

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 13, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE *"Little Rondo"* Richard Blake
Deon Spangler

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 103)

Let my whole being bless the Lord!
Let everything inside me bless his holy name!
The Lord is compassionate and merciful,
very patient, and full of faithful love.
**God doesn't deal with us according to our sin
or repay us according to our wrongdoing,**
As high as heaven is above the earth,
**that's how large God's faithful love is for those who
honor him.**
As far as east is from west—
that's how far God has removed our sin from us.
Like a parent feels compassion for their children—
**that's how God feels compassion for those who
honor him.**
All God's creatures, bless the Lord!
Let my whole being bless the Lord!

GATHERING PRAYER

**We sing and speak your praise, O God, grateful for
the many ways in which you have healed us. Keep
our hearts, our minds, and our spirits open to learn
ways in which we can offer healing love for others.
For we ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.**

HYMN *"This is a Day of New Beginnings"*

#417 NCH vs 1-3 Brian Wren

**1 This is a day of new beginnings,
time to remember, and move on,
time to believe what love is bringing,
laying to rest the pain that's gone.**

**2 For by the life and death of Jesus,
love's mighty Spirit, now as then,**

**can make for us a world of difference
as faith and hope are born again.**

**3 Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,
step from the past, and leave behind
our disappointment, guilt and grieving,
seeking new paths, and sure to find.**

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

**God of grace and mercy, you have showered us with
unending, undeserved forgiveness, and yet, we are
loathe to extend that forgiveness to others. You tell
us to forgive "as we have been forgiven," but we
hold on to grudges and refuse to forgive the ones
who have hurt us unless they show some sign of
change and contrition. Forgive our judgmental ways.
Teach us to be humble and merciful. Remind us of
the many ways in which you have offered, time and
time again, your forgiving love to us. Heal our
wounds and bind up our brokenness. For we ask this
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

WORDS OF GRACE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

**One: The Peace of God be with you.
Many: And also with you.**

All are invited to greet one another with words such as
"The peace of Christ be with you,"
and the response: *"And also with you".*

HYMN *"Change My Heart, O God"*

#373 W&R Eddie Espinosa

**Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.
You are the Potter, I am the clay;
Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS Rosie Repinski

NEW TESTAMENT **Romans 14:1-12**

¹ Welcome the person who is weak in faith—but not in order to argue about differences of opinion. ² One person believes in eating everything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Those who eat must not look down on the ones who don't, and the ones who don't eat must not judge the ones who do, because God has accepted them. ⁴ Who are you to judge someone else's servants? They stand or fall before their own Lord (and they will stand, because the Lord has the power to make them stand). ⁵ One person considers some days to be more sacred than others, while another person considers all days to be the same. Each person must have their own convictions.

⁶ Someone who thinks that a day is sacred, thinks that way for the Lord. Those who eat, eat for the Lord, because they thank God. And those who don't eat, don't eat for the Lord, and they thank the Lord too.

⁷ We don't live for ourselves and we don't die for ourselves. ⁸ If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God. ⁹ This is why Christ died and lived: so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you look down on your brother or sister? We all will stand in front of the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ Because it is written,

*As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me,
and every tongue will give praise to God.*

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

GOSPEL **Matthew 18:21-35**

²¹ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Should I forgive as many as seven times?"

²² Jesus said, "Not just seven times, but rather as many as seventy-seven times. ²³ Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle accounts, they brought to him a servant who owed him ten thousand bags of gold. ²⁵ Because the servant didn't have enough to pay it back, the master ordered that he should be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, and that the proceeds should be used as payment. ²⁶ But the servant fell down, knelt before him, and said, 'Please, be patient with me, and

I'll pay you back.' ²⁷ The master had compassion on that servant, released him, and forgave the loan.

²⁸ "When that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred coins. He grabbed him around the throat and said, 'Pay me back what you owe me.'

²⁹ "Then his fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I'll pay you back.' ³⁰ But he refused. Instead, he threw him into prison until he paid back his debt.

