

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

www.unitednewhaven.org
www.facebook.com/unitednewhaven
[@unitednewhaven](https://www.instagram.com/unitednewhaven)

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.

November 23, 2025

10:00AM

Reign of Christ C

We Gather as Church

*Please stand as you are able

PRELUDE *Three Preludes from the Neumeister Collection* J. S. Bach
Herr Jesu Christ, du höchstes Gut
Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr
Was Gott tut, das ist wohlgetan

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.

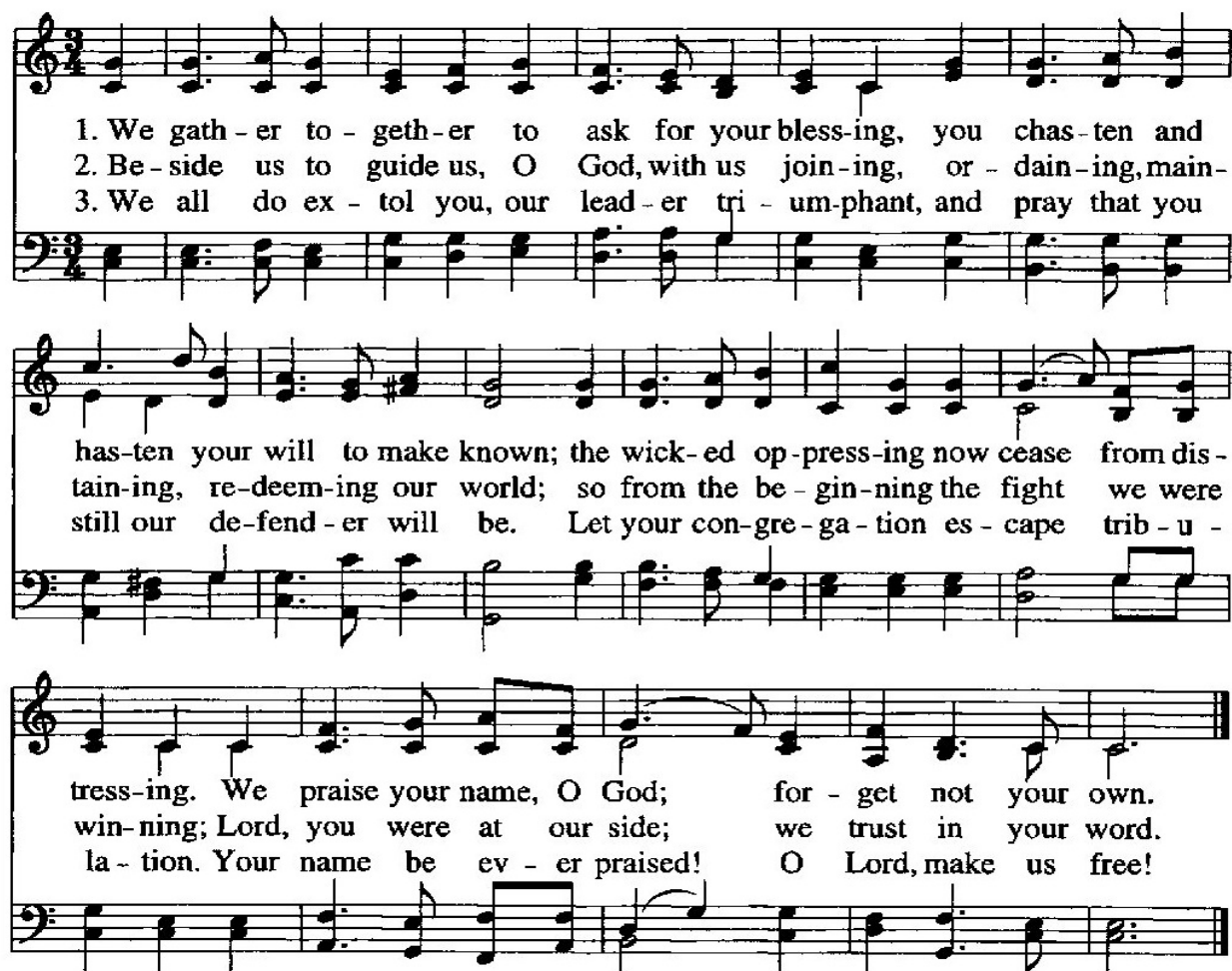
At God's table of life, all peoples know peace and creation flourishes. Here the hopeless are nourished with possibility, the complacent are transformed into advocates for change.

Here in our very midst the kin-dom of God is revealed.

