

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.

May 3, 2026

10:00AM

Easter 5A

We Gather as Church

*Please stand as you are able

PRELUDE

Seasons of Life

Mark Hayes

WORDS OF WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: O give thanks to the Holy One, for God is good; God's love abides, endures, and prevails forever!

Many: **Alleluia! The resurrection life comes to us. Christ is risen!**

One: In distress, I call. In grief, I cry. In despair, I come. The Holy One answers. The Holy One comforts. The Holy One comes.

Many: **Alleluia! The resurrection life comes to us. Christ is risen!**

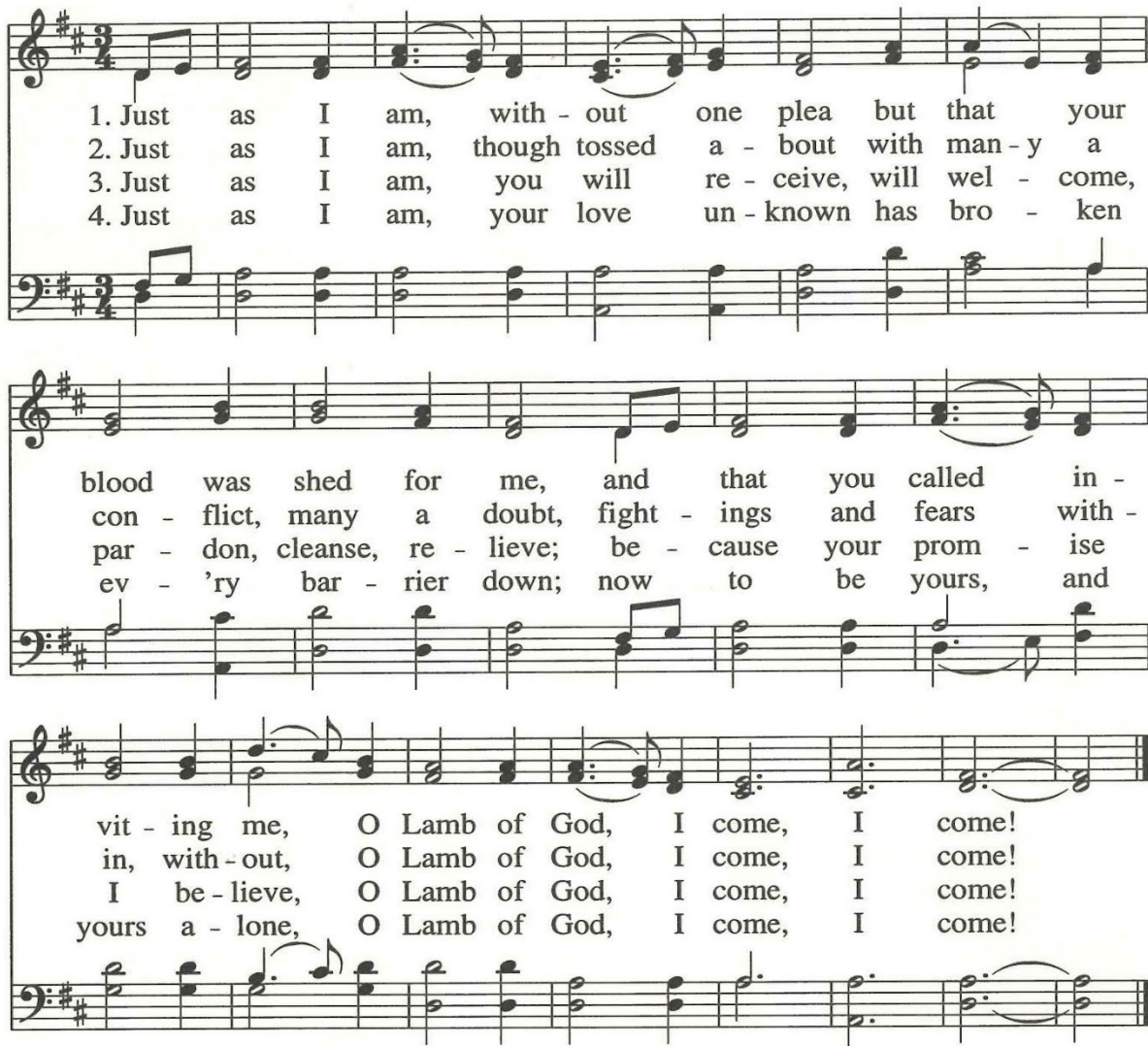
One; God, my refuge and confidence, surrounds me with strength and victory! Exalt God's holy name!

