

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers spread, showing vibrant, multi-colored paint (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple) smeared across the fingertips and palms. The background is dark and out of focus. Overlaid on the center of the image is the text "OPEN TABLE" in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# OPEN TABLE



**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**

**August 31, 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** "Come, Thou Fount Of Every Blessing" Arr. Shirley Norwood

**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**

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: We who have risen to embrace this day,

**All: we who are weary in body and spirit, all are welcome in this sacred place.**

One: We who know the abundance of life,

**All: we who are left impoverished by harsh realities, all receive a sustaining measure of God's love.**

One: We who are strong in mind and soul,

**All: we who are challenged by illnesses of many kinds, all are whole in the Spirit of God.**

One: We who have a voice and the strength to use it,

**All: we who whisper prayers in our hearts,**

One: all are invited to worship God, whom we love.

**All: Come, for you have a place of honor in the heart of God.**

## **INVOCATION**

Christ is with us!

**Christ is in our midst!**

**We give you thanks, Gracious God, that you invite us and all people into your presence, to feast at your table, to share together as equals, and to welcome one another. Keep us ever mindful that by your grace, we are welcomed here. May we never do anything to suggest that anyone of your children is any less worthy of your grace. Amen.**

## **\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

"Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You"

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

**Sharing Joys and Concerns**

### **A Prayer for Labor Day Sunday**

**O God, We gather on this Labor Day Sunday to give thanks for the blessing of work. We pray for all workers, those who are seeking work, and those unable to work to receive the support they need. Help us to use the fruits of our labor not just for our own good, but for the good of our neighbors and all your creation. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

***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

"10,000 Reasons"

**Bless the Lord, oh, my soul, oh, my soul. Worship His holy name.  
Sing like never before, oh my soul. I worship Your holy name.  
(Repeat)**

## OFFERTORY

"Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"

**\*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

### **Jeremiah 2:4-13**

Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, and all the families of the house of Israel. Thus says the LORD: What wrong did your ancestors find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthless things, and became worthless themselves? They did not say, "Where is the LORD who brought us up from the land of Egypt, who led us in the wilderness, in a land of deserts and pits, in a land of drought and deep darkness, in a land that no one passes through, where no one lives?" I brought you into a plentiful land to eat its fruits and its good things. But when you entered you defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. The priests did not say, "Where is the LORD?" Those who handle the law did not know me; the rulers transgressed against me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and went after things that do not profit.

Therefore once more I accuse you, says the LORD, and I accuse your children's children. Cross to the coasts of Cyprus and look, send to Kedar and examine with care; see if there has ever been such a thing. Has a nation changed its gods, even though they are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for something that does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, be shocked, be utterly desolate, says the LORD, for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water.

### **Psalms 81:1, 10-16**

Sing aloud to God our strength;

**shout for joy to the God of Jacob.**

"I am the Sovereign your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

**"Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.**



"But my people did not listen to my voice;  
**Israel would not submit to me.**  
 "So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts,  
**to follow their own counsels.**  
 "O that my people would listen to me,  
**that Israel would walk in my ways!**  
 "Then I would quickly subdue their enemies,  
**and turn my hand against their foes.**  
 "Those who hate God would cringe before God,  
**and their doom would last forever.**  
 "I would feed you with the finest of the wheat,  
**and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."**

### **Luke 14:1, 7-14**

One time when Jesus went for a Sabbath meal with one of the top leaders of the Pharisees, all the guests had their eyes on him, watching his every move.

He went on to tell a story to the guests around the table. Noticing how each had tried to elbow into the place of honor, he said, "When someone invites you to dinner, don't take the place of honor. Somebody more important than you might have been invited by the host. Then he'll come and call out in front of everybody, 'You're in the wrong place. The place of honor belongs to this man.' Red-faced, you'll have to make your way to the very last table, the only place left. "When you're invited to dinner, go and sit at the last place. Then when the host comes he may very well say, 'Friend, come up to the front.' That will give the dinner guests something to talk about! What I'm saying is, If you walk around with your nose in the air, you're going to end up flat on your face. But if you're content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself." Then he turned to the host. "The next time you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends and family and rich neighbors, the kind of people who will return the favor. Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks. You'll be—and experience—a blessing. They won't be able to return the favor, but the favor will be returned—oh, how it will be returned!—at the resurrection of God's people."

This is the word of life.