Amen

HYMN #23We Gather Together*

KREMSER



1. We gath - er to - geth - er to ask for your bless - ing, you chas - ten and
2. Be - side us to guide us, O God, with us join - ing, or - dain - ing, main -
3. We all do ex - tol you, our lead - er tri - um - phant, and pray that you

has - ten your will to make known; the wick - ed op - press - ing now cease from dis -
tain - ing, re - deem - ing our world; so from the be - gin - ning the fight we were
still our de - fend - er will be. Let your con - gre - ga - tion es - cape trib - u -

tress - ing. We praise your name, O God; for - get not your own.
win - ning; Lord, you were at our side; we trust in your word.
la - tion. Your name be ev - er praised! O Lord, make us free!

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: Siblings 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

Jeremiah 23:1-6

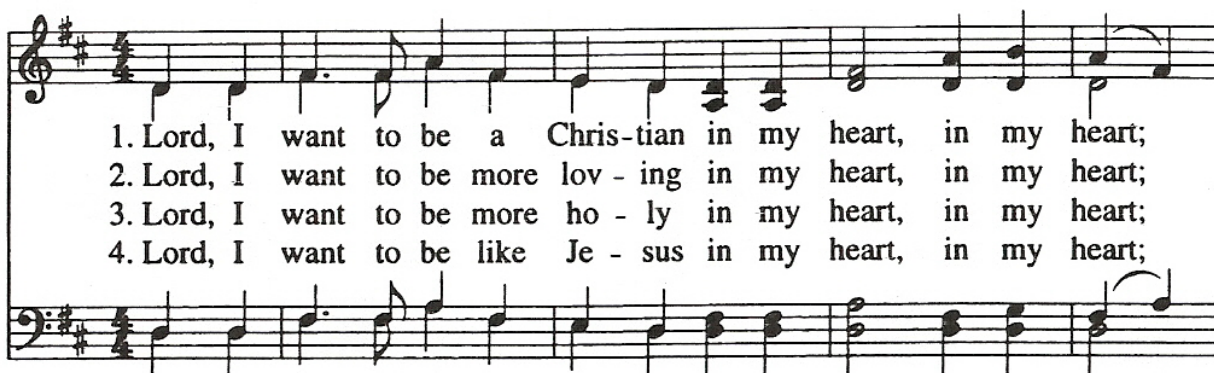
Mike Norris

¹Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! says the Lord. ²Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who shepherd my people: It is you who have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. So I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the Lord. ³Then I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the lands where I have driven them, and I will bring them back to their fold, and they shall be fruitful and multiply. ⁴I will raise up shepherds over them who will shepherd them, and they shall no longer fear or be dismayed, nor shall any be missing, says the Lord. ⁵The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will live in safety. And this is the name by which he will be called: "The Lord is our righteousness."

***HYMN #403**

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

African American Spiritual



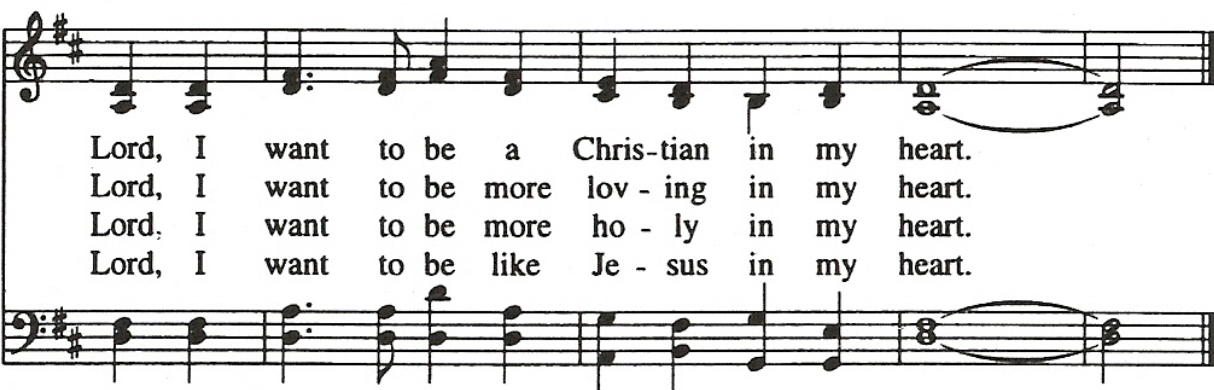
1. Lord, I want to be a Chris-tian in my heart, in my heart;
2. Lord, I want to be more lov - ing in my heart, in my heart;
3. Lord, I want to be more ho - ly in my heart, in my heart;
4. Lord, I want to be like Je - sus in my heart, in my heart;



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.



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.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

MUSICAL MEDITATION

A Pleasant Thought

Florence Price

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.

We pray for those who continue to suffer under a government unconcerned for their welfare.

