

Surprising Prophets



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

COMMUNION SUNDAY

July 6, 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

"There's a Spirit of Love in This Place"

There's a spirit of love in this place, there's a spirit of love in this place. You can't see it, but it's there, just as precious as the air. There's a spirit of love in this place.

Refrain: O alleluia, sing alleluia! We bless your holy name.

O alleluia, sing alleluia! There's a spirit of love in this place.

There's a presence of peace in this room, there's the presence of peace in this room. In God's tenderness is found peace that passes human bounds. There's the presence of peace in this room. Refrain

Greeting One Another

***No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome 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: Moses said to God, "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue..."

All: but God sent him anyway.

One: Jeremiah said, "I am just a boy..."

All: but God spoke through him anyway.

One: Mary was perplexed by the angel's visit,

All: but God still invited her to give birth to Jesus.

One: God invites us to understand that we have gifts and we are needed: whether old or young; tired or energetic; quick or slow. Whoever we are, however we are,

All: we hear your call, O God. We have come.

INVOCATION

Christ is with us!

Christ is in our midst!

Holy One we come to you, for we need healing. We come to you, for we need teaching. We come to you, for we need leading. As we gather; as we sing; as we pray; as we listen; as we speak: May we open ourselves to your balm, your blessing, your word. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

"How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies"

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

"This is My Song"

Tom Richards,
Soloist

This is my song, O God of all the nations, A song of peace for lands afar and mine. This is my home, the country where my heart is; Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; But other hearts in other lands are beating With hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

OFFERTORY MOMENT

"What a Mighty God We Serve"

What a mighty God we serve, what a mighty God we serve, angels bow before You, heaven and earth adore You. What a mighty God we serve.

What a mighty God, You are! What a mighty God You are! Angels bow before You, heaven and earth adore You. What a mighty God, you are.

Angels bow before You, heaven and earth adore you, angels bow before You, heaven and earth adore You, what a mighty God we serve.

***DOXOLOGY** (*Deacons Vanessa & 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

2 Kings 5:1-14

Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, "If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy." So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. And the king of Aram said, "Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel."

He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, "When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy." When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me."

But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel." So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean." But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, "I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?" He turned and went away in a rage. But his servants approached and said to him, "Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, 'Wash, and be clean'?" So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

Psalm 30

I will extol you, O God, for you have drawn me up,

and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

O God my God, I cried to you for help,

and you have healed me.

O God, you brought up my soul from Sheol,

restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.

Sing praises to God, O you God's faithful ones,

and give thanks to God's holy name.

For God's anger is but for a moment; God's favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

As for me, I said in my prosperity,

"I shall never be moved."

By your favor, O God, you had established me as a strong mountain;

you hid your face; I was dismayed.

To you, O God, I cried,

and to you I made supplication:

"What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit?

Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?

"Hear, O God, and be gracious to me!

O God, be my helper!"

You have turned my mourning into dancing;

you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O God my God, I will give thanks to you forever.

Galatians 6:1-16

Live creatively, friends. If someone falls into sin, forgivingly restore him, saving your critical comments for yourself. *You* might be needing forgiveness before the day's out. Stoop down and reach out to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law. If you think you are too good for that, you are badly deceived.

Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life.

⁶ Be very sure now, you who have been trained to a self-sufficient maturity, that you enter into a generous common life with those who have trained you, sharing all the good things that you have and experience.

Don't be misled: No one makes a fool of God. What a person plants, he will harvest. The person who plants selfishness, ignoring the needs of others—ignoring God!—harvests a crop of weeds. All he'll have to show for his life is weeds! But the one who plants in response to God, letting God's Spirit do the growth work in him, harvests a crop of real life, eternal life. So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit. Right now,

therefore, every time we get the chance, let us work for the benefit of all, starting with the people closest to us in the community of faith.

