

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost
Second Sunday in the Season of Creation



Living Water

Season of Creation 2026

Immersion in Living Water

EZEKIEL 47:9, 12

<https://seasonofcreation.org/>

September 20th 2026
Portage Lake United Church

Welcome and Announcements

*We gather in the name of the Holy Trinity, one God, source of all goodness and mercy.
No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.*

- Pastor Peter has printed new sign-up sheets for Sunday morning volunteering through November. And he perhaps has already signed you up. So, check it out, cross your name off, barter and trade your dates, and make notes! He will check out the sign-up sheet and make changes weekly.
- First United Methodist Church in Hancock is hosting a Community Hymn Sing in celebration of 165 years of ministry Saturday, September 19, at 7:00 PM. All are welcome!
- The Angel Mission needs: Men's and Women's socks
- *Are there any other announcements?*



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

*Liturgical Color Green – Ordinary Time
Lectionary Year A Proper 20(25)*

Presider: Peter Norland
Musician: Susie Byykkonen
Greeters: NEEDED
Reader: Ann Campbell
Prayer Writer: Jim Northey
Coffee Hour: Ann Campbell

MEDITATION

The house of my soul is too small for you to enter:
make it more spacious by your coming.

from The Confessions, by Saint Augustine

PRELUDE

This is My Father's World

traditional English melody/arr. Victor Labenske

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

✦ CALL TO WORSHIP (Responsive)

The wilderness is still.

The hungry are left empty.

The cracked earth crumbles.

The thirsty cry out.

The Promise Keeper pulls them close.

God, hear us now.

Water flows.

The Holy One listens.

A feast from heaven.

The Holy One provides.



Photo by Ann Campbell

+HYMN “Let the Whole Creation Cry” #256 BLUE

1 Let the whole creation cry,
"Glory to the Lord on high"
Heaven and earth, awake and sing,
"God is our eternal King."
Praise God, all ye hosts above,
Ever shining forth in love;
Sun and moon, uplift your voice;
Night and stars, in God rejoice!

2 Men and women, young and old,
Raise the anthem manifold;
Join with children's songs of praise,
Worship God through length of days.
From the north to southern pole
Let the mighty chorus roll:
"Holy, holy, holy One,
Glory be to God alone!"

Stopford A. Brooke, 1881

Jacob Hintze, 1678
Harm. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
As in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, 1861



1. Let the whole cre - a - tion cry, "Glo-ry to the Lord on high."
2. Men and wom - en, young and old, Raise the an - them man - i - fold;



Heaven and earth, a - wake and sing, "God is our e - ter - nal King."
Join with chil-dren's songs of praise, Wor - ship God through length of days.



Praise God, all ye hosts a - bove, Ev - er shin - ing forth in love;
From the north to south-ern pole Let the might - y cho - rus roll:



Sun and moon, up - lift your voice; Night and stars, in God re - joice!
"Ho-ly, ho - ly, ho - ly One, Glo - ry be to God a - lone!"

✚ PRAYER OF THE DAY



O God,
who knows our every need before we can even ask,
You provide all our needs and some of our wants.
You bless us all.
Make truly thankful,
and empower us to bless others from the gifts you have given us,
For the glory of your name,
Amen.

✚ PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Unison)

God of generosity,
we find ourselves bitter
when faced with your abundant grace.
We believe ourselves more deserving than others.
We nurse our anger and resentment at those you
forgive,
instead of rejoicing in the abundant love you show.
Forgive us when we wish your grace was scarce.
Forgive the double standards we hold.
Help us to know that we are all in need of your grace,
and help us rejoice as we all gratefully receive your
mercy.



+ DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS (Responsive)

The grace of God is boundless,
poured out freely for all of us.

We will receive this gift of forgiveness,
and trust God to transform our lives!



Photo – Ann Campbell

✦ PASSING THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you all.

And also with you.

Greet each other with a sign of God's peace.

