



# Gathering Sunday September 14, 2025

## **UNITED CHURCH ON THE GREEN**

In the Heart of New Haven, Open to All Seekers  
An Open and Affirming Congregation of  
The United Church of Christ

In a world where Christianity is too often associated with intolerance, exclusion, and hate, the mission of United Church on the Green is to proclaim Christ through faith, hope, and love. We are a community of many races, ethnic backgrounds, religious experiences, ages, sexual orientations, and gender identities. No matter where you are on your journey of faith, you will have a home here at United Church on the Green.

September 14, 2025

10:00AM

Pentecost 14C

**We Gather as Church**

\*Please stand as you are able

**PRELUDE**

*Concerto for Two Oboes, op. 9/3*

Tomaso Albinoni

Olav van Hezewijk and Marta Boratgis, *oboes*

**WORDS OF WELCOME**

**PASTOR RAY**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

At God's table of justice, everyone has a place and none are turned away.

**Here strangers are welcomed as friends, the poor sit alongside the rich, and the upside-down kin-dom of God is revealed.**

At God's table of abundance, a banquet of righteousness and liberation is set for all.

**Here the powerless are heard; the outcast are showered with honor, and the inside-out kin-dom of God is revealed.**

At God's table of life, all peoples know peace and creation flourishes.

**Here the hopeless are nourished with possibility, the complacent are transformed into advocates for change. Here in our very midst the kin-dom of God is revealed.**

Amen

**\*HYMN #150**

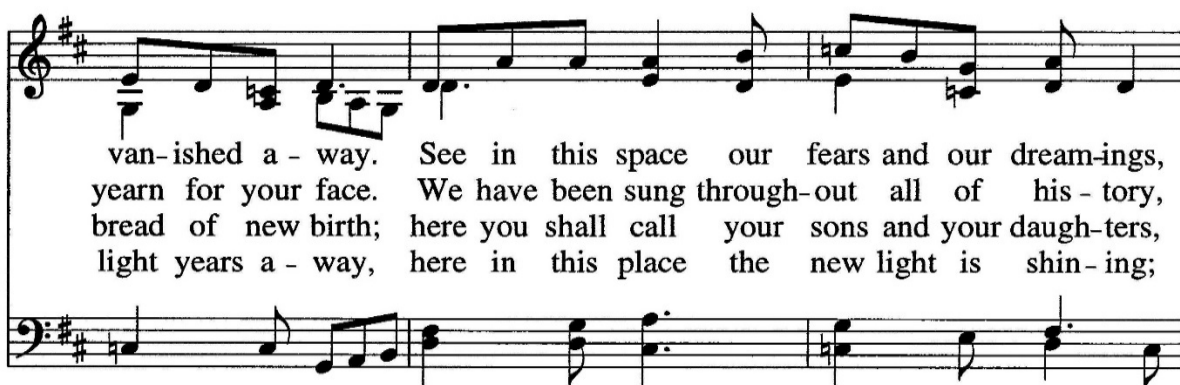
*Here in this Place*

GATHER US IN

*Unison*



1. Here in this place, the new light is stream-ing, now the dark night has  
2. We are the young—our lives are a mys-tery; we are the old, who  
3. Here we re-ceive new life in your wa-ters; here we re-ceive the  
4. Not just in build-ings, small and con-fin-ing, not in some heav-en,



van-ished a-way. See in this space our fears and our dream-ings,  
yearn for your face. We have been sung through-out all of his-tory,  
bread of new birth; here you shall call your sons and your daugh-ters,  
light years a-way, here in this place the new light is shin-ing;



brought here to you in the light of this day.  
called to be light to the whole hu-man race.  
call us a-new to be salt for the earth.  
now is God pres-ent, and now is the day.