Now, in these last sentences, I want to emphasize in the bold scrawls of my personal handwriting the immense importance of what I have written to you. These people who are attempting to force the ways of circumcision on you have only one motive: They want an easy way to look good before others, lacking the courage to live by a faith that shares Christ's suffering and death. All their talk about the law is gas.

They *themselves* don't keep the law! And they are highly selective in the laws they *do* observe. They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast of their success in recruiting you to their side. That is contemptible!

For my part, I am going to boast about nothing but the Cross of our Master, Jesus Christ. Because of that Cross, I have been crucified in relation to the world, set free from the stifling atmosphere of pleasing others and fitting into the little patterns that they dictate. Can't you see the central issue in all this? It is not what you and I do—submit to circumcision, reject circumcision. It is what *God* is doing, and he is creating something totally new, a free life! All who walk by this standard are the true Israel of God—his chosen people. Peace and mercy on them!

Thanks be to God!

SONG OF PREPARATION

"My Eye Have Seen the Glory"

SERMON

"Surprising Prophets"

Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you,

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

The gifts of creation are on the table.

The dreams of God are set before us.

Let us give thanks for God's gifts.

At all times, great God, may our grateful hearts give you praise.

Pastor: We remember Jesus – born of Mary, Joseph and God – who was born in Bethlehem and who grew up in Nazareth.

All: We remember that he was a son and a brother, a worker and a friend.

Pastor: We remember Jesus gathered disciples and taught them about a way of peace and justice, of love and blessing.

All: He called it the Kingdom of God.

Pastor: We remember Jesus gathered his friends in an upper room and asked them to love one another as he had loved them. We remember that Jesus said, "Every time you take the bread and break it and every time you bless the cup and drink from it, you are to remember me."



All: Every time we eat and drink in Jesus' name, He is present with us and we are indeed one body! As many as we are, we are one in Christ.

Pastor: Now remembering the events of the last week of Jesus' life – how he entered into Jerusalem in great joy and how he left carrying a cross– we take our place at the table of the Lord's Supper to bear his sorrows and pledge ourselves to love and serve him. Pour out your Spirit, God, on these gifts of bread and wine that they may signify for us the body and blood of Jesus Christ – our teacher, our friend, and our Savior. May Christ's loving spirit work through us to serve and renew the world God loves.

All: All glory and honor is yours, God most holy, now and forever. Amen.

THE SHARING OF THE ELEMENTS

COMMUNION HYMN "Let Us Break Bread Together"

Let us break bread together on our knees; let us break bread together on our knees.

**Refrain: When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun, My God,
have mercy on me.**

**Let us drink wine together on our knees; let us drink wine together on our knees.
R**

Let us praise God together on our knees; let us praise God together on our knees. R

ALLELUIA

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia**

***CLOSING HYMN** "They'll Know We are Christians By Our Love"

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

**Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me;
let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.**

With God our creator, children all are we.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.

With every step I take, may this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

DEPART TO SERVE



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

Rev. Michael-Ann Veziroglu, Joanna Hollis, Tom Richards

Deacon Assisting

George Gerson

Union's Joys & Prayer Concerns

Joys: All Birthdays in July! Our Church Family! Live Streaming! Communion Sunday!

Concerns:

Rod Jennings's family & friends; Linda Padmore's sister; Jane Grandusky's husband, Mark; Bonnie Avery's family members, Greg & Nancy Avery; Teresa Byrd; Lynn McNaughton's mom and cousin, Cade; 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; Rosemarie Lightfoots's sister, Anita; 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



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.