***Thanks be to God!***

### **SONG OF PREPARATION**

"Halle, Halle, Halle"

Arr. Hal H. Hopson  
 Tom Richards & Pastor Sheila

### **SERMON**

"Open Table"

Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey

### **\*CLOSING HYMN**

"We'll Understand It Better By and By"

### **\*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

### **POSTLUDE**

"Let The Church Say Amen"

Arr. Shirley Norwood

***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**

Dorothy Bates, Louise Dempster, Joanna Hollis

**Deacon Assisting**

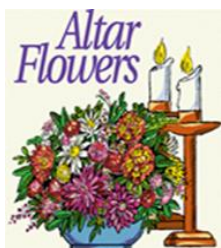
Joanna Hollis

## Union's Joys & Prayer Concerns

**Joys:** All Birthdays in August! Our Church Family! Live Streaming! Labor Day Sunday!

### Concerns:

Tom Richards's sister, Cindy Richards-Wallace & his friend, Jackie Sloan; Jan Mark; Ada Harvey's grandson, Grant; David Ramirez; Irv Koehler; Tom Richards; Linda Padmore's family & friends; Rod Jennings's family & friends; Marion Gaetano's family & friends; Jane Grandusky's husband, Mark; Bonnie Avery's family and friends; Teresa Byrd; Lin 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; 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; Palestinians; Hurricane victims; Wild fires; Immigrant families; Attack on DEI; Medicaid & Food Assistance Programs

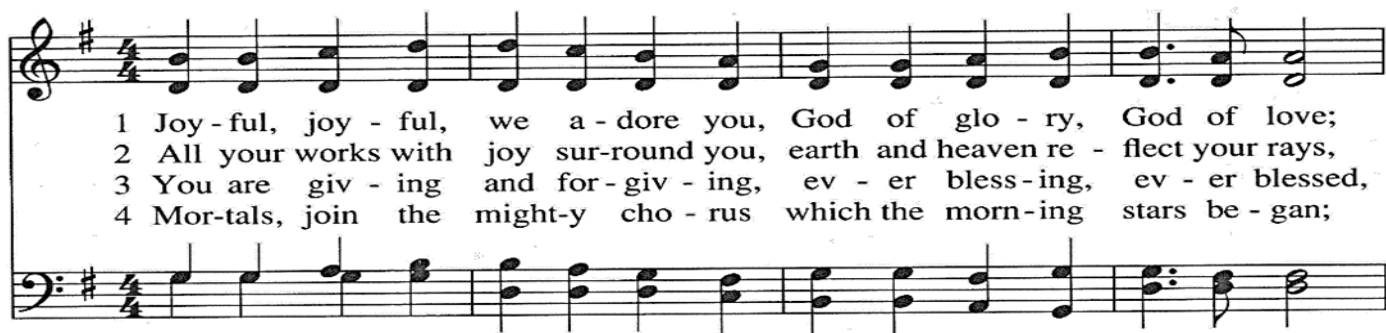


Every Sunday beautiful flowers adorn our altar. We have a flower chart for sign-ups. Also, you can call the office or send an email to [office@unionucc.net](mailto:office@unionucc.net). Garden flowers are \$10 and floral arrangements are \$40. As an added bonus you can list the flowers in the bulletin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

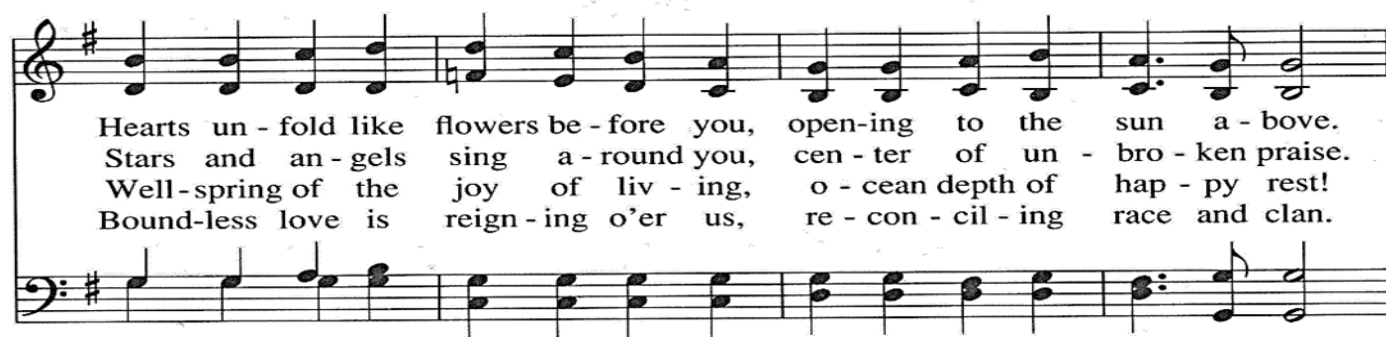
### Sunday School Highlight

God Loves Everyone!! We cannot hear these words too much! Join us in Sunday School as we hear a story that Jesus tells to help us remember these words. We'll talk about how we include people, make them feel welcome. We'll share times when we didn't feel welcomed and what we learned. Be welcomed in Sunday School, come and join us!!