We pray for those who weather the effects of lost income and who remain food and housing insecure.

We pray for our society that has so badly lost its way.

We pray that all will see the full humanity of Your beloved children.

We pray for ourselves and our kin that the light of God's love will shine on us all, particularly our queer and trans siblings.

We pray for immigrants, refugees, and the disappeared in these wicked times.

We pray for our world suffering the ravages of Climate Change, especially those dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Melissa.

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

We pray that justice and peace might rule with special prayers for those suffering because of famine in our land and across the world.

We pray for those suffering the plague of gun violence.

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

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

We pray that Your Church will be place of refuge and hope and that we may ever live in the power of Hope.

SILENT PRAYER

PASTORAL PRAYER

And so, 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.

SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

We invite you to greet one another with signs of peace

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

All That I Am

William Grant Still

All that I am, all I ever can be
I owe to You, Lord, for You have molded me.
All that I have, all that I call mine
I owe to You, Lord, for all things are Thine.

You are the source of light: Light that's offered to all
In Your wisdom You give to us our due.
You are the source of love: Love that binds in unity
In Your love and mercy I find lasting peace.

All that I love, all that's dear to me,
All of my blessings come, my Lord, from Thee
All that I own, all that belongs to me,
All I surrender, my Lord, to Thee.

***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 #27**

Now Thank We All Our God

NUN DANKET

1. Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
2. O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
3. All praise and thanks to God almighty now be given;

who wondrous things hath done, in whom this world rejoices,
with ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us,
to God, the three-in-one, who reigns in highest heaven,

who, from our mothers' arms, hath blessed us on our way
and keep us in all grace, and guide us when perplexed,
the one eternal God, whom earth and heaven adore,

with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day.
and free us from all ills, in this world and the next.
for thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

The musical score is written for a four-part setting (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

COMMISSION AND BLESSING

Pastor Ray

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

Nun Danket Alle Gott

Sigfrid Karg-Elert

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.

Director of Music

Caesar Storlazzi

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

Digital Deacons

Worship & Music Ministry Team

Coffee Hour Coordinator

Dale Richards

Head Sexton

William Henton

THIS WEEK AT UNITED CHURCH

Nov 23rd: 10:00AM Sunday Worship - Meeting House and Online

Nov 25th: 12Noon Staff Meeting – Online

Nov 27th: THANKSGIVING DAY

For Our Full Calendar, go to: 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

OPEN CHOIR SUNDAY

Sunday November 30th - Warm Up at 9:00AM

On November 30th, we will have an Open Choir Sunday. As you may know, we started with Open Choir last year, and we plan to have these on the fifth Sunday of the month (when a month has five Sundays, of course!) If you'd like to sing with the choir on November 30th (which happens to be the first Sunday of Advent), all you have to do is show up a little early to church for the choir warm-up rehearsal at 9AM (no worries if you are a little late). Just come to the front of the church by the piano. No experience is necessary, and we will provide the music, etc. No weeknight rehearsal and no commitment! Just come for the choir camaraderie and the joy of singing. Hope to see you there. Contact Caesar, our choir director, at AveCesare@aol.com if you have any questions.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP EXPLORATION SESSION

Sunday November 30th - Second Hour

There will be a membership exploration session immediately following service on Sunday November 30th. This will be a time to learn more about membership at UCG and answer any questions you might have. The session will be led by Rev Ray.

IN KIND DONATIONS FOR DESK "THANKSGIVING FOR ALL" PROGRAM

United Church on the Green is collecting donations for the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK) Thanksgiving for All, a Thanksgiving feast. We will be accepting cash donations and we are also asking that folks donate onions. Bring a bag of onions to church on Sunday, November 23rd and we will drop those off with DESK to prepare for their Thanksgiving meal.

Service and Justice will be matching the congregation's donations. If you have questions, talk to Jeff or Cher.

To donate online, go to: <https://unitednewhaven.org/donate>

HOLIDAY POINSETTIA DEDICATION DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 15th

FREE WILL OFFERING

The Meeting House will be decorated with Poinsettia Plants during the Holidays. If you would like to dedicate a plant to a loved one, send your Dedication Language to: office@unitednewhaven.org.

If you would like to contribute to our Floral Display Fund, go to: <https://unitednewhaven.org/donate>, or contribute during service, using a Poinsettia Fund envelope.

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*

pastor@unitednewhaven.org

music@unitednewhaven.org

media@unitednewhaven.org

office@unitednewhaven.org

nancyalupi@gmail.com

operations@unitednewhaven.org

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

www.unitednewhaven.org

www.facebook.com/unitednewhaven

[@unitednewhaven](https://www.instagram.com/unitednewhaven)

