

Surprising
Teaching



UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*We welcome all people to experience God's love,
grow spiritually and engage in meaningful service.*

SERVICE OF THE WORD

February 16, 2025

*Please stand as you are able.

This service is livestreaming. Thank you. ♥

ENTER TO WORSHIP

GATHERING MUSIC

*When you hear the music, please gather. Be seated and prepare for worship.
Lighting the Candle, we remember God's presence with us.*

PRELUDE

"You are Welcome Here"

THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Words of Welcome & Announcements

INTROIT

"Come By Here, My Lord"

Come by here, my Lord, come by here. Come by here, my Lord, come by here. Come by here, my Lord, come by here. Oh Lord, come by here.

Someone needs You, Lord, come by here. Someone needs You, Lord, come by here. Someone needs You, Lord, come by here. Oh, Lord, come by here.

Someone's prayin', Lord, come by here. Someone's prayin', Lord, come by here. Someone's prayin', Lord, come by here. Oh, Lord, come by here.

Kum Ba Yah, my Lord, come by here. Kum Ba Yah, my Lord, come by here. Kum Ba Yah, my Lord, come by here. Oh, Lord, come by here.

*Chorus:

We are one in the bond of love; we are one in the bond of love, we have joined our spirits with the Spirit of God, we are one in the bond of love.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Blessed are those who follow God's way.

All: They are like a tree planted by streams of water.

One: It does not fear when heat comes,

All: it is not anxious in times of drought.

One: Like such a tree, we trust in God.

All: We know that God always watches over us.

One: Come, let us worship God:

All: who is the source of life in all seasons.

***INVOCATION**

Christ is with us!

Christ is in our midst!

Happy are you who speak to God, you shall be heard. Bless us anew, O God. Happy are you who are honest with God, you shall be forgiven. Bless us anew, O God. Happy are you who open up your real self, you shall be loved. Bless us anew, O God. Happy are you who long for change, your living shall be renewed. Bless us anew, O God. Happy are you who put yourself in God's hands; you shall be held. Bless us anew, O God. Happy are you who long for a fairer world, you shall be given vision. Bless us anew, O God. Happy are you who seek God always; you shall be shown the way. Bless us anew, O God. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

"Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer"

PASTORAL PRAYER

Sharing Joys and Concerns

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE

"Sometimes, I Feel Like a Motherless Child" Tom Richards,
Soloist

OFFERTORY

"I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me"

***DOXOLOGY** (*Deacons George & Brandon to bring offerings forward.*)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God all creatures here below;

Praise God for all that Love has done:

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND COMMITMENT**

(All children and youth are welcome to attend the Sunday School Class.)

READING OF SCRIPTURES

Jeremiah 17:5-10

Thus says the LORD: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the LORD. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? I the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

Psalm 1

Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of God,
and on God's law they meditate day and night.
They are like trees planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do they prosper.
The wicked are not so,
but are like chaff that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for God watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish.

Luke 6:17-26

Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their ailments. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him—so much energy surging from him, so many people healed! Then he spoke: You're blessed when you've lost it all. God's kingdom is there for the finding. You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry. Then you're ready for the Messianic meal. You're blessed when the tears flow freely. Joy comes with the morning.

“Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that that person is uncomfortable. You can be

glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like! - for even though they don't like it, I do... and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.

But it's trouble ahead if you think you have it made. What you have is all you'll ever get. And it's trouble ahead if you're satisfied with yourself. *Yourself* will not satisfy you for long. And it's trouble ahead if you think life's all fun and games. There's suffering to be met, and you're going to meet it. "There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

Thanks be to God!

SONG OF PREPARATION

"Pass Me Not"

Arr. Larry Shackley

Duet: Tom Richards & Pastor Sheila

SERMON

"Surprising Teaching"

Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey

***CLOSING HYMN**

"We'll Understand It Better By and By"

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

THE POSTLUDE

"What the World Needs Now Is Love"

Arr. Burt Bacharach

DEPART TO SERVE

GLEANNING: Feeding Our Neighbors



Thank you to all those who joined us as we went gleaning on Saturday, February 15, 2025 to help the hungry by picking vegetables to be distributed in Palm Beach County.