Gath-er us in, the lost and for - sak - en; gath-er us in; our  
 Gath-er us in, the rich and the haugh-ty; gath-er us in, the  
 Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, give us to eat the  
 Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er; gath-er us in and

spir - its in - flame. Call to us now, and we shall a - wak - en;  
 proud and the strong; give us a heart so meek and so low - ly;  
 bread that is you; nour-ish us well, and teach us to fash-ion  
 make us your own; gath-er us in, all peo-ples to - geth-er,

we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.  
 give us the cour-age to en - ter the song.  
 lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.  
 fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

**GATHERING PRAYER (Unison)**

**Pastor Ray**

**We give thanks to you, Oh God, for you are good; for your steadfast love endures forever. You have redeemed us from trouble and gathered us in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. When we cry to you in trouble, you bring us out of our distress.**

**We thank you God for your steadfast love, for your wonderful works to humankind. We lift up your name here in the congregation of the people and praise you in the assembly of the elders. We worship you here, today, together. Amen.**

## **CHILDREN'S GATHERING**

***All children are invited to come to the front for a brief time of greeting and prayer. Afterward, children are invited to go to the children's room, or children may stay with their parents.***

### **Children's Sermon and Sing-Along**

*if you promise to be welcoming  
then you are welcome here!  
if you keep an open heart  
an open mind and open ears!  
if you know that folks are different  
and it's nothing to fear  
then I promise you will always be  
welcome here!*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Abram Guerra**

**Gracious God, you tell us to love one another—to love others the way we so naturally love ourselves. Yet each of us must admit that we have failed to do so. Jesus taught us to love our neighbors even if they don't look like us, even if they don't think like us, even if they don't love like us, even if they don't pray like us, even if they don't speak like us, even if they don't vote like us. But we have failed to love one another with no exceptions.**

***Brief period of silence***

**Forgive us Holy One, and make us again in your image of Love. Blot out our sins, renew our minds, rekindle our hearts, and guide us by Your Holy Spirit into the Love that is your will. Amen.**

# RESPONSE

## *There's a Spirit of Love in This Place*

MEDEMA



1. There's a spir - it of love in this place, there's a  
(2. There's the) pres - ence of peace in this room, there's the



spir - it of love in this place. You can't  
pres - ence of peace in this room. In God's



see it, but it's there just as pre-cious as the air. There's a  
ten-der-ness is found peace that pass - es hu-man bounds. There's the



spir - it of love in this place. O al - le -  
pres - ence of peace in this room.



lu - ia, sing al - le - lu - ia! We bless your ho - ly



name. O al - le - lu - ia, sing al - le - lu - ia! There's a



spir - it of love in this place. 2. There's the place.

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

One: Sisters and brothers in Christ, God's Spirit did not leave us after that first Pentecost. The Spirit is still with us, empowering us to know mercy and grace, forgiveness and service. In this Spirit, and through Christ, we proclaim the Good News:

**All: We are forgiven Alleluia! Amen.**

### **We Listen for God's Word**

#### **SCRIPTURE**

*Psalm 98:1-5*

Paul Henjes

<sup>1</sup>O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory. <sup>2</sup>The Lord has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations. <sup>3</sup>He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God. <sup>4</sup>Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. <sup>5</sup>Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.



**\*HYMN #609**

*Guide My Feet*

AFRICAN AMERICAN SPIRITUAL



1. Guide my feet  
 2. Hold my hand  
 3. Stand by me  
 4. I'm Your child  
 5. Search my heart  
 6. Guide my feet

while I run this race,

yes, my Lord!



guide my feet  
 hold my hand  
 stand by me  
 I'm Your child  
 search my heart  
 guide my feet

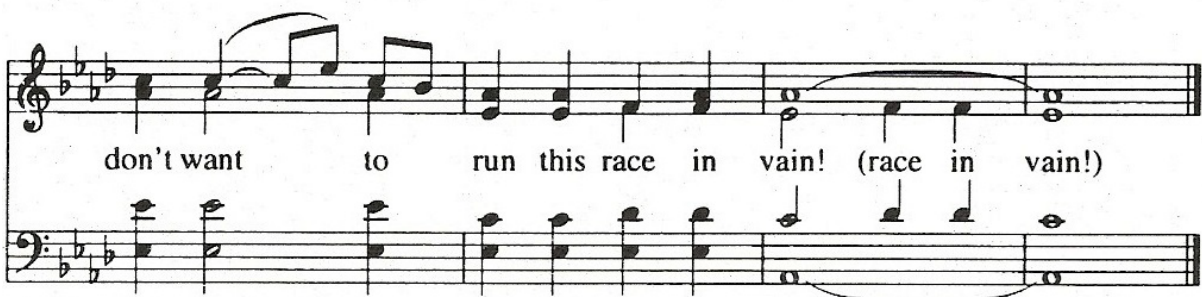
while I run this race,

yes, my Lord!



guide my feet  
 hold my hand  
 stand by me  
 I'm Your child  
 search my heart  
 guide my feet

while I run this race, for I



don't want to run this race in vain! (race in vain!)

