

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.

September 6, 2026

10:00AM

Pentecost 15A

We Gather as Church

*Please stand as you are able

PRELUDE

Improvisation

Seiji Nakanishi

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We come, God of the Journey, a people from different places, different histories, different lifestyles.

All: We come hoping to find companionship for the journey, solidarity for the struggle.

One: We gather, God of Hospitality, around your “welcome table, a table not yet round, but rounding.

All: We gather seeking to become a “round-table people, welcoming of all, with no preferred seating, no firsts and no lasts and no corners for ‘the least of these.’

One: We yearn, God of the Rainbow, for a new way of living and relating as neighbors not strangers, as brothers and sisters not ‘them and us.’

All: We yearn to live fully celebrating both the diversity of our human family, and the unity of our call to love and justice.

One: We hunger, God of Abundant Life, for lives that have meaning and integrity, and for relationships grounded in mutuality and respect.

All: We thirst for places to bring our doubts, our fears; places to express honestly who we are. We thirst for hope and encouragement as we struggle to follow Jesus in the way of life-risking love.

One: With the gift of your grace we are nourished.

All: With the promise of your presence may we be strengthened to be faithful. Amen.

***HYMN # 597 NCH** *Shall We Gather at the River?* HANSON

1 Shall we gath - er at the riv - er, where bright an - gel feet have trod,
2 On the mar - gin of the riv - er, wash - ing up its sil - ver spray,
3 As we reach the shin - ing riv - er, lay we ev - ery bur - den down;
4 Soon we'll reach the shin - ing riv - er, soon our pil - grim - age will cease;

with its crys - tal' tide for - ev - er flow - ing by the throne of God?
we will walk and wor - ship ev - er, all the hap - py gold - en day.
grace our spir - its will de - liv - er, and pro - vide a robe and crown.
soon our hap - py hearts will quiv - er with the mel - o - dy of peace.

Refrain

Yes, we'll gath - er at the riv - er, the beau - ti - ful, the beau - ti - ful riv - er,

Gath - er with the saints at the riv - er that flows by the throne of God.

PRAYER (Unison)

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

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

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all

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.

HYMN RESPONSE

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 *Exodus Chapter 4, verses 18-23 (Ex. 4:18-23)*

Reader

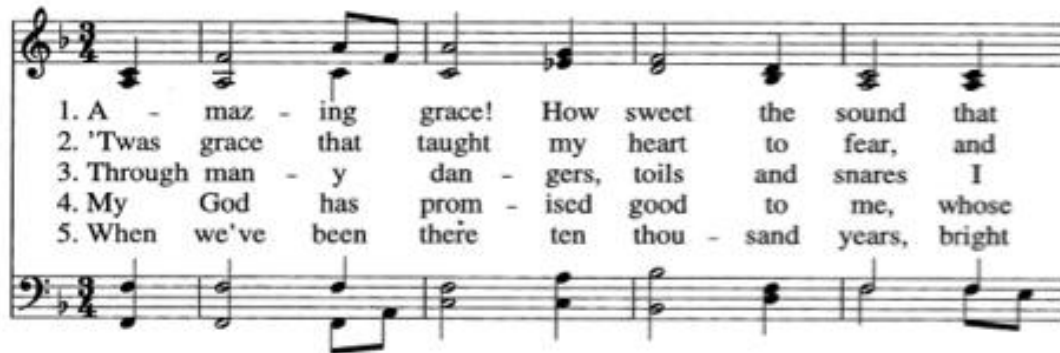
¹⁸ Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, "Please let me go back to my own people in Egypt and see whether they are still living." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." ¹⁹ The LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all those who were seeking your life are dead." ²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons, put them on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt, and Moses carried the staff of God in his hand.

²¹ And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put in your power, but I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

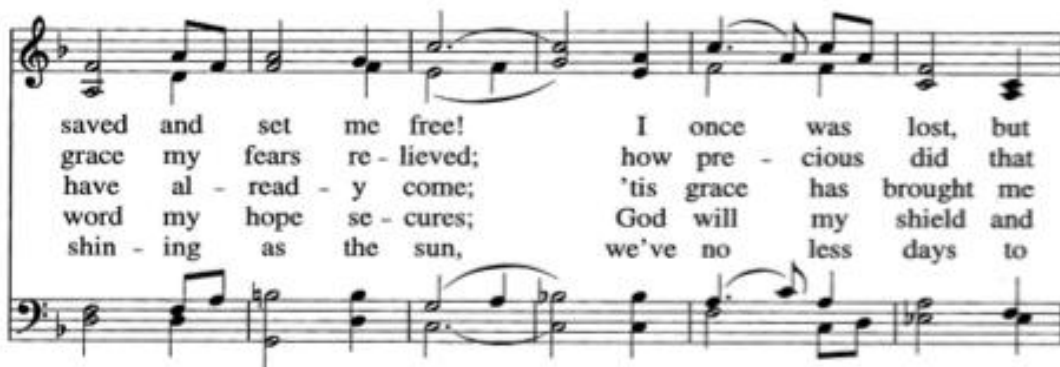
²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: Israel is my firstborn son. ²³ I said to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." But you refused to let him go; now I will kill your firstborn son.'