Many: **Alleluia! The resurrection life comes to us. Christ is risen!**

***HYMN #410**

Just as I Am

WOODWORTH



1. Just as I am, with - out one plea but that your
2. Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with man - y a
3. Just as I am, you will re - ceive, will wel - come,
4. Just as I am, your love un - known has bro - ken

blood was shed for me, and that you called in -
con - flict, many a doubt, fight - ings and fears with -
par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause your prom - ise
ev - 'ry bar - rier down; now to be yours, and

vit - ing me, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
I be - lieve, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!
yours a - lone, O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

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

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

Genesis 34:1-11

Jean Welty

¹Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the region. ²When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region, saw her, he seized her and lay with her by force. ³And his soul was drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob; he loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her. ⁴So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl to be my wife."

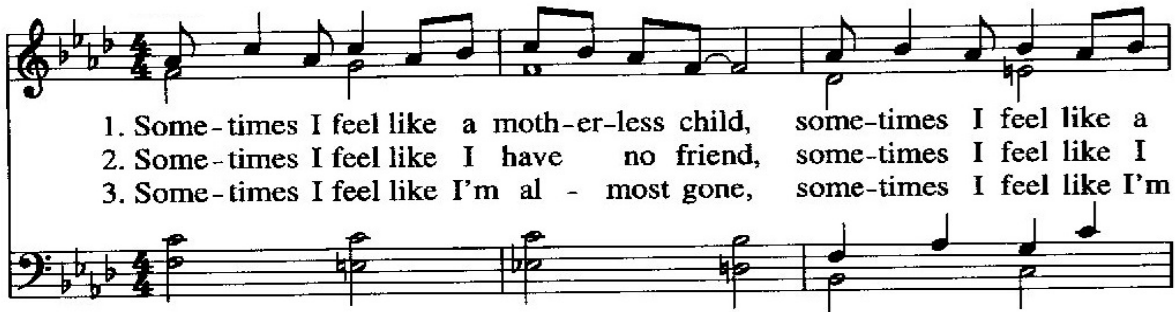
⁵Now Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter Dinah, but his sons were with his cattle in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. ⁶And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him, ⁷just as the sons of Jacob came in from the field. When they heard of it, the men were indignant and very angry, because he had committed an outrage in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done.

⁸But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The heart of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage. ⁹Make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. ¹⁰You shall live with us, and the land shall be open to you; live and trade in it and get property in it."


¹¹Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, "Let me find favor with you, and whatever you say to me I will give."

***HYMN #480** *Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child*

WHEATLEY



1. Some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child, some-times I feel like a
2. Some-times I feel like I have no friend, some-times I feel like I
3. Some-times I feel like I'm al - most gone, some-times I feel like I'm



moth-er-less child, some-times I feel like a moth-er-less child a
have no friend, some-times I feel like I have no friend, a
al - most gone, some-times I feel like I'm al - most gone, a



long way from home, a long way from home.

SERMON

Rev. Dr. Stephen G. Ray, Jr.

ANTHEM

There Is a Balm in Gilead

William L. Dawson

*There is a Balm in Gilead,
to make the wounded whole,
There is a Balm in Gilead,
to heal the sin-sick soul.*

Sometimes I feel discouraged,
and think my work's in vain,

But then the Holy spirit
revives my soul again.

If you cannot sing like angels,
if you cannot preach like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus,
and say "He died for all."

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 David French, Catie Schneider, George Peterman + Jesse Balkcom.

Our prayers begin with rejoice that Christ is with Us.

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

Immigrants. Refugees. Our Queer and trans siblings and all of your children who need special care and protection in these times.

We pray to give thanks that those who have lost their lives bearing witness to the humanity, dignity, and value of our siblings and kin abide with you.

We pray for the many whose lives have been 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 Change. 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 in our own city who now face uncertainty because of the closing of warming centers.

We lift special prayers for those suffering hunger anywhere in the world.

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 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 people of all ages, races, ethnicities and faith traditions to partake of the sacrament. This is Christ's table, not ours. And so, we invite you to join us in this meal. God loves you and bids welcome.

