



Jesus said, "I am the light of the world.  
Whoever follows me will never walk in  
darkness, but will have the light of life."

-John 8:12

Jesus ALSO said,  
"YOU are the Light of the World."

- Matthew 5: 14

## January 22, 2023 Our Money Story: Release

**GUESTS**, Welcome to our faith community here at Union UCC. To learn more about us please visit our website at [www.unionucc.org](http://www.unionucc.org) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/unionneffs](http://www.facebook.com/unionneffs).

Please complete the Welcome Card in the racks in front of you and hand it in with your offering or give it to a pastor. This is a good way to let us know you're here.

**One of our core values as a church is extravagant welcome and hospitality. We believe in God's inclusive love. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.**

Lay Readers: 8:00 Doug Albert, 10:30 Eric Minnich  
Ushers: 8:00-Cliff James, Carol James  
10:30- Carrington Smith, Jim Lane, Jason Klinger, Susan Smith,  
Al Stubbmann, Karen Misera, Claire Kern, Gene Thrash  
Sound: Dawn Dengler

**\*Please stand in body or spirit.**

**Prelude Music**  
**Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen/  
All Day, All Night Traditional      Spirituals**  
**Blake Hoppes**

**Welcome**

**Liturgy is used and adapted from Our Money Story  
sanctifiedart.org**

**Sharing God's Peace**

Leader: One of our core values as God's church here  
in Neffs is extravagant welcome.

So repeat after me - No matter who you are or where  
you are on life's journey,

**ALL: No matter who you are or where you are on life's  
journey,**

Leader: you are welcome here.

**ALL: you are welcome here.**

Leader: For those of you who are here, I invite you to  
greet those around you, waive across the aisle, walk  
around.

We send our prayers and blessings to those watching  
and listening at home or during the week.

(Please stand in body or spirit to greet each other and  
for our first song.)

# \*Hymn #8 Gather Us In Sing! A New Creation

Marty Haugen



1. Here in this place, new light is stream-ing, now is the  
 2. We are the young, our lives are a mys - t'ry, we are the  
 3. Here we will take the wine and the wa - ter, here we will  
 4. Not in the dark of build-ings con-fin - ing, not in some



1. dark - ness, van - ished a - way, See, in this space, our  
 2. old who yearn for your face, We have been sung through-  
 3. take the bread of new birth, Here you shall call your  
 4. heav - en, light years a - way, but here in this place, the



1. fears and our dream-ings, brought here to you in the light of this  
 2. out all of his - t'ry, called to be light to the whole hu- man  
 3. sons and your daugh- ters, call us a - new to be salt for the  
 4. new light is shin - ing, now is the King-dom now is the



1. day. Gath-er us in the lost and for - sa - ken, Gath-er us  
 2. race. Gath-er us in the rich and the haugh-ty, Gath-er us  
 3. earth. Give us to drink the wine of com - pas - sion, Give us to  
 4. day. Gath-er us in and hold us for - ev - er, Gath-er us



1. in the blind and the lame; Call to us now, and we shall a -  
 2. in the proud and the strong; Give us a heart so meek and so  
 3. eat the bread that is you; Nour- ish us well, and teach us to  
 4. in and make us your own; Gath-er us in all peo - ples to -



1. wa - ken, we shall a - rise at the sound of our name.  
 2. low - ly, give us the cour- age to en - ter the song.  
 3. fash - ion, lives that are ho - ly and hearts that are true.  
 4. geth - er, fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

Please be seated.

Today's liturgy is from Seasons of the Spirit.

### Call to Worship

One: Through Moses, God said,

**All: "Let my people go." (Ex.9:1)**

One: In scripture, the law declares:

**All: "In the seventh year, you must cancel all debts." (Deut.15:1)**

One: With grace, Jesus said:

**All: "Give one coat away." (Luke 3:11)**

One: With honesty, Jesus taught:

**All: "Sell what you have, give that money to the poor." (Matt. 19:21)**

One: Faith has always involved letting go, releasing, setting free, Dropping our nets, giving to others, and following.

**All: So in this hour of worship, may we release that which binds us. May we worship with open, untamed, and porous hearts, so that we can walk freely with God.**

One: Let it be so.

**All: Amen.**

### Prayer

Leader: Friends, in God we have been graced with wisdom and knowledge, we are not lacking in any spiritual gift. We are continually encouraged and strengthened, called as partners in Christ's mission of love and service to the world. We gather in hope. We worship with the Spirit at play in our hearts. Praise be to the God of goodness and light!

**All: Amen.**

### Sung Response:

**#526 We Are Marching In the Light of God**

Black Hymnal, New Century Hymnal

**ALL: We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are marching, oo-oooh,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, oo-oooh,  
We are marching in the light of God.**

### **Music Offering**

**8:00 Heritage Choir:** The Gift of Love Hal H. Hopson

**Heritage Choir**

**10:30 Kids Choir:** I Like Bananas Uncle Charlie

### **10:30 Worship – Time for Children**

**Education Hour for All Ages – 9:15-10:15am**

**Children's Church –** during 10:30am Worship for ages 3-grade 5. Ms. Tiffany would like to invite children to join her and her volunteers for Sunday School at 9:15 and Children's Church during 10:30am service.