Children of God, we are the body of Christ.

**By one spirit
we were baptized into one body.**

Keep the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

Amen! We are bound by the love of Christ.



WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture, reading,
preaching and song*



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IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER
Ezekiel 47:8, 12

Manna in the Wilderness

FIRST READING Exodus 16:2–15 (2-8 shown here)

² The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. ³ The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and ate our fill of bread, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” ⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, “In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?” ⁸ And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.”

FIRST READING Exodus 16:2–15 (9-15 shown here)

⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites: ‘Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining.’ ” ¹⁰ And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked toward the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. ¹¹ The LORD spoke to Moses, ¹² “I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’ ”

¹³ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. ¹⁴ When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**

Second Reading Philippians 1:21-30

²¹ For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain. ²² If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me, yet I cannot say which I will choose. ²³ I am hard pressed between the two: my desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better, ²⁴ but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for you. ²⁵ Since I am convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in faith, ²⁶ so that, by my presence again with you, your boast might abound in Christ Jesus because of me.

²⁷ Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ and in no way frightened by those opposing you. For them, this is evidence of their destruction but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. ²⁹ For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ but of suffering for him as well, ³⁰ since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Word of God. Word of Life. **Thanks be to God**



"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

#281 BLUE

1 Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
Whence the healing stream doth flow;
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through;
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
Be Thou still my strength and shield, Be Thou still my
strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to Thee, I will ever give to Thee.

William Williams, 1745
Stanza 1 trans. Peter Williams, 1771
Stanzas 2-3 trans. William Williams, 1772

John Hughes, 1907

1. Guide me, O Thou great Je - ho - vah, Pil - grim through this
2. O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, Whence the heal - ing
3. When I tread the verge of Jor - dan, Bid my anx - ious

bar - ren land; I am weak, but Thou art might - y; Hold me
stream doth flow; Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar Lead me
fears sub - side; Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, Land me

with Thy power - ful hand; Bread of heav - en, bread of heav - en,
all my jour - ney through; Strong de - liv - erer, strong de - liv - erer,
safe on Ca - naan's side; Songs of prais - es, songs of prais - es

Feed me till I want no more, Feed me till I want no more.
Be Thou still my strength and shield, Be Thou still my strength and shield.
I will ev - er give to Thee, I will ev - er give to Thee.

+ GOSPEL READING Matthew 20:1–16

The Laborers in the Vineyard

20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ² After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. ³ When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, ⁴ and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. ⁵ When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. ⁶ And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ ⁷ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ ⁸ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ ⁹ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. ¹⁰ Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. ¹¹ And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹² saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ ¹³ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? ¹⁴ Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵ Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ ¹⁶ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

Sermon



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IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER

Ezekiel 47:9, 12

OFFERING AND PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

Lord, giver of all good gifts,
thank you for the resources gathered here.
Use these gifts for the advancement of your kingdom;
in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



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IMMERSION IN LIVING WATER

Ezekiel 47:9, 12

HYMN “For the Fruit of All Creation” #553 BLUE

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Fred Pratt Green, 1970

Francis Jackson, 1957

1. For the fruit of all cre - a - tion, Thanks be to God.
2. In the just re - ward of la - bor, God's will be done.
3. For the har-vests of the Spir - it, Thanks be to God.

For the gifts to ev - ery na - tion, Thanks be to God.
In the help we give our neigh-bor, God's will be done.
For the good we all in - her - it, Thanks be to God.