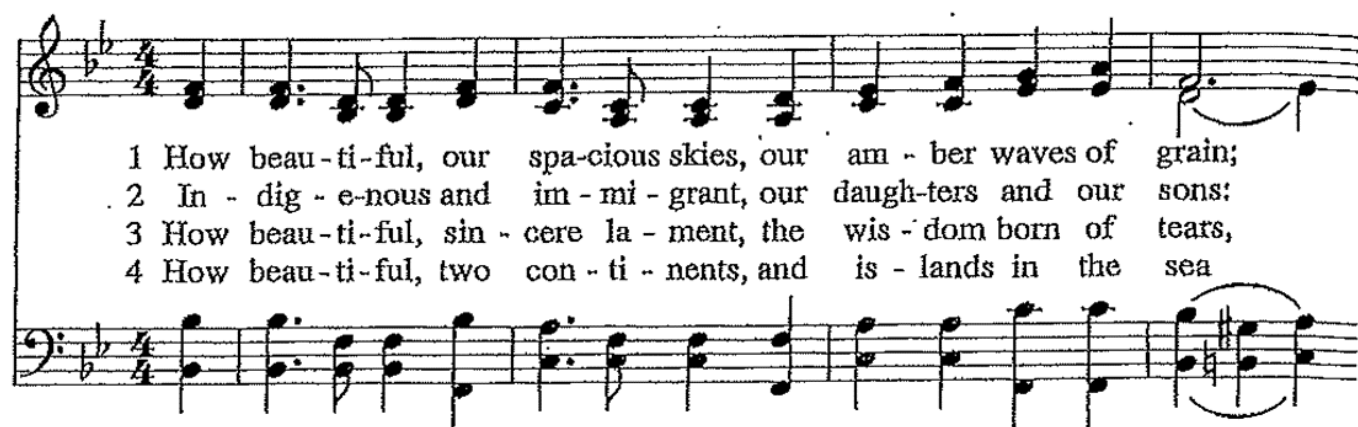
Sunday School Highlight

How do we follow in Jesus' footsteps? Come join us in Sunday School as we hear what Jesus invited his disciples to do, and as we figure out what we can do. There are so many ways to share God's love with those around us, and we those who are far away. Let's explore about those who do this work already and what we can learn from them!