**TODAY: Pastors invite children forward for a Children's Time and then they leave with Ms. Tiffany for a time designed just for them!**

Children will be in the basement and will return before worship is over. If worship ends early, parents are welcome to meet their children downstairs.

**Song:** Go, Make a Diff'ence Angrisano, Tomaszek #199  
Sing! Prayer and Praise

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is written on a five-line staff. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Go make a dif - f'ence... We can make a dif -". The second staff continues with: "- f'ence... Go make a dif - f'ence in the world...". The piece ends with a double bar line and the word "Fine" written above it.

## **Scripture**

### **Deuteronomy 15:1-11**

Every seventh year you shall grant a remission of debts. And this is the manner of the remission: every creditor shall remit the claim that is held against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the community, because the Lord's remission has been proclaimed. Of a foreigner you may exact it, but you must remit your claim on whatever any member of your community owes you. There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the LORD is sure to bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession to occupy, if only you will obey the LORD your God by diligently observing this entire commandment that I command you today. When the LORD your God has blessed you, as he promised you, you will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow; you will rule over many nations, but they will not rule over you. If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, "The seventh year, the year of remission, is near," and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt. Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land."

## **Matthew 19:16-22**

Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man said to him, "I have kept all these; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

### **Sung Response:**

#### **#526 We Are Marching In the Light of God**

Black Hymnal, New Century Hymnal

**ALL: We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are marching, oo-oooh,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, oo-oooh,  
We are marching in the light of God.**

### **The Message**

Our Money Story and God's Money Story: Release  
John Harting, Larry Todd, Pastor Kris, The Financial  
Leadership Team

## Prayers of the People

The best stories captivate and transform us—they change how we live. This stewardship year, we invite you to remember, release, reimagine, and restore your money stories so that we can write the one God is begging us to live into. We are going to combine art with our stewardship theme this year.

Stewardship, like art-making, is a spiritual practice. This project is designed to help you tangibly mark your progress throughout your stewardship series. We will be working as a team to create a mandala mosaic.

What is a mandala? Meaning “circle” in Sanskrit, a mandala is a geometric, circular design used in Buddhist and Hindu traditions for meditation and prayer. Often, the design of the mandala represents a cosmos or universe and is used for spiritual transformation and healing. The mandala template used in this project nods to this Eastern tradition. The imagery within the rings of the mandala correspond to the scriptures we’re using.

[This week, add to the second ring of the mandala.](#) Imagery in this portion of the design is inspired by [Matthew 19:16-22](#) (*a wealthy man seeks eternal life*) and [Deuteronomy 15:1-11](#) (*the year of canceled debts*). The open hands represent the posture Jesus invited the rich man to take by letting go of his possessions and wealth. The hands also symbolize the releasing of debts—a mandate given (*to the Israelites through Moses*) in order to build a community in which all could prosper

TODAY - As you entered worship, you received a coffee filter and marker.

Today we are practicing release. Release literally means: “To relieve from something that confines, burdens, or



*oppresses.*" When it comes to money, many of us long to release shame, fear, or past harm. Maybe we need to release what is holding us back from trusting in God wholeheartedly. Using your washable marker, I invite you to write a prayer naming anything you wish to release to God. We encourage you to fill up your coffee filter with words, doodles, and color.

Ushers will be around to collect your prayers in bowls which we will place in water.

Your prayers will be washed away as they create beautiful colors which will be attached to our mandala as our offerings of release for today.

No matter what confines, limits, or oppresses us, hear and receive this good news:

God washes away all sin and brokenness, blurring our prayers into beauty and color and grace. Thanks be to God who makes us new—over and over and over again. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven and made whole. Thanks be to God!

### **The LORD'S PRAYER**

**ALL: 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
forever. Amen.**

**News about the Ministry and Mission of God's Church**

**Offering**

## Offering Prayer

Leader: Holy God,  
It is not always easy to give what we have.  
We count pennies.  
We weigh the pros and cons.  
We calculate what we have given before,  
And we remind ourselves what we are giving to now.  
We all have our money stories.  
And yet,  
Even though it can take work for us to practice release,  
We trust that you can take these gifts—  
However freely or reluctantly given—  
And use them to build a more beautiful world.  
For that is who you are.  
You are forever building castles out of sand,  
Disciples out of people, and new life out of cautious gifts.  
We believe; help our unbelief.  
In Christ's name we pray,  
Amen.



**Thank you for the many ways in which you support God's  
work and God's people.**

## **Donate to God's Mission and Ministry at UNION UCC**

**OFFERING ENVELOPES.** If you can't attend worship, you can mail your envelopes to the church. The church address is on one side, just add a stamp.

**ELECTRONIC GIVING.** Choose to give a repetitive contribution on a regular basis (i.e weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly), or make single contributions whenever you desire in an amount of your choice. Electronic contributions are initiated from Union UCC's website (UnionUCC.org). Click on 'giving', then on 'Ways to Give' and follow the prompts. Feel free to contact John Harting 610-799-2508) or Don Penrod (610-398-2654) to answer your

questions or demonstrate the process.