We **WELCOME** each of you to this celebration of worship. If you are visiting, we invite you to sign our Guest register in the Narthex. Offering envelopes are found in the pocket on the back of the chairs in the sanctuary for your convenience.

Participating in Today's Service:

Readers

Rebekah Gay, George Gerson, Louise Dempster

Assisting

Vanessa Nuñez

Union's Joys & Prayer Concerns

Joys: All Birthdays in February! Our Church Family! Live Streaming! Black History Month! Valentine's Fellowship!

Concerns:

Frank Byrd's family & friends; Ada Harvey and family; Charlene Buck; Linda Padmore's niece, Yvette & sister, Christine; Alice Payne; Bonnie Avery's family member, Greg; Rosemarie Lightfoots's sister, Anita; Marion & Criss Gaetano's family & friends; Charlie Rodriguez's family and friends; Melanie Shepherd; Richard Lightfoot; Beth White; Louise's friend, Martha; Susan Harrell's husband, George; David's family members, Evelyn Soza, Jerman Rodrigues, Carmen, Margarita; Donna's brother, Clevert; George Gerson's Brother, Michael; Melanie's Friend, Donna; Borjana's son, Petar; Ruth Deischer's sister-in-law, Susan Deischer; Renna McGinnis; George Gerson's friends, Diane & Timothy Scott; George Gerson's nephew, Glenn; Ruth Cassidy's husband, Bill; Rose's daughter, Tyshawna for healing & recovery; Jan Mark; Rod Jennings; Jan Mark's son, Gary; Justice & Peace efforts; grieving, depression and anxiety; all refugees; Ukraine War; Puerto Rico; Haiti; Gun violence everywhere; Environmental concerns; Maui, HI, Florida; Israel conflict; Hurricane victims; Wild fires; Immigrant families



Every Sunday beautiful flowers adorn our altar. We have a flower chart for sign-ups. Also, you can call the office or send an email to office@unionucc.net. Garden flowers are \$10 and floral arrangements are \$40. As an added bonus you can list the flowers in the bulletin in memory or in honor of someone or a special occasion. You are also welcome to take the \$40 arrangement home.

Sunday School Highlight

'God's blessing is on you! God's love surrounds you.'
These are messages Jesus shared and is still sharing.
Join us as we read about these blessings
and explore ways to spread God's love!



Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

Exod. 13:21; 16:4; 17:6; Ps. 105:39-44; Rev. 22:1-2

William Williams, 1745

St. 1, transl. Peter Williams, 1771; alt.
St. 2-3, transl. William Williams, 1772; alt.

1 Guide me, O my great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, where the heal - ing
 3 When I reach the Riv - er Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but you are might - y;
 wa - ters flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar
 fears sub - side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion,

hold me with your power - ful hand. Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
 lead me all my jour - ney through. Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
 land me safe on heav - en's side. Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.
 ev - er be my strength and shield, ev - er be my strength and shield.
 I will ev - er sing to you, I will ev - er sing to you.

418 WE'LL UNDERSTAND IT BETTER BY AND BY

*For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully...
1 Corinthians 13:12*