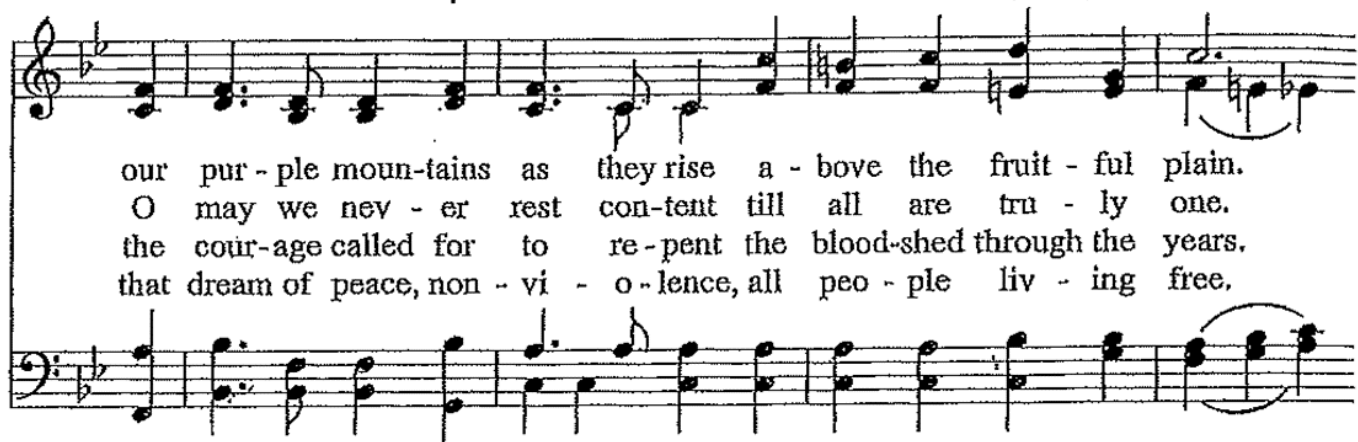


How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies

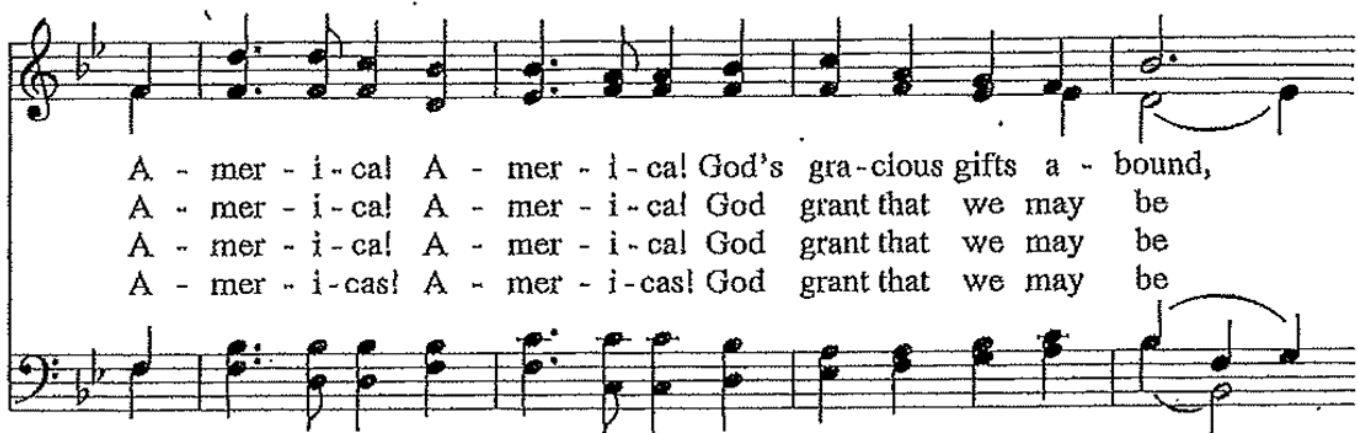
*St. 1, Katharine Lee Bates, 1893; alt.
St. 2, 3, 4, Miriam Therese Winter, 1993*



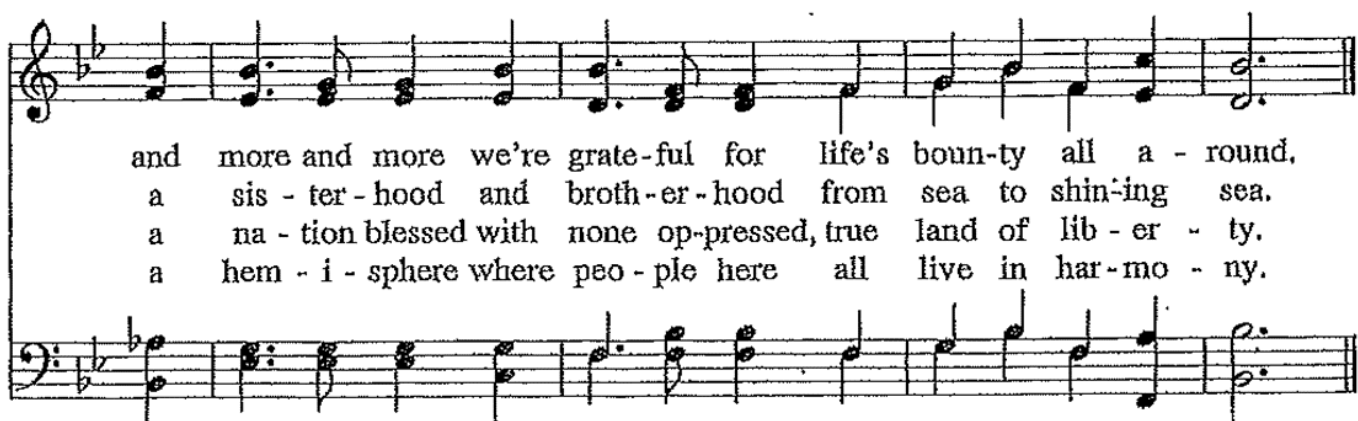
1 How beau-ti-ful, our spa-cious skies, our am-ber waves of grain;
2 In-dig-e-nous and im-mi-grant, our daugh-ters and our sons:
3 How beau-ti-ful, sin-cere la-ment, the wis-dom born of tears,
4 How beau-ti-ful, two con-ti-nents, and is-lands in the sea



our pur-ple moun-tains as they rise a-bove the fruit-ful plain.
O may we nev-er rest con-tent till all are tru-ly one.
the cour-age called for to re-pent the blood-shed through the years.
that dream of peace, non-vi-o-lence, all peo-ple liv-ing free.