For the plow - ing, sow - ing, reap-ing, Si - lent growth while we are sleep-ing,
In our world-wide task of car - ing For the hun - gry and de - spair-ing,
For the won - ders that as-tound us, For the truths that still con-found us,

Fu - ture needs in earth's safe-keep-ing, Thanks be to God.
In the har-vests we are shar-ing, God's will be done.
Most of all that love has found us, Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



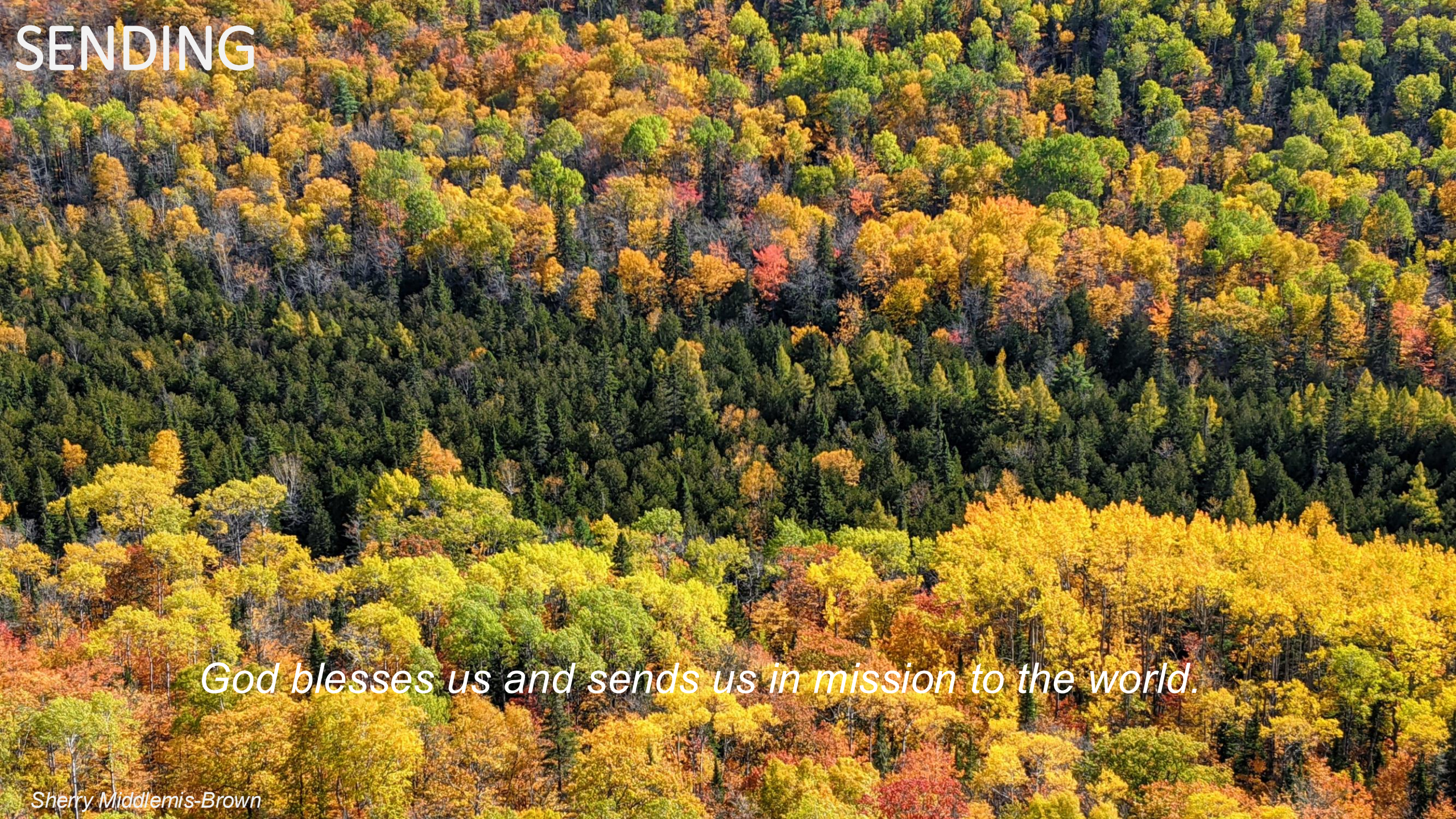
God of living water
Quench the thirst of your world.