INVITATION

Preface

Leader The Lord be with you, *All* And al -
so with you. *Leader* 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

Music © 2000 Abingdon Press, admin. by The Copyright Co. Used by permission.
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 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 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 *Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love* Everett Titcomb

Jesus! Name of wondrous love!
Name all other names above!
Unto which must every knee
Bow now in deep humility.

Jesus! Name decreed of old,
To the maiden mother told,
Kneeling in her lowly cell,

By the angel Gabriel.

Jesus! Name of priceless worth
To the fallen ones of earth,
For the promise that it gave,
“Jesus shall His people save.”

Jesus! Name of wondrous love.

***DOXOLOGY**

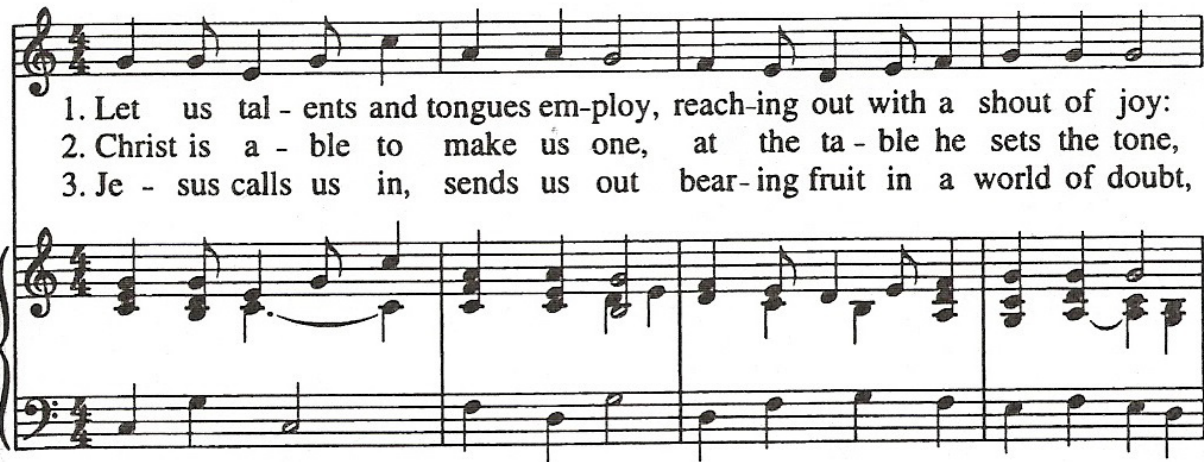
**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

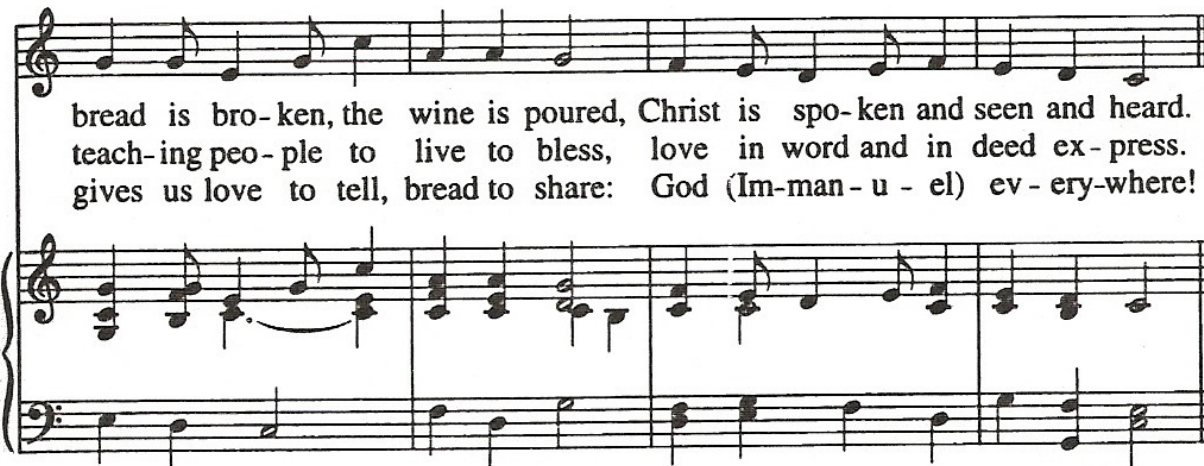
God, thank you, thank you, thank you – for your grace, for this community of faith, for the gifts of our lives. Bless these offerings today that they might be used to further your reign of righteousness here and now. Work through each of us and through the ministries of this congregation that we might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