## SERMON

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

## ANTHEM

*Ave Verum Corpus*

Stephanie Martin

Ave, verum corpus natum  
ex Maria Virgine:  
vere passum, immolatum  
in cruce pro homine:  
cuius latus perforatum  
unda fluxit et sanguine:  
esto nobis praegustatum,  
in mortis examine.

Hail the true body, born  
of the Virgin Mary:  
You who truly suffered and were  
sacrificed  
on the cross for our sake.  
From whose pierced flank  
flowed water and blood:  
Be a foretaste for us  
in the trial of death.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Lord be with you... **And also with you...** Let us pray...

**We join our voices to pray, rejoice and celebrate the good things of our life together and those who are celebrating their birthdays, including Joan Duffy**

**We pray for ourselves and our kin that the light of God's love will shine on us all, particularly our siblings who are transwomen, transmen, nonbinary, bisexual, gay, lesbian and queer. We pray that in that light we will see the full humanity of Your beloved children.**

**We pray that in these times of persecution that Your church will be place of refuge and hope.**

**We pray for the innocent who suffer the world over because of war and that justice and peace might rule. We lift special prayers for those suffering and perishing in the famine in Gaza.**

**We pray for migrants, refugees, and the disappeared in these days of wickedness.**

**We pray for our world suffering the ravages of Climate Change.**

**We pray that justice and peace might reign.**

**We pray for children, teachers, parents, and school staffs that this school year children may learn to dream of a different world.**

**We pray for those suffering the plague of gun violence.**

**We pray for those challenged by physical and mental illness and for us who love them.**

**We pray that wisdom and courage might lead those with plenty, to help make a better world for all.**

**For ourselves, that we may ever live in the power of Hope.**

**SILENT PRAYER**

**PASTORAL PRAYER**

## COMMUNION

*At United Church on the Green, we believe the communion table is truly open. This means that we invite people of all ages and denominations to partake of the sacrament. This is Christ's table, not ours. And so, we invite you to join us in this meal. But it is up to you to decide whether or not you wish to receive the bread and the cup. God loves you regardless.*

## INVITATION

## PREFACE

**Preface**

*Leader* The Lord be with you, \_\_\_\_\_ *All* And al -

*Leader* so with you. \_\_\_\_\_ Lift up your

*All* hearts. \_\_\_\_\_ We lift them up to the Lord, \_\_\_\_\_

*Leader* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. *All* It is

right to give our thanks and praise. \_\_\_\_\_

WORDS: From *The United Methodist Hymnal*  
MUSIC: Mark A. Miller

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Source: *The Faith We Sing*, no. 2257a.

Beloved children of God, as we gather here this morning, we are the church! In this moment, we respond to the words of Jesus, who tells us: "...where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

And it is with the power of Christ that we proclaim that this table is open to all people — no matter who you are or what you believe or what you've been told.

**Here at the Lord's table we remember the simple gathering of a chosen family that came together for a meal that proclaimed a new way of being in this world.**

**We remember God's radically inclusive love made real in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus.**

**We remember the One who befriended the forgotten, embraced the outcast, and saw the Image of God in all people.**

**We remember the One who confronted every power that disconnected, marginalized, oppressed, and "other-ed."**

**It is here at this table that we find hope and imagination to see God's dream and promise of a world of wholeness, and it is here that we receive the nourishment and strength to continue on the paths of justice.**

We recall that on the night he was betrayed, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way he took the cup, saying, "This is my blood, my very life, poured out for you. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

**God, we thank you for breathing this world into existence and proclaiming from its birth: "It is good."**

**We come to you with gratitude for the endless blessings that we see, feel, and know on our journeys of life.**

**We celebrate the rich diversity of your creation — every beautiful body, every shade of skin, every expression of love.**

**Through your Spirit, open our hearts to the joy we can find in the midst of life's challenges.**

**Remind us that we are loved — fiercely and forever.**

**And however the world may try to hold us down or tell us who to be, remind us that nothing can separate us from your presence.**

**Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with all the faithful of every time and place, who forever sing to the glory of your name:**

## SANCTUS

### Sanctus

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord; God of  
power and might. Heav - en and earth are  
full of your glo - - - -  
- ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho -  
san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high -  
est! Blest is the one who comes  
in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na in the high - est! Ho - san - na in the high - est! Ho -  
san - na in the high - est!