**VENMO** Union UCC now has Venmo! You can now make donations, pay for events, and support the church through this platform. Please be sure to include in the “What it’s for” line what your Venmo is supporting. You can either search for @unionuccneffs

**MOBILE GIVING.** If you would like to give on the go, Vanco, the company that processes our e-giving transactions, has a mobile app that allows you to do so. Open your app search screen, search under “Vanco Mobile Faith \Engagement” and follow the prompts.

**AMAZON SMILE.** Donate to Union UCC, Neffs (Search by zip code 18065) while you shop <https://smile.amazon.com>

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### **Musical Offering**

**8:00 Blake Hoppes:** How Great Thou Art Carl Gustav Boberg

**10:30 High School Choir:** How Great is our God with How Great Thou Art Chris Tomlin, Arr. Mark Hayes

### **Offering Response**

**#526 We Are Marching In the Light of God**  
Black Hymnal, New Century Hymnal

**ALL: We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching in the light of God,  
we are marching in the light of God.**

**We are marching, oo-oo,  
We are marching in the light of God.  
We are marching, oo-oo,  
We are marching in the light of God.**

## **Benediction**

**We believe that on the first day,  
God released love and creativity over a void;  
and that void became mountains and rivers, sunsets and  
starry nights.**

**We believe God released  
God's people from the grips of slavery,  
liberating us day in and day out.**

**We believe God laid down with death  
and was released from its grip,  
knowing suffering and freeing us from this fragile life.**

**And we believe God invites us—  
day in and day out—**

**to release our fears,**

**let go of assumptions, tear down walls,**

**throw open the doors, and walk closer to love.**

**May it be so.**

**Amen.**

**\*Hymn #562 Take My Gifts** Black Hymnal (New  
Century Hymnal)

**1. Take my gifts and let me love you,  
God who first of all loved me,  
gave me light and food and shelter,  
gave me life and set me free,  
now because your love has touched me,  
I have love to give away,  
now the bread of love is rising,  
loaves of love to multiply!**

**2. Take the fruit that I have gathered  
from the tree your Spirit sowed,  
harvest of your own compassion,  
juice that makes the wine of God,  
spiced with humor, laced with laughter  
flavor of the Jesus life, tang of risk and new adventure,**

**taste and zest beyond belief.**

**3. Take whatever I can offer  
gifts that I have yet to find,  
skills that I am slow to sharpen,  
talents of the hand and mind,  
things made beautiful for others  
in the place where I must be:  
take my gifts and let me love you,  
God who first of all loved me**

### **SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION**

Union United Church of Christ, Neffs, Pa  
Eric Minnich, Consistory President presiding

#### **For those of you at home:**

Please log in or call in to our zoom meeting. There is a waiting room, please be patient until someone lets you into the meeting.

Please mute yourself once you are in the meeting.

We may ask you your name in order to identify everyone present and be sure that we have a quorum. The agenda and other documents were emailed to you or will be available to see on your screen.

Thank you for being a part of the work that we do as God's church.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81918906059?pwd=TkZxdThSbFdtUks3Q2pacUNRRitKUT09>

Meeting ID: 819 1890 6059

Passcode: 785369

One tap mobile +13052241968,,81918906059#,,,,\*785369#

US +13092053325,,81918906059#,,,,\*785369# US

## Postlude Music

Precious Lord, Take My Hand  
Blake Hoppes

Tomas A. Dorsey



*finding release*  
by lauren wright pittman  
inspired by matthew 19:16-22

# **EVIDENCE OF STEWARDSHIP LAST SUNDAY**

<b>Offering (e-giving, envelopes, and plate)</b>	
Last Week	\$6,048.00
Calendar Year 2022 (Jan-Nov.)	\$ 338,265.00
Calendar Year 2021 (Jan-Nov.)	\$ 333,115.00
Change from Last Year	<b>1.5%</b>
Budget FY 2022 ( <i>July 2022-Nov. 22</i> )	\$ 157,070.00
Actual Fiscal Year-to-Date ( <i>July 2022-Nov. 22</i> )	\$ 141,498.80
Difference in Giving vs. Budget	<b>-9.9%</b>
<i>Additional financial information available in Consistory Minutes</i>	

<b>Attendance Last Week</b>		
	In person	Online
8:00 am	<b>26</b>	<b>118</b>
10:30 am	<b>67</b>	<b>158</b>
Education Hour	<b>7</b>	

<b>2022 Donations to the Northern Lehigh Food Bank:</b>	
Last Week:	100bs, \$50
Total YTD:	254lbs, \$50

## **Presentations to the Glory of God**

***Spread the Good News :***  
***We are Blessed to worship in such a beautiful church as our church. Thanks be to God***  
***-Carol Barry***

*Be a sponsor for \$20, send to Union UCC through your offering envelope or online marked Spread the Good News or \$8 for Children's Bulletin. Contact Marissa to sign up for a certain date or to sponsor in honor or memory of someone.*

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