1. We are of - ten tossed and driv'n On the rest - less
 2. We are of - ten des - ti - tute Of the things that
 3. Tri - als dark on ev - 'ry hand, And we can - not
 4. Temp - ta - tions, hid - den snares Of - ten take us

sea of time. Som - ber skies and howl - ing tem - pests oft suc -
 life de - mands. Want of food and want of shel - ter, thirst - y
 un - der - stand, All the ways that God would lead us to that
 un - a - wares. And our hearts are made to bleed for some

ceed a bright sun - shine. In that land of per - fect day, When the
 hills and bar - ren lands. We are trust - ing in the Lord, And ac -
 bless - ed Prom - ised Land. But He guides us with His eye And we'll
 thought - less word or deed. And we won - der why the test When we

mists have rolled a - way, We will un - der - stand it bet - ter by and
 cord - ing to His Word, We will un - der - stand it bet - ter by and
 fol - low till we die. For we'll un - der - stand it bet - ter by and
 try to do our best, But we'll un - der - stand it bet - ter by and

by. By and by when the morn - ing comes,

When the saints of God are gath - ered home, We will

tell the sto - ry how we've o - ver - come; For we'll

un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.

I'm So Glad, Jesus Lifted Me

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African-American spiritual

1 I'm so glad, Je - sus lift - ed me, I'm so glad,
 2 Sa - tan had me bound, Je - sus lift - ed me, Sa - tan had me bound,
 3 When I was in trou - ble, Je - sus lift - ed me, when I was in trou - ble,

Je - sus lift - ed me, I'm so glad,
 Je - sus lift - ed me, Sa - tan had me bound,
 Je - sus lift - ed me, when I was in trou - ble,

Je - sus lift - ed me, sing - ing glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah, Je - sus lift - ed me.

Nehemiah Action

JOIN US AS WE LIVE OUT

MICAH 6:8

MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2025

AT 7:00PM

IN-PERSON: PALM BEACH COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER

ONLINE: ZOOM



WHAT IS PEACE?

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

PEACEPBC.ORG/2022_NA

PLEASE SIGN-UP ON THE SOUNDBOARD.

THE LORD'S PLACE MARCH TO END HOMELESSNESS

A powerful event that brings our community together to combat the crisis of homelessness in Palm Beach County, FL. Everyone deserves a safe and secure place to call home.

JOIN US!

Friday, February 28, 2025

March begins: 2 p.m.

Ceremony: 4 - 6 p.m.



561.578.4928



Info@TheLordsPlace.org



TheLordsPlace.org

EASTER HANDBELL CHOIR

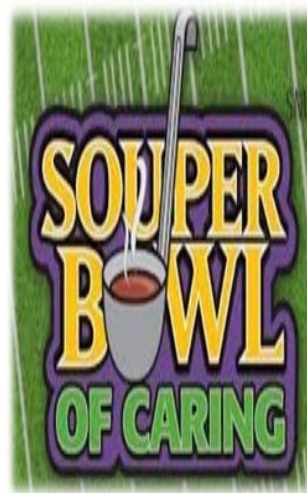


All are invited to participate in Union's
Easter Handbell Choir.

No Experience Necessary.

If interested, please sign-up on the
soundboard or contact the office by
email: Office @unionucc.net.

THANK YOU CHURCH FAMILY



Thank you for all
the cans donated
this past Sunday!
~ M&O Team



NEWSLETTER

It's almost that time again, just a reminder to submit
your ministry's articles/updates for the March newsletter
by **Friday, February 28th**. Send them to
zaida@unionucc.net.

Thank you.

**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
5088 SUMMIT BLVD, WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33415**

Ministers of the Church

All of Us

Pastor

Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey

Music Director

Donya Lane

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unionucc.net

Florida Conference, UCC

www.uccfla.org

National UCC:

www.ucc.org

Office Phone: 561-686-0330 - please leave a message.

Go to www.unionucc.net to see more of our news.

Office Hours are: Tuesday thru Friday from 9:00AM – 1:00 PM.

THIS WEEK AT UNION UCC

Sunday, February 16, 2025

10:00 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

11:15 AM Valentine's Fellowship - All are welcome!

11:45 AM Deacon's Meeting



Tuesday - Friday - Prayer Room is Available

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM Open during office hours!