Photo by Sherry Middlemis-Brown

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR (ECUMENICAL)

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.





SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Sherry Middlemiss-Brown

"God you Spin the Whirling Planets" #285 BLUE

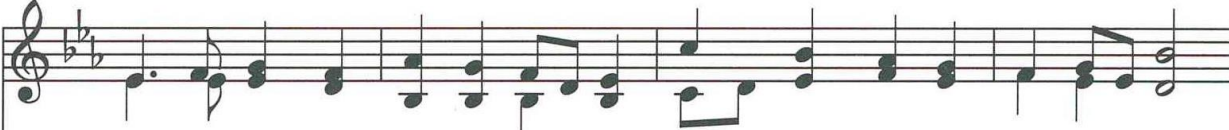
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Jane Parker Huber, 1978

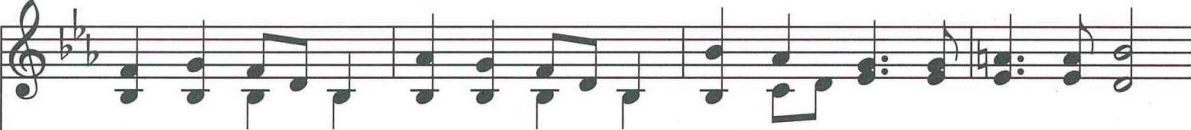
Franz Joseph Haydn, 1797



1. God, You spin the whirl-ing plan-ets, Fill the seas and spread the plain,
2. You have called us to be faith-ful In our life and min-is-try.
3. God, Your word is still cre-at-ing, Call-ing us to life made new.



Mold the moun-tains, fash-ion blos-soms, Call forth sun-shine, wind, and rain.
We re-pond in grate-ful wor-ship Joined in one com-mu-ni-ty.
Now re-veal to us fresh vis-tas Where there's work to dare and do.



We, cre-at-ed in Your im-age, Would a true re-flec-tion be
When we blur Your gra-cious im-age, Fo-cus us and make us whole.
Keep us clear of all dis-tor-tion. Pol-ish us with lov-ing care.



Of Your jus-tice, grace, and mer-cy And the truth that makes us free.
Healed and strength-ened as Your peo-ple, We move on-ward toward Your goal.
Thus, new crea-tures in Your im-age, We'll pro-claim Christ ev-ery-where.



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CHARGE AND BLESSING

Beloved, you can rest in the knowledge that God always provides.
Be bold and trust in God's provision, and give and love with a generous heart!

Beloved, may God continue to bless and keep you.
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



POSTLUDE

Take My Life and Let it Be

Henry A.C. Malan/arr. Victor Labenske

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

In Matthew 20:1–16, what is the landowner's motivation for paying the workers the same wages?

When has God provided for you?



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Ezekiel 47:9, 12

The overarching theme for this year comes from Ezekiel 47: 1-12, which portrays God's life-giving water flowing from the temple of God. The river grows deeper and deeper restoring barren land, reviving waters, and sustaining flourishing ecosystems. The vision invites human responsibility: recognizing ecological damage, embracing interconnectedness, we are called to immerse ourselves in the water, and actively safeguarding and working for the renewal of creation so that environmental healing and human well-being may flourish together.

Thanks to:

Presider: Peter Norland
Musician: Susie Byykkonen
Greeters: NEEDED
Reader: Ann Campbell
Prayer Writer: Jim Northey
Coffee Hour: Ann Campbell

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Serving Next Week, September 27th, 2026

Presider: Peter Norland Musician: Susie Byykkonen
Greeters: Marla and David Bonhoff Reader: Christina Norland
Prayer Writer: Greg Campbell Coffee Hour: Lois Jambekar
Next week's scripture:
Ex. 17:1–7; 12–16; Phil. 2:1–13; Mt. 21:23–32



Portage Lake United Church

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) & UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Rooted in the Trinity. Growing in God's Word.
Branching out to those in need. Nourished by many waters.