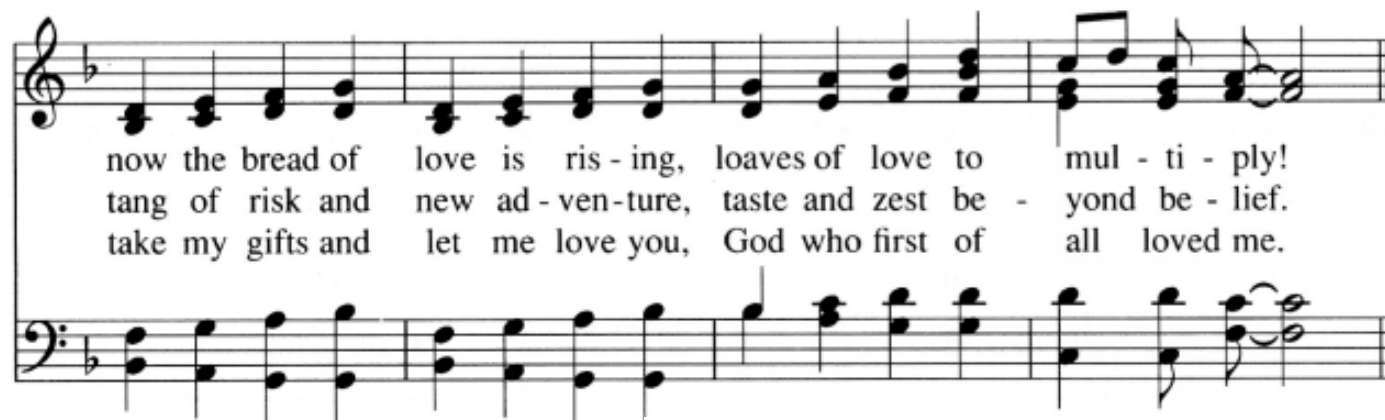
1 Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,
 2 Take the fruit that I have gath - ered from the tree your Spir - it sowed,
 3 Take what-ev - er I can of - fer— gifts that I have yet to find,



gave me light and food and shel - ter, gave me life and set me free,
 har - vest of your own com-pas - sion, juice that makes the wine of God,
 skills that I am slow to sharp - en, tal - ents of the hand and mind,



now be - cause your love has touched me, I have love to give a - way,
 spiced with hu - mor, laced with laugh - ter— fla - vor of the Je - sus life,
 things made beau - ti - ful for oth - ers in the place where I must be:



now the bread of love is ris - ing, loaves of love to mul - ti - ply!
 tang of risk and new ad - ven - ture, taste and zest be - yond be - lief.
 take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.



Living Gift Market is October 4

Heifer International is a program that works with communities to end world hunger and poverty. Through our Heifer Living Gift Market we hope to inspire our church family to get involved in ending hunger and poverty, bringing the commandment to love your neighbor to life year-round. Families who receive our gift not only benefit from the animal, but they also pass on the gift to other families in their community. This allows them to help others as you have helped them.

Our goal is to fill an ark by raising \$5,000 or more. This can be done with your gift of a goat, heifer, water buffalo, alpaca, llama, sheep, pigs, rabbits, honeybees, ducks, chickens, and so much more.

Come out to the courtyard after church on October 4. We will have exhibits, live animals, and treats and enjoy the Living Gift Market.

If you are interested in volunteering or hosting a table at the event, sign up on the sign-up sheets in the church hall or contact Wendy Woodward at (847) 814-5168 or email wwoodward@hotmail.com.

SOUPER COOKS SHELTER MEALS

Souper Cooks is a group of volunteers who prepare and serve meals at the New Community Shelter (301 Mather Street).

A New Season Has Begun — We serve on the 4th Thursday of the month (except in June, July, August and November).

Preparing the Meal: 1:00 p.m.

Six to eight volunteers prepare the meal at Union Church.

Serving the Meal: 4:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

A team of 3 to 4 volunteers greets and serves the community at the NEW Community Shelter.

Learn More and Volunteer!

Contact Marty Berry (mjpberry@sbcglobal.net)
or Achim Seifert (seif904@sbcglobal.net)

Union
CONGREGATIONAL



Julie Harder, M.D., trained as a Gottman Institute Leader,
presents the Free Online Workshop:

FREE ONLINE WORKSHOP

The Seven Principles

Couples Workshop



BASED ON
NEW YORK TIMES
BESTSELLER
OVER A MILLION
COPIES SOLD



Are you in a committed relationship,
or considering marriage?



Is your relationship OK, but you'd like
to make it even happier?



Are you arguing in circles about
the same issues?



Would you like evidence-based
strategies for relationship success?

Dr. John Gottman observed thousands of couples over forty years, analyzing their interactions, then following them for years to see which couples stayed happily together and which split up.

From this data Dr. Gottman developed proven strategies to help couples succeed.



WHEN?
Saturdays,
October 17 & 31 and
November 7 & 14
12–3:15 pm EST



FREE!
+ \$55+ shipping
for the course
materials.



SIGNUP CLOSES
October 1st



Email Dr. Julie Harder at
julie.harder.projects@gmail.com
for more details and to register.

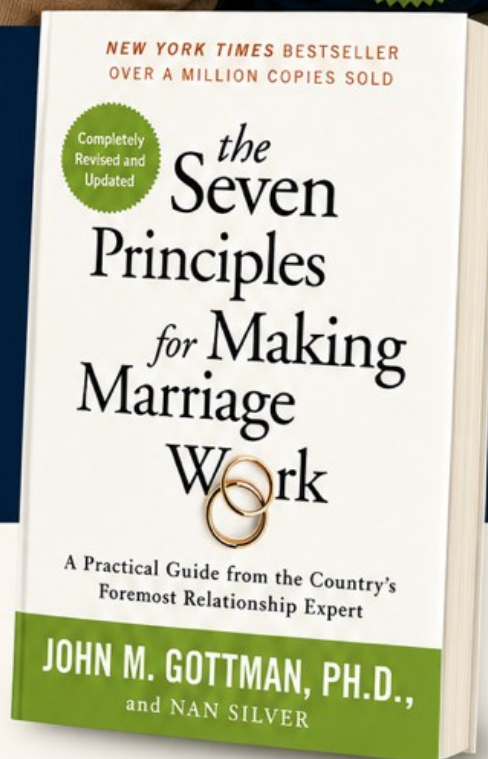
OR, GO TO THESE LINKS:



FAQs:
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STRONGER CONNECTION. HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIP. A BETTER FUTURE—TOGETHER.

Build the relationship you both deserve. We all can love better.