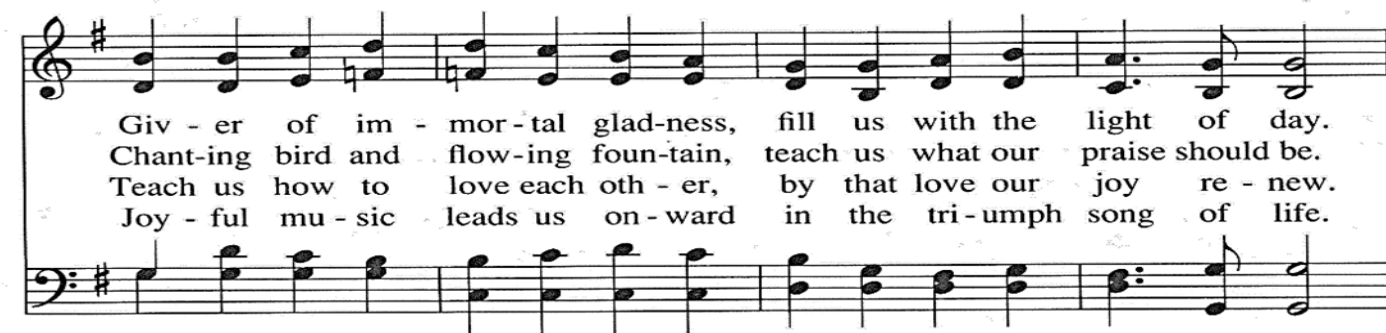
1 Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore you, God of glo - ry, God of love;  
 2 All your works with joy sur-round you, earth and heaven re - flect your rays,  
 3 You are giv - ing and for-giv - ing, ev - er bless-ing, ev - er blessed,  
 4 Mor-tals, join the might-y cho - rus which the morn-ing stars be - gan;



Hearts un - fold like flowers be - fore you, open-ing to the sun a - bove.  
 Stars and an - gels sing a - round you, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.  
 Well-spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean depth of hap - py rest!  
 Bound-less love is reign - ing o'er us, re - con - cil - ing race and clan.



Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness, drive the storms of doubt a - way;  
 Field and for - est, vale and moun-tain, flower-y mead-ow, flash-ing sea,  
 Lov-ing Spir - it, Fa - ther, Moth - er, all who love be - long to you;  
 Ev - er sing - ing, move we for - ward, faith - ful in the midst of strife,



Giv - er of im - mor-tal glad-ness, fill us with the light of day.  
 Chant-ing bird and flow-ing foun-tain, teach us what our praise should be.  
 Teach us how to love each oth - er, by that love our joy re - new.  
 Joy - ful mu - sic leads us on - ward in the tri-umph song of life.



### NEWSLETTER REMINDER

Don't forget to submit any articles/news/  
 pictures and/or announcements for the September  
 Newsletter by Tuesday, September 2, 2025. Please send  
 them email to: [zaida@unionucc.net](mailto:zaida@unionucc.net). Thank you!

# Lord, I Want To Be a Christian

454

*African-American spiritual**Deut. 6:5-6; 10:12-16*

1 Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart, in my heart;  
2 Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart, in my heart,  
3 Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart, in my heart;  
4 Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart, in my heart;

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart.

*Refrain*

In my heart, in my heart, in my heart,  
In my heart, in my heart, in my heart,

Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart.  
Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart.



# We Are Often Tossed and Driven

(We'll Understand It Better By and By)

Charles Albert Tindley, c. 1906; alt.

