

A composite image featuring a large, open hand. The palm and fingers are dark, while the palm is filled with a map of the Earth, showing continents in various colors like green, yellow, and red. The hand is set against a background of a bright, hazy sky with soft clouds. The word "Imagine" is written in a white, cursive script across the middle of the hand.

*Imagine*



# 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 FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**May 18, 2025**

*\*Please stand as you are able.*

*This service is livestreaming. Thank you. ♥*

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### **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**

*"This Is the Day"*

#### **THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

*Words of Welcome & Announcements*

#### **INTROIT**

*"You are Welcome Here"*

**Refrain:**     **You are welcome here, no matter who you are, no matter where  
you are on life's journey You are welcome here, no matter who  
you are, come and join with us, we're united in the church of  
Christ.**

**Come now all people join in the song, come be a part of the family of God.  
We are God's people and you belong, share in the joy of Christ. *Refrain***

**We pray for justice; we pray for peace; we hear the word of the Savior of all.  
We find God's mercy; we find release, sharing the joy of Christ. *Refrain***

*\*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:** Imagine a place where all are welcome

**All:**    **and everyone hears the sound of their name.**

**One:** Imagine everyone having enough food and water

**All:**    **and a home free of hatred and fear.**

**One:** Imagine a place where creativity is valued

**All: and the spirit is nurtured in love.**

One: Imagine, just imagine this is that place.

**All: With one voice, one joy, one faith, one love we worship God together.**

## **INVOCATION**

Christ is with us!

**Christ is in our midst!**

**We praise you, O God, for the gift of creation and the surprise of re-creation. Open our eyes to see new things. Open our minds to think fresh thoughts. Open our communities to welcome new partners. Open our spirits to follow your Spirit. Amen.**

## **\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

## **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**

“I Surrender All”

**All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live.**

**Refrain: I surrender all, I surrender all. All to Thee, my blessed Savior,  
I surrender all.**

**All to Jesus I surrender, Lord, I give myself to Thee; Fill me with Thy love and  
power, Let Thy blessing fall on me. (Refrain)**

## **OFFERTORY**

“Since Jesus Came Into My Heart”

**\*DOXOLOGY** (*Deacons Joanna & Isaac 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

### Psalm 148

**Response: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!**

Praise God! Praise God from the heavens;  
**praise God in the heights!**  
Praise God, all you angels of God;  
**praise God, all you host of heaven!**  
Praise God, you sun and moon;  
**praise God, all you shining stars!**  
Praise God, you highest heavens,  
**and you waters above the heavens!**

**Response: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!**

Let them praise the name of God,  
**for God commanded and they were created.**  
God established them forever and ever;  
**God fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.**  
Praise God from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,  
**fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling God's command!**  
Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!  
**Beast of the forest and all cattle, crawling things and flying birds!**

**Response: Praise God from the heavens, praise God in the heights!**

Rulers of the earth and all peoples,  
**nobles and all leaders of the earth!**  
Young men and women alike,  
**old and young together!**  
Let them praise the name of the Sovereign,  
**whose name alone is exalted; whose glory is above earth and heaven.**  
God has raised up a horn for the people, and praise for all the faithful,  
**for the people of Israel who are close to God. Praise be to God! "**

**Response: Praise God from the heavens, praise god in the heights!**

### Acts 11:1-18

The news traveled fast and in no time the leaders and friends back in Jerusalem heard about it—heard that the non-Jewish “outsiders” were now “in.” When Peter got back to Jerusalem, some of his old associates, concerned about circumcision, called him on the carpet: “What do you think you’re doing rubbing shoulders with that crowd, eating what is prohibited and ruining our good name?” So Peter, starting from the beginning, laid it out for them step-by-step: “Recently I was in the town of Joppa praying. I fell into

a trance and saw a vision: Something like a huge blanket, lowered by ropes at its four corners, came down out of heaven and settled on the ground in front of me. Milling around on the blanket were farm animals, wild animals, reptiles, birds—you name it, it was there. Fascinated, I took it all in.

“Then I heard a voice: ‘Go to it, Peter—kill and eat.’ I said, ‘Oh, no, Master. I’ve never so much as tasted food that wasn’t kosher.’ The voice spoke again: ‘If God says it’s okay, it’s okay.’ This happened three times, and then the blanket was pulled back up into the sky. “Just then three men showed up at the house where I was staying, sent from Caesarea to get me. The Spirit told me to go with them, no questions asked. So I went with them, I and six friends, to the man who had sent for me. He told us how he had seen an angel right in his own house, real as his next-door neighbor, saying, ‘Send to Joppa and get Simon, the one they call Peter. He’ll tell you something that will save your life—in fact, you and everyone you care for.’ “So I started in, talking. Before I’d spoken half a dozen sentences, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as he did on us the first time. I remembered Jesus’ words: ‘John baptized with water; you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ So I ask you: If God gave the same exact gift to them as to us when we believed in the Master Jesus Christ, how could I object to God?”