We Are Sent Out

*HYMN #316 *Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ* Linstead

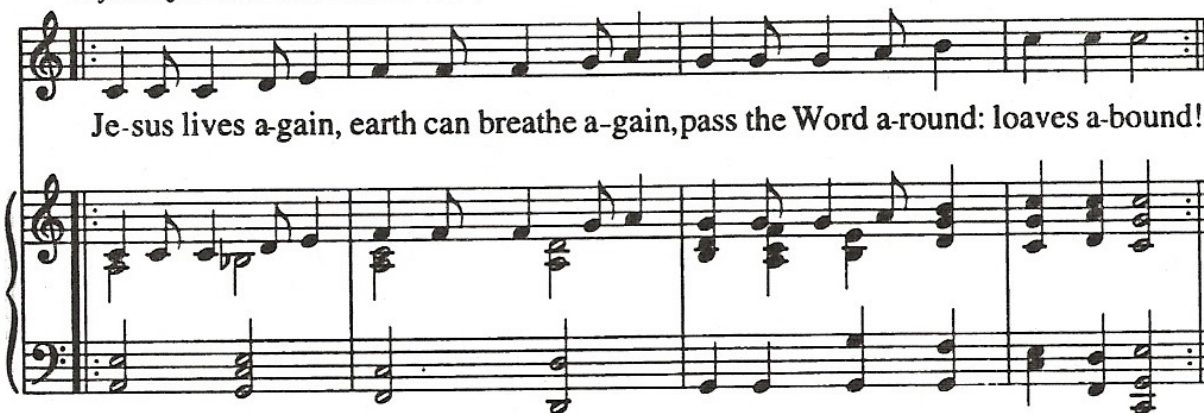


1. Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:
2. Christ is a - ble to make us one, at the ta - ble he sets the tone,
3. Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,



bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.
teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.
gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - ery - where!

Refrain (first time p, second time f)



Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

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

Joyful Day

Mark Hayes

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, Delaney Fox, Grecia Hernandez Hontz, Thomas Hernandez Hontz, Tess Klibanoff, Christopher Leimgruber, Julia Blue Raspe, Daniel Rausch, Connor Reese, and Mary Scanlon

Digital Deacons

Worship & Music Ministry Team

Coffee Hour Coordinator

Dale Richards

Head Sexton

William Henton

THIS WEEK AT UNITED CHURCH

May 3rd: 10:00AM 5th Sunday of Easter, Meeting House and Online

May 5th: 12Noon Staff Meeting - Online

May 7th: 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

Congregational Retreat on Saturday May 16th, 2026 at 9:00AM at our Parish House 323 Temple Street (corner of Wall), New Haven

The Congregational Care Ministry Team invites you to a Congregational Retreat
The agenda for the meeting will include:

- Worship
- Review and Dreamcasting of the Church Covenant
- Shaping the New Webpage and Web Presence in Our Voice

We are looking forward to a time of fellowship and creative expression of who God is calling us to be. We will have in-person and Zoom capabilities so everyone can participate.

Pride Prom – June 20th 2026 Sign Up to Help!

Friends! How would you like to plan a prom? Balloons, music, dancing and food, it doesn't happen by itself! If you love to organize, reach out or coordinate you will be a great fit for our PRIDE Prom Organizing Committee!

Service and Justice Task Force will be meeting regularly to prepare for PRIDE Prom 2026 to be held this June in our very own Great Hall. If you would like to participate please reach out to Jeff Hopper, Cher Balkcom or Susan Ray.

Stewardship Campaign

You may be already aware that this fiscal year's stewardship campaign has begun and we want to encourage you to be generous with your pledging so that together, as one United family, we could support our Church as well as the various ministries dear to us at United.

As we look ahead to the upcoming fiscal year, we ask you to commit together with the whole UCG family to fund and support the work ahead of us. No pledge is too great or too small. What is most important is your participation.

The easiest, secure, and most reliable way to pledge is online at:

<https://unitednewhaven.org/donate> This will bring you to a secure site where you can fill out a pledge form.

You can also pledge by filling out a pledge slip, available in the Narthex.

Please take the time to consider and pray over your decision, and submit your pledge before Tuesday, June 30, 2026.

Thank you so much for your willingness to be part of this year's campaign.

Together with you, we shall be the Church we are called to be.

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

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Parish House office, *corner of Temple & Wall*

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