A-mer-i-cal A-mer-i-cal God's gra-cious gifts a-bound,
A-mer-i-cal A-mer-i-cal God grant that we may be
A-mer-i-cal A-mer-i-cal God grant that we may be
A-mer-i-cas! A-mer-i-cas! God grant that we may be



and more and more we're grate-ful for life's boun-ty all a-round,
a sis-ter-hood and broth-er-hood from sea to shin-ing sea.
a na-tion blessed with none op-pressed, true land of lib-er-ty.
a hem-i-sphere where peo-ple here all live in har-mo-ny.

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

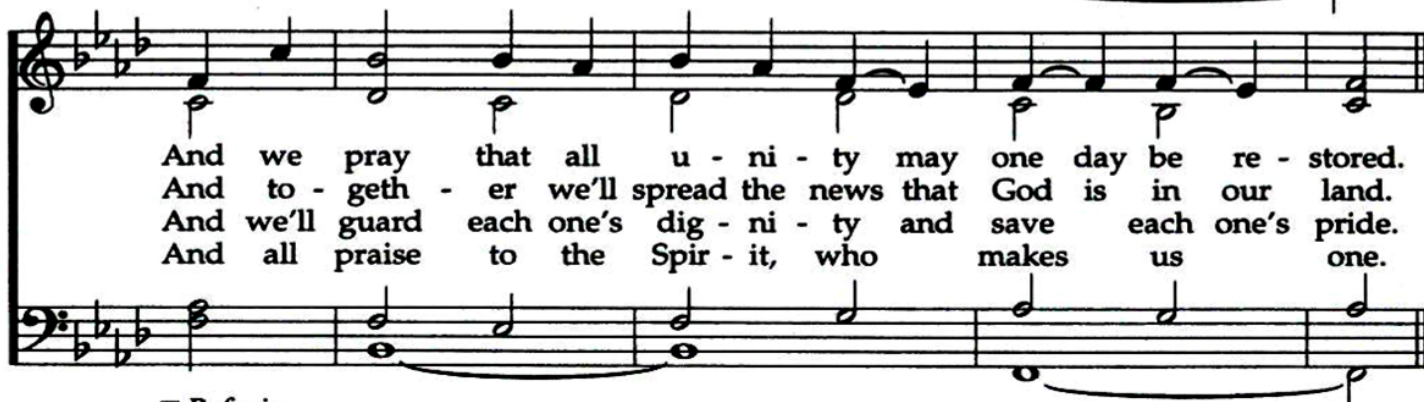
Unison



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.