³¹ "When his fellow servants saw what happened, they were deeply offended. They came and told their master all that happened. ³² His master called the first servant and said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you appealed to me. ³³ Shouldn't you also have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ His master was furious and handed him over to the guard responsible for punishing prisoners, until he had paid the whole debt. ³⁵ "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if you don't forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

SERMON "Forgive Us Our Debts" Pastor Julie

HYMN "I Then Shall Live"

#372 W&R Gloria Gaither

**1 I then shall live as one who's been forgiven;
I'll walk with joy to know my debts are paid;
I know my name is clear before my Father;
I am His child and I am not afraid.
So, greatly pardoned, I'll forgive my brother;
The law of love I gladly will obey.**

**2 I then shall live as one who's learned compassion;
I've been so loved that I'll risk loving, too.
I know how fear builds walls instead of bridges;
I'll dare to see another's point of view.
And when relationships demand commitment,
Then I'll be there to care and follow through.**

**3 Your Kingdom come around and through and in me;
Your power and glory – let them shine through me;
Your hallowed name, oh, may I bear with honor,
And may your living kingdom come in me.
The Bread of Life, oh, may I share with honor,
And may you feed a hungry world through me.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory "Prayer From Finlandia" Sibelius

Doxology "We Give You But Your Own"

#785 NCH William W. How

We give you but your own,
What-e'er the gift may be;
All that we have is yours alone,
We give it gratefully. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Generous and Merciful God, you have blessed our
lives in so many ways. In gratitude for all these
blessings and in confidence that our gifts will be
used for ministries of peace and hope, we offer
these gifts. Amen.

HYMN "In All Our Living"

#499 NCH Mexican folk hymn, Elise S. Eslinger

1 In all our living, we belong to God;
And in our dying, we are still with God;
So, whether living, or whether dying,
We belong to God; we belong to God.

2 God sent Christ Jesus to be our shalom,
To show us mercy and healing love;
So in our living and in our dying,
Christ is our shalom; Christ is our shalom.

BLESSING

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS

*As we are gathered together as children of God, we
are called to share our blessings and joys and our
concerns, our deepest fears, sadnesses, griefs and
needs so that we may bear one another up and
support each other in prayer and Christian love.*

HYMN "This is a Day of New Beginnings"

#417 NCH vs 4

Brian Wren

4 Christ is alive, and goes before us
to show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
our God is making all things new.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM

This week's radio broadcast is
sponsored by Joel & Marla Raine
in celebration of 52 years together.

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.
We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, September 13, 2026

<https://youtube.com/live/z-F-jefac5E>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, September 13th

- 9:30 AM Worship

Deacon — Byrl Buddenhagen

Greeters — Sandy Bieneck & Michelle Bergemann

Ushers — Craig Heck, Bob Petkovsek

Power Point — Brynn or Calvin Heck

AV — Stephanie Heck

*FYI - (for those who are scheduled for PowerPoint/AV
it is suggested that you arrive 30 minutes prior to
the church service to get the laptop turned on,
allow for any updates, get screen down and start
running the announcements).*

Following Sunday, September 20th at CALVARY

Deacon –

Greeters – Donita & Phil Follen

Ushers – Debbie & Mike Perkl

Power Point – not needed

AV – not needed

Tuesday, September 15th

- 1:00 PM – Bible Study

- 5:30 PM – Trustees Meeting

Saturday, September 19th

Noon – 4 PM - Chili Contest

Sunday, September 20th

9:00 AM – Joint Worship at Calvary

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Sept 13 – JoAnn Voss

Sept 20 – at Calvary

Sept 27 –

Oct 4 –

Oct 11 -

We need people to sign up

Saturday,

September 19th

12 NOON to 4 PM



Organizations and individuals
will be creating 12 “amazing chilis”

Your donation of \$8 (adult) or \$4 (child under 7)
will get you a bottomless cup of chili

PLUS a ticket to vote for your favorite chili!

(ALL proceeds will go to our local food pantry!)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20th

9:00 AM – Joint Worship at Calvary



**Meal
Giveaway**

UCC NEILLSVILLE

515 West Second Street

September 20, 2026

9:45 - 10:00 AM