Hearing it all laid out like that, they quieted down. And then, as it sank in, they started praising God. “It’s really happened! God has broken through to the other nations, opened them up to Life!”

***Thanks be to God!***

**SONG OF PREPARATION**

“Clap Your Hands”

Arr. Patti Drennan  
Tom & Pastor Sheila

**SERMON**

“Imagine”

Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey

**\*CLOSING HYMN**

“They’ll Know We are Christians”

**\*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

**POSTLUDE**

“Imagine”

Arr. John Lennon

***DEPART TO SERVE***



### **NEWSLETTER REMINDER**

Don't forget to submit any articles/news/pictures and/or announcements for the June/July Newsletter by Tuesday, May 27th. Please send them email to [zaida@unionucc.net](mailto:zaida@unionucc.net). Thank you!



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**

Louise Dempster, Vanessa Nuñez

**Deacon Assisting**

Vanessa Nuñez

## Union's Joys & Prayer Concerns

**Joys:** All Birthdays in May! Our Church Family! Live Streaming! Fifth Sunday of Easter!

### Concerns:

Lynn McNaughton; Ariel Hines; Lynn McNaughton's cousin, Cade; Joanna Hollis's family friend, Gavin Weiss; Linda Padmore's daughter, Jeannine; Linda Harvey; Susan Young's sister, Genie; Kirk Dorhout; Evelyn Chouris; Charlotte Snowden; Renna McGinnis; Beth White's family & friends; Frank Byrd's family & friends; Melanie Shepherd; Ada Harvey and family; Charlene Buck; Linda Padmore's niece, Yvette & sister, Christine; Bonnie Avery's family member, Greg; Rosemarie Lightfoots's sister, Anita; Charlie Rodriguez's family and friends; Beth White; Louise's friend, Martha; 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; Attack on DEI; Medicaid & Food Assistance Programs



Flowers today are in honor of my  
40th birthday, a great milestone in my life!  
*Venessa Nuñez.*



### Sunday School Highlight

How do we get better at being inclusive? We'll look at an experience of Peter's. It is a dream, really. How can we make the dream of love and inclusivity a reality everywhere? Let's brainstorm together what we are doing and what we might do! Join us in Sunday School!



# God of Grace and God of Glory

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Harry Emerson Fosdick, 1930; alt.

1 God of grace and God of glo - ry, on your peo - ple  
 2 From the e - vils that sur - round us and as - sail the  
 3 Cure your chil - dren's war - ring mad - ness; bend our pride to  
 4 Set our feet on loft - y plac - es; gird our lives that  
 5 Save us from weak res - ig - na - tion to the e - vils

pour your power; crown your an - cient church - 's sto - ry;  
 Sav - ior's ways, from the fears that long have bound us—  
 your con - trol. Shame our reck - less, self - ish glad - ness,  
 they may be ar - mored with all Christ - like grac - es,  
 we de - plore; let the search for your sal - va - tion

bring its bud to glo - rious flower. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 free our hearts for faith and praise. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 rich in things and poor in soul. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 in the fight to set us free. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,  
 be our glo - ry ev - er - more. Grant us wis - dom, grant us cour - age,

for the fac - ing of this hour, for the fac - ing of this hour.  
 for the liv - ing of these days, for the liv - ing of these days.  
 make our bro - ken spir - its whole, make our bro - ken spir - its whole.  
 in the quest for lib - er - 'ty, in the quest for lib - er - ty.  
 serv - ing you whom we a - dore, serv - ing you whom we a - dore.

# Since Jesus Came into My Heart 503

*If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17*



1. What a won - der - ful change in my life has been wrought Since Je - sus came
2. I have ceased from my wan - d'ring and go - ing a - stray Since Je - sus came
3. I shall go there to dwell in that cit - y, I know, Since Je - sus came



in - to my heart! I have light in my soul for which long I had sought,  
in - to my heart! And my sins, which were man - y, are all washed a - way,  
in - to my heart! And I'm hap - py, so hap - py, as on - ward I go,



Since Je - sus came in - to my heart!  
Since Je - sus came in - to my heart! Since Je - sus came in - to my  
Since Je - sus came in - to my heart!



heart, Since Je - sus came in - to my heart, Floods of joy o'er my



soul like the sea bil - lows roll, Since Je - sus came in - to my heart.