WORDS: From *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Isa. 6:3; Matt. 21:9)  
MUSIC: Mark A. Miller

Music © 1999 Abingdon Press, admin. by The Copyright Co. Used by permission.  
Source: *The Faith We Sing*, no. 2257-b.

And so, as we stand before this feast, we pray with the words you taught us to pray:

**Our Father/Mother/God/Creator, 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. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

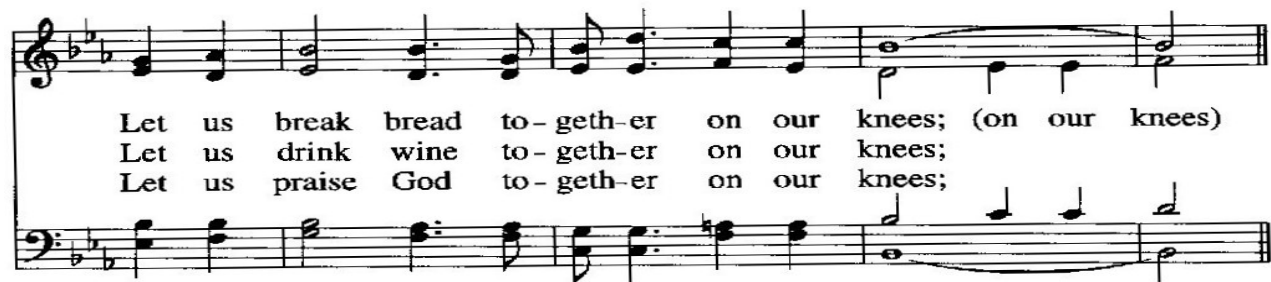
**HYMN #311**

*Let Us Break Bread Together*

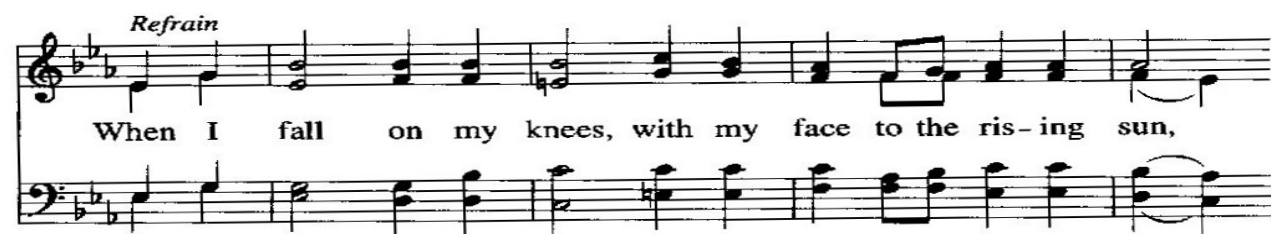
LET US BREAK BREAD



1. Let us break bread to- geth-er on our knees; (on our knees)  
2. Let us drink wine to- geth-er on our knees;  
3. Let us praise God to- geth-er on our knees;



Let us break bread to- geth-er on our knees; (on our knees)  
Let us drink wine to- geth-er on our knees;  
Let us praise God to- geth-er on our knees;



*Refrain*  
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris- ing sun,



O Lord, have mer- cy on me. (on me)



## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

### **SHARING OF THE MEAL**

*Today we will share the meal together by individually taking the bread and cup and returning to our seat. We will then eat and drink communion as one community. During Communion, we serve grape juice. Gluten free bread is available.*

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**From these simple gifts of grape and grain, you have consecrated us as your children, called and sent to share your extravagant love with others. Open our eyes that we might see you near us. Open our lives that we might be agents of hope and love for our world. When we forget our holy calling, speak anew to our hearts, and draw us back. This is our prayer in the name of all that is holy. Amen.**

### **SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

*We invite you to greet one another with signs of peace*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **CALL TO OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY**

*With a Voice of Singing*

Martin Shaw

With a voice of singing declare ye this,  
And let it be heard, Alleluia!  
Utter it even unto the ends of the earth.  
The Lord hath delivered all people, Alleluia!  
O be joyful in God, all ye lands,  
O sing praises to the honor of God's name,  
Make all praise to be glorious.