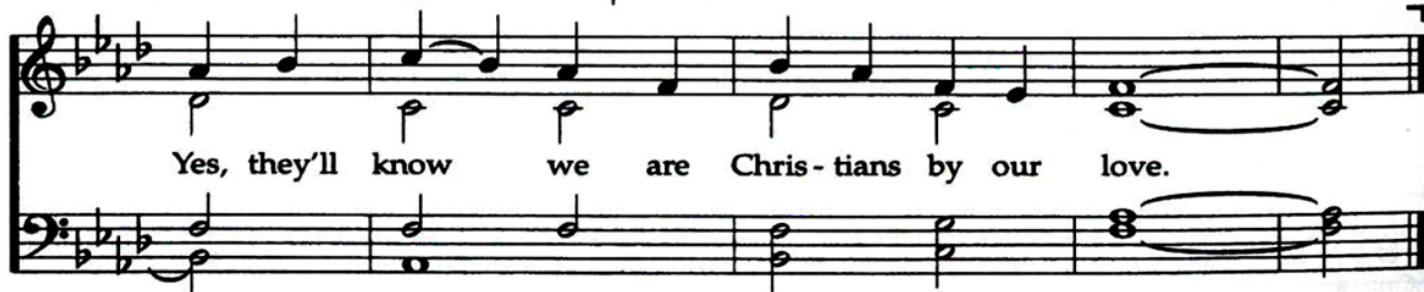


And we pray that all u - ni - ty may one day be re - stored.
 And to - geth - er we'll spread the news that God is in our land.
 And we'll guard each one's dig - ni - ty and save each one's pride.
 And all praise to the Spir - it, who makes us one.

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.

UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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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, July 6, 2025 Communion Sunday!

10:00 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

11:15 AM Fellowship - All are welcome!

11:45 AM Justice & Peace Meeting

Tuesday - Friday – The Sanctuary is Available for Prayer!

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

Sunday, July 13, 2025

10:00 AM Worship – Facebook Live Streaming

11:15 AM Fellowship - All are welcome!



Union's Yard Sale

Yard Sale on Saturday, July 26, 2025

Church yard **8 AM – 4 PM**



Sign up sheet on the sound board for
Council's Yard Sale & Summer Church
Cleaning-Clearing away unneeded items.
Collection will begin, Sunday, July 20th.



Summer Hymn Sing

ALL ARE INVITED

Sunday, August 10, 2025

Join us for Union's Summer Hymn Sing.
Share your favorite Hymns or Songs by
placing them on the soundboard.

If you have any questions, please contact
the Church office via
email: zaida@unionucc.net.



July 6, 2025

2 Kings 5:1-14

Surprising Prophets

Do you know someone who is an overthinker, complicating life with their if's, and's or but's? Perhaps you know someone who can take the easiest tasks and turn them into trying ordeals. Do I even dare ask if you could be that person?

If so, you are not alone. Many people overthink, which ultimately leads to unnecessary worry. I'll admit that I'm one of those people who does both — overthinks and overcomplicates. I'm not sure why I do that? Maybe because it's hard to let ourselves truly believe that faith in God can move the mountains that we create out of life's mole hills. And maybe, just maybe, we can't allow ourselves to believe in a mountain-moving God because that belief requires us to give up the façade that we're in control.

Let me introduce you to Naaman, an overthinker standing in the need of more faith — and healing. The celebrated army commander of the King of Syria, whose name in Hebrew translates into “pleasant and beautiful,” is anything but. He is suffering from a skin affliction, most likely leprosy, which carries with it the societal stigma of being unclean.

But when Naaman hears that Elisha, the prophet of Israel, can heal him, he seeks him out. The visit doesn't go well. Naaman becomes furious with the seemingly dismissive way the prophet speaks to him. How dare this lowly servant of God tell a prominent army commander to simply jump into the Jordan River and bathe. Not only does Naaman have more impressive rivers back home, but healing leprosy cannot be as easy as washing.

Naaman turns to leave in a huff, but his servants convince him to listen to the prophet's surprising remedy. One even makes the very convincing point that if the instructions were complicated, would Naaman be quick to follow through? Perhaps it's time for Naaman to check his ego and stop overthinking the mysterious ways that God works.

He gives in, washes himself as instructed by Elisha, and voila — his skin is healed.

More times than not, we are like Naaman, seeking healing and answers to life's questions but then not trusting the surprising ways God leads us to healing.

What if we decided to finally trust God this day? What if we stopped making things harder for ourselves by overthinking and overcomplicating life? Could wholeness and restoration be as simple as crying out to God, “I believe, now help my unbelief.” We won't know until we try.

Healing God, we stand before You today in need of Your gentle touch. Restore us to wholeness. Increase our faith and help us to stop overthinking and overcomplicating the life You have blessed us with. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)