# 429 They'll Know We Are Christians

*By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another. John 13:35*

*Unison*

1. We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord.  
2. We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand.  
3. We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side.  
4. All praise to the Fa - ther, from whom all things come.

We are one in the Spir - it; we are one in the Lord.  
We will walk with each oth - er; we will walk hand in hand.  
We will work with each oth - er; we will work side by side.  
And all praise to Christ Je - sus, His on - ly Son.

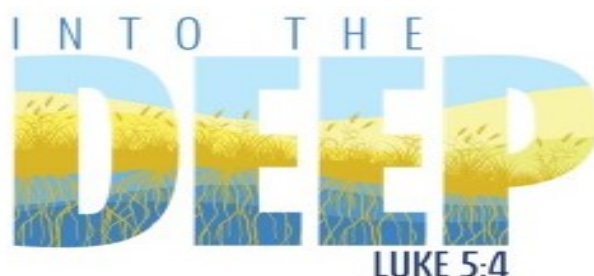
And we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored.  
And to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land.  
And we'll guard each one's dig - ni - ty and save each one's pride.  
And all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one.

*Refrain*

And they'll know we are Chris - tians by our love, by our love.

Yes, they'll know we are Chris - tians by our love.

Save the Dates: June 21-22, 2025!



If interested, please sign-up or contact  
the office via  
email: [zaida@unionucc.net](mailto:zaida@unionucc.net).  
Details coming soon!



## Summer Handbell Choir

Kids, Teens, & Adults

All are invited to participate in Union's  
Handbell Choir during the summer  
months of July and August.

No Experience Necessary.

Tom Richards will be our Handbell  
Director.

If interested, please sign-up or contact  
the office via

email: [zaida@unionucc.net](mailto:zaida@unionucc.net).



## SUMMER Praise ENSEMBLE

Kids, Teens, & Adults

All are invited to participate in Union's  
Summer Praise ensemble  
during the summer months.

If interested, please sign-up or contact the  
office via

email: [zaida@unionucc.net](mailto:zaida@unionucc.net).



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

Go to [www.unionucc.net](http://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, May 18, 2025**

**10:00 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming**

**11:15 AM Fellowship - All are welcome!**

**11:45 AM Council Meeting**

**Sunday, May 25, 2025**

**10:00 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming**

**11:15 AM Fellowship - All are welcome!**



**THANK YOU TO ALL  
WHO HELPED MAKE  
“TEA TIME” WITH UNION’S  
MOTHERS A GREAT  
SUCCESS!!**



THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HELPED  
**CELEBRATE UNION’S STUDENTS!!**  
WE’RE SO PROUD OF OUR KIDS!!



## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

May 18, 2025

Revelation 21:1-6

### Imagine

There's a magical place in New Jersey where children have been letting their imaginations run wild since 1954. It's called the Land of Make Believe and, just as its name says, it invites children to literally step into the nursery rhymes read to them at bedtime. There are the homes of the three little pigs to run through and the old lady's shoe — the one with so many children she didn't know what to do — to slide down from.

For years it was thought that as we grew older, we no longer visited these lands of make believe. It was thought our ability to imagine faded with each passing year. Researchers from Kent University in England proved otherwise as a recent study among 470 people between 4 and 81, showed that adult imagination was not only as vivid as a child's but became more vivid with age.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could right now play in our own lands of make believe? Wouldn't it be even better to enter God's land of belief that John is inviting us to do this day?

The beloved friend of Jesus writes to us from his seclusion on the Greek island of Patmos. It is there in a dank cave where he penned the visions he received that would later become The Book of Revelation. And one such revelation calls for us to revisit the promise that God will indeed make all things new — a promise echoed all throughout scripture.

Today, we are being called to imagine a new heaven and a new earth for the former ones have passed away. This new heaven and earth don't necessarily mean that the current ones have been destroyed and something different has emerged. Rather the ancient Greek word for "new" — *kaine* — means "new in character" or "fresh." John is talking not about the next heaven and earth, but rather a better heaven and earth.

Let's now imagine together what this "better" might look like, especially for our earth today? Close your eyes. What do you see? How would you characterize this better earth? And more importantly, how is God asking you to be a pivotal player in making this better earth a reality rather than make believe?

Imagination is a wonderful thing for all ages — and it can be a powerful spiritual practice to engage in daily. For who wouldn't want to step into a place where God is making all things new, where death and crying and pain are no more? Let our imagining become the prayer portal for making this possible.

*God of new beginnings, help us to look beyond the realities of this world and toward a better heaven and a better earth, where all Your children are fed, loved and safe. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*