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

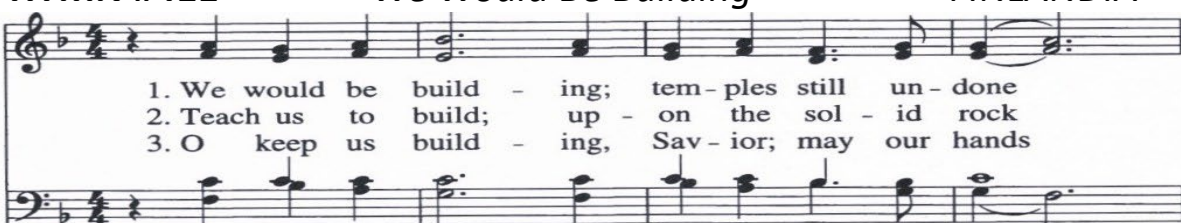
**God, thank you, thank you, thank you – for your grace, for this community of faith, for the gifts of our lives. Bless these offerings today that they might be used to further your reign of righteousness here and now. Work through each of us and through the ministries of this congregation that we might glorify you in all we do. Amen.**

## We Are Sent Out

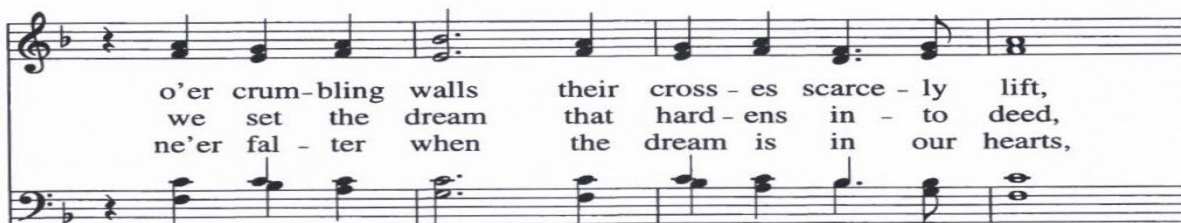
\*HYMN #411

*We Would Be Building*

FINLANDIA



1. We would be build - ing; tem - ples still un - done  
2. Teach us to build; up - on the sol - id rock  
3. O keep us build - ing, Sav - ior; may our hands



o'er crum - bling walls their cross - es scarce - ly lift,  
we set the dream that hard - ens in - to deed,  
ne'er fal - ter when the dream is in our hearts,



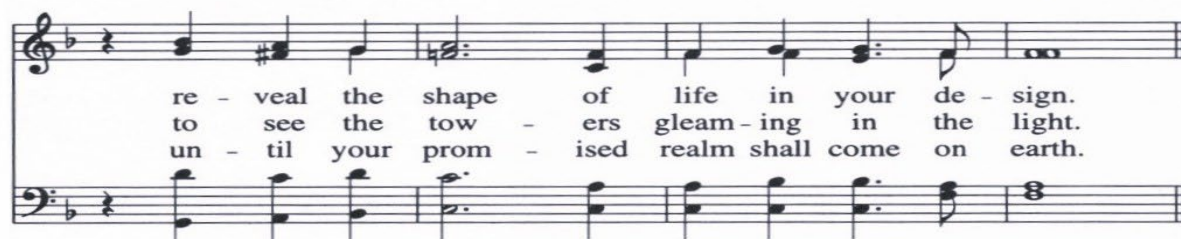
wait - ing till love can raise the bro - ken stone,  
ribbed with the steel, both time and change to mock,  
when to our ears there come di - vine com - mands



and hearts cre - a - tive bridge the hu - man rift.  
the un - fail - ing pur - pose of our no - blest creed.  
and all the pride of sin - ful will de - parts.



We would be build - ing, Ar - chi - tect Di - vine,  
Teach us to build; O Mak - er, lend us sight  
We build with you; O grant en - dur - ing worth



re - veal the shape of life in your de - sign.  
to see the tow - ers gleam - ing in the light.  
un - til your prom - ised realm shall come on earth.