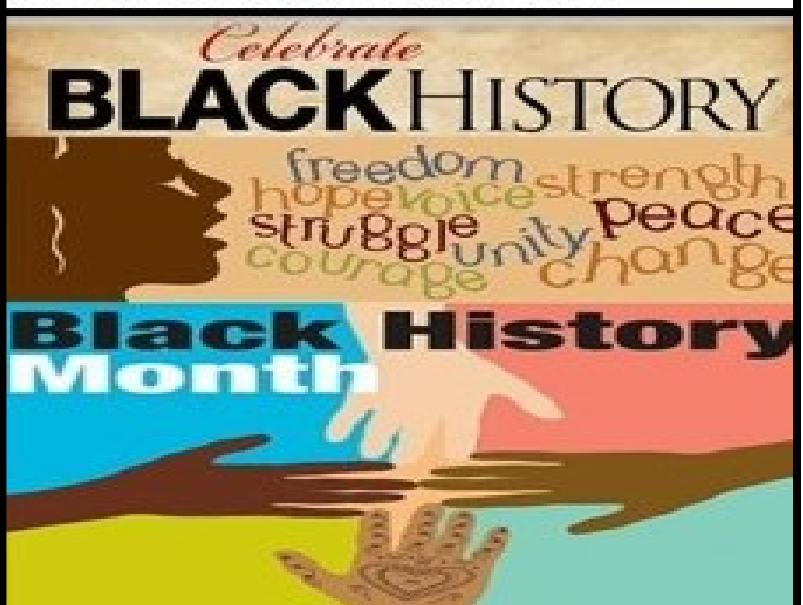
Sunday, February 23, 2025

10:00 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

11:15 AM Black History Month Fellowship - All are welcome!



Next Sunday, February 23, 2025, we will Celebrate Black History Month during our Fellowship Hour.



SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

February 16, 2025

Luke 6:17-26

Surprising Teaching

All Johanna ever wanted was a home in the woods with a pond where she could sit and watch the sun glisten on the water as she wrote poetry.

She got the home — and the pond. And poetry of praises for God's blessings in her life flowed from her heart onto paper. Praises for God binding her broken heart after losing her fiancé to cancer. Thanks for God giving her courage in her own cancer diagnosis. Gratitude for God making a way for her, after many starts and stops, to finally finish seminary and be ordained in the Episcopal Church — at the age of 60.

So much in awe of God's blessings in the storms of life, that Johanna lovingly named her pond "Beatitude Pond," after the "beatitudes" Jesus spoke about in what is his longest and most surprising teaching that we know as the Sermon on the Mount.

It is in this sermon that we are not only introduced to the Lord's Prayer, but we hear the teaching of the Beatitudes, which comes from the Latin word *beatus*, meaning "blessed" or "fortunate."

But Jesus' illustrations of what being blessed looked like was not what the crowd gathered that day on the mountainside expected to hear. Rather his disciples, curious onlookers — as well as many downtrodden and beleaguered families and individuals who knew intimately about hardships and struggles — were stunned to hear that those who were hungry, hated, poor and weeping, were among the blessed ones.

Blessed are you because God sees and hears and understands. Blessed are you because God is holding and redeeming you. Blessed are you who know that God is still with you amid life's trials because that very knowledge is what keeps a heart beating with hope.

To this day, the Sermon on the Mountain is considered one of the most important teachings of Jesus because of its emphasis on love, forgiveness and a hope beyond hope.

How are we defining blessedness in our lives? When counting our blessings, do we still find ourselves citing material things or achievements?

Johanna didn't. She knew blessings were not found in rainbows after a storm, but in the storm clouds themselves. And on a February day, with the strengthening sun melting the ice on her beloved Beatitude Pond, Johanna's blessedness was made complete.

Her ashes were sprinkled in the very spot where she wrote her poetry of praise to a God who always whispered to her amid the trials in her life, "Blessed are you."

Compassionate God, we praise You for always guiding, strengthening and protecting us. Help us to redefine what blessedness means in our lives. May the blessings we count be the very ones in which we finally recognize Your love and grace among us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.