1 We are of - ten tossed and driven on the rest - less sea of time,  
 2 We are of - ten des - ti - tute of the things that life de - mands,  
 3 Tri - als harsh on ev - ery hand, and we can - not un - der - stand  
 4 Temp - ta - tions, hid - den snares of - ten take us un - a - wares,

Som - ber skies and howl - ing tem - pests oft suc - ceed a bright sun - shine;  
 Want of food and want of shel - ter, thirst - y hills and bar - ren lands;  
 All the ways that God would lead us to that bless - ed prom - ised land;  
 And our hearts are made to bleed for man - y a thought - less word or deed,

In that land of per - feet day, when the mists have rolled a - way,  
 In our God our trust's as - sured, and ac - cord - ing to the Word,  
 We are guid - ed by God's eye, and we'll fol - low till we die,  
 And we won - der, why the test, when we try to do our best,

*to Refrain*

We will un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.  
 We will un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.  
 For we'll un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.  
 But we'll un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by.

*Refrain*

By and by, when the morn - ing comes, when the saints of

God are gath - ered home, We'll tell the sto - ry

how we've o - ver - come! for we'll un - der - stand it bet - ter by and by. (by and by.)

### NEW MEMBER'S CLASS

We are inviting our friends to be part of the Union family.  
All who are interested in becoming a member of the church,  
please see Pastor Sheila or a Deacon.



THE FLORIDA CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
GEOGRAPHICAL AREA GATHERING

**~Ft. Lauderdale UCC~**  
**Saturday September 6, 2025**  
**10am - 3pm**  
**2501 NE 30<sup>th</sup> ST Fort Lauderdale, FL 33306**

*Imagining Possibilities*  
*Connect • Empower • Engage*

### PEACE VILLAGE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

October 7th



Sign-up for the Board of County Commissioners Meeting on October 7, 2025, when they will vote on whether to award funding towards the Peace Village Affordable Senior Housing Project.

### SAVE THE DATE

**September 7, 2025 @ Union**  
**Youth "PEACE" Talks and Pizza Party!**



**PEACE organizer, Megan, will engage  
with the Youth at Union on what it  
means to be a part of PEACE.**

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

Ministers of the Church  
Pastor  
Sunday School Teacher  
Guest Musician  
Vocalists

All of Us  
Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey  
Rev. Michael-Ann Veziroglu  
Shirley Norwood  
Tom Richards  
Michelle Benghttt  
Vanie Joseph  
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[www.uccfla.org](http://www.uccfla.org)

National UCC:

[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)

**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, August 31, 2025**

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

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

**Tuesday - Friday – The Sanctuary is Available for Prayer!**

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

**Saturday, September 6, 2025**

**10:00 AM - 3:00 PM The Florida Conference United Church Of Christ**

**Geographical Area Gathering**

**Ft. Lauderdale UCC, 2501 NE 30<sup>th</sup> St, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33306**

**Sunday, September 7, 2025 Communion Sunday**

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

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

**11:30 AM Youth “PEACE” Talks & Pizza Party!**





## 12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

August 31, 2025

Luke 14:1, 7-14

### Open Table

I have a friend who pastors a neighboring congregation who was hoping to use a generous gift left by a saint of the church to reconfigure the sanctuary seating.

She wanted to remove the wooden pews and buy moveable chairs, thus, opening space to set up banquet tables and invite the hungry in the community to an extravagant sit down dinner.

That didn't happen. The money went instead to repaving the church parking lot.

She asked the committee who made this decision if that was the best way to show hospitality to others? The committee thought so. And perhaps it was.

But if we explore the ancient meaning of hospitality, perhaps removable chairs allowing room to feed the hungry was a better choice than a coat of asphalt.

The word "hospitality," in the original Greek, is *philoxenos*, which means, "to love the stranger." In Middle Eastern culture it was considered a sacred duty to take responsibility for the stranger — to give them food and shelter. So true hospitality is more than opening church doors or paving a parking lot but opening our hearts to seeing the needs of others.

Jesus didn't see hospitality on display when he went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee. What he saw was guests clamoring for the good seats — the places of honor. And he called them out, telling them to be humble, adding, too, that around the table should be the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind.

In the book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*, Brennan Manning said that in the Near East, the shared table symbolizes the shared life. "Sadly," Manning writes, "the meaning of meal sharing is largely lost in the Christian community today."

What does hospitality look like in your life? Are the doors to your heart opened to the stranger who is hungry, cold and lonely?

My friend who failed in getting removable chairs in the sanctuary to create a banquet hall for the hungry in her community is now looking for another church to serve.

The one she served has a great parking lot, not a pothole to be found, but there are no longer cars parked there on a Sunday. The doors closed for good a few months ago.

*God, we hear Jesus' words that the first will be last and the last will be first, yet still we put our desire for recognition, prestige and comfort ahead of Your children who are pushed aside and overlooked. Open the doors to our hearts, so that true hospitality is lived in our communities. 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.)