## COMMISSION AND BLESSING

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,

**so that we may seek truth boldly and love deep within our hearts.**

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,

**so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.**

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, starvation, and war,

**so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them.**

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world,

**so that we can do what others claim cannot be done.**

*Amen, Ameen, and Ashe!*

POSTLUDE

*Trio Sonata*

G. F. Handel

**Our Worship Has Ended. Let Our Service Begin!**

Please join us at Coffee Hour after Worship

<https://unitednewhaven.org/this-weeks-worship>

Scan the QR Code to Sign Up for our Weekly Newsletter



## **THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP LEADERS**

**Senior Pastor**

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

**Intern**

Carolyn Streets

**Director of Music**

Caesar Storlazzi

**UCG Choir:** Judith Carlson, Grecia Hernandez Perez, Thomas Hontz, Tess Klibanoff, Christopher Leimgruber, Julia Blue Raspe, Daniel Rausch, Connor Reese, and Jean Welty

**Guest Musicians**

Olav van Hezewijk and  
Marta Boratgis, *oboes*

**Digital Deacons**

Worship & Music Ministry Team

**Coffee Hour Hosts**

June + Dale Richards

George C. Lindsay

**Head Sexton**

William Henton

## **THIS WEEK AT UNITED CHURCH**

**Sep 14th:** 10:00AM Gathering Sunday- Meeting House and Online

**Sep 16th:** 12Noon Staff Meeting – Online

**Sep 18th:** 6:00PM Bible Study – Online

For Our Full Calendar, go to: [www.calendarwiz.com/unitednewhaven](http://www.calendarwiz.com/unitednewhaven)

## **CHURCH NOTES**

### **Musical Permissions**

**CCLI: 11242315, One License: A-736676**

**CCS WorshipCast: 22251728 All rights reserved.**

## **MEETING HOUSE WIFI INFORMATION**

WiFi Network: UCG Meetinghouse

WiFi Password: 2037874195

## **UPCOMING CHURCH-WIDE EVENT – SAVE THE DATE**

**Our Congregational Retreat**

**The Unitarian Society - The Library**

700 Hartford Tpke, Hamden CT 06517

**Saturday October 18th, beginning at 10:00AM**

See Moderator Abram Guerra to help with the planning.



## UNITED CHURCH ON THE GREEN

AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September 9, 2025

Members and Friends of United Church on the Green,

Greetings.

I pray that summer has brought you joy and new discoveries of God's creativity in this wonderful world of ours.

I am writing to invite you to join us on Gathering Sunday, September 14, 2025. We will be celebrating the beginning of the church year and return of worship service to the sanctuary. I am very excited about the many new faces who have joined us as members and friends since last year. Not the least of which are children who bring joy and vitality to our time together. We have much to celebrate and would be so thankful for your presence.

Following worship, we will have opportunity to enjoy each other's company and a wonderful coffee hour filled with great food and fellowship.

I hope to see you on Gathering Sunday and invite you to bring family and friends!

Blessings and peace.

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray Jr.  
Senior Minister

**At United Church on the Green, we seek to Do Justice, Love Mercy and Walk Humbly with God, following the footsteps of Jesus.** We are also a Progressive Protestant Christian Church, a member of the Nationwide United Church of Christ (UCC).

**We have a long history.**

- Established 1742. Meetinghouse was built in 1815.
- The Amistad Incident? Abolition of slavery? The 1970 Black Panther trials? Divestment in South Africa? United was there.

**We believe God is still speaking to the world today... and we're trying to listen.**

- Not a "The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it." kind of church. Questions encouraged. (Actually, they're necessary.)
- "Open and Affirming" of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people since 1989.

**We are working with God to build a better future.**

- Not interested in "saving souls" or "converting the heathen." God's love is for all.
- Trying to "connect the dots" to grow peace, justice, and compassion in the world.

#### **Staff Contacts**

**Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray Jr.,** *senior pastor*

**Caesar Storlazzi,** *director of music*

**Maxim Schmidt,** *digital media administrator*

**Nicole René Atchison,** *church administrator*

**Nancy Lupi,** *financial secretary*

**Jack Russell,** *director of operations*

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**Rev. Louise B. Higginbotham,** *minister emerita*

**Rev. Dr. Bonnie Scott,** *minister emerita*

**United Church on the Green, UCC**

**Meeting House,** *corner of Temple & Elm*

**Parish House office,** *corner of Temple & Wall*

323 Temple Street, New Haven, CT 06511

203-787-4195

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