****HYMN #401 HTL***Amazing Grace*

NEW BRITAIN



1. A - maz - ing grace! How sweet the sound that
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and
3. Through man - y dan - gers, toils and snares I
4. My God has prom - ised good to me, whose
5. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, bright



saved and set me free! I once was lost, but
grace my fears re - lieved; how pre - cious did that
have al - read - y come; 'tis grace has brought me
word my hope se - cures; God will my shield and
shin - ing as the sun, we've no less days to



now am found; was blind, but now I see.
grace ap - pear the hour I first be - lieved!
safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.
por - tion be as long as life en - dures.
sing God's praise than when we'd first be - gun.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

MUSICAL MEDITATION**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 this week including Ramon Molina, Patti Moakler, and Pam Stanton.

Our prayers begin with rejoicing that in Your love and creativity you have made us a rainbow. Made us in Your image that is multi-splendored and too rich for simple definitions.

We give thanks for the Holy Spirit that is with Us, filling our hearts with hope and power.

With Us. Your children. Of every hue. Of every race. Of every culture and tongue.

Immigrants. Refugees. Queer. Trans. All of your children; especially those who need special care and protection in these times.

We pray for the many whose lives are being lost in senseless wars. For everyone but especially for the children. May their light not be extinguished because of cruelty and malice but continue to shine in our hearts.

We pray for our world, suffering the ravages of Climate Catastrophe. Standing expectantly before an uncertain future, we pray for our children, their teachers, school staffs and administrators that they may together teach us to dream of a different world.

We pray for the unhoused and the hungry in our own city and anywhere in the world.

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

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

We pray that as Your Church we will be a place of refuge that ever lives 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 all people to partake in the sacrament. This is Christ's table, not ours. And so, we invite you to join us at this meal. God loves you and bids welcome.

INVITATION

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've been told about God's welcome.

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 tongue and 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

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 seats. 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

The Call

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Connor Reese, soloist

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:

Such a Feast, as mends in length:

Such a Way, as gives us breath:

Such a Strength, as makes his guest

Such a Truth, as ends all strife:

Such a Life, as killeth death

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:

Such a Joy, as none can move:

Come, My Light, my Feast, my

Such a Love, as none can part:

Strength:

Such a Heart, as joys in love

Such a Light, as shows a feast:

***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 #386

We Are One in the Spirit

ST. BRENDAN'S

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,

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 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:

Refrain (Harmony)

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.

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

Improvisation

Seiji Nakanishi

Our Worship Has Ended. Let Our Service Begin!

Please join us at Coffee Hour after Worship

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

THIS WEEK'S WORSHIP LEADERS

Senior Pastor	Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.
Director of Music	Caesar Storlazzi
Guest Musicians	Seiji Nakanishi (keyboard) Connor Reese (baritone soloist)
Digital Deacons	Worship & Music Ministry Team
Coffee Hour Coordinator	Dale Richards
Head Sexton	William Henton

THIS WEEK AT UNITED CHURCH

September 6th: 10:00AM Worship Service – Online + Meeting House

September 10: 6:00PM Bible Study – Online

For Our Full Calendar, go to: www.calendarwiz.com/unitednewhaven

CHURCH NOTES

Musical Permissions

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MEETING HOUSE WIFI INFORMATION

WiFi Network: UCG Meetinghouse

WiFi Password: 2037874195

Year-Round Narthex Floral Display

The Sacred Spaces Committee would like you to know that you don't have to wait until Easter or Christmas to remember or honor someone with Narthex Flowers. You can bring the floral arrangements yourself, or provide a monetary donation. Suggested donation is \$40.

Use a Flower Dedication Form, a Flower Offering Envelope or pay online:

<https://unitednewhaven.org/donate>

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*

Nancy Lupi, *financial secretary*

Jack Russell, *director of operations*

Bailey Murphy, *church secretary*

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Rev. Louise B. Higginbotham, *minister emerita*

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Scott, *minister emerita*

United Church on the Green, UCC

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Parish House office, *corner of Temple & Wall*

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