

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
September 27, 2026
United Church of Christ - Neillsville
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE *"Prelude & Fugue in C"* J.S. Bach
Karen Mohr

RINGING OF THE CARILLON
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, let us worship God who provides for us.

Even though we whine and complain, God hears our cries.

Lift your voices in praise, for God has come to comfort you.

Thanks be to God who forgives and heals our wounded souls.

Come, celebrate God's steadfast love.

Open our hearts, O Lord, and let us truly listen to your words.

GATHERING PRAYER

God of hope and peace, you are with us in all our days and in all our ways. As you walked with the Israelites in the desert, when they had given up hope, you came to them with nourishment and your steadfast love. As Jesus walked through Jerusalem, healing the sick and those afflicted, your love was made abundantly clear through acts of love and mercy. Be with us this day as we gather to hear your word. Inspire and encourage us in all that we do, that we may serve you faithfully, bringing hope and your message of love to your thirsting world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

HYMN *"Come O Fount of Every Blessing"*

#459 NCH Robert Robinson

**1 Come, O Fount of every blessing;
tune my heart to sing your grace;
streams of mercy, never ceasing,
call for songs of endless praise.
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
sung by flaming tongues above;
praise the mount; I'm fixed upon it,
mount of God's unfailing love!**

**2 Here I pause in my sojourning,
Giving thanks for having come,
Come to trust, at every turning,
God will guide me safely home.
Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
Came to rescue me from danger,
Blessed body, precious blood.**

**3 O to grace how great a debtor
daily I am drawn anew!
Let that grace now, like a fetter,
bind my wandering heart to you.
Prone to wander, I can feel it,
Wander from the love I've known:
here's my heart; O take and seal it;
seal it for your very own.**

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

How quick we are to say yes to you, Holy God, and then we turn around and forget our bold words of commitment. We really want to serve, but we are very weak and are easily drawn away by cares and fears. We pledge ourselves to working for your kingdom but find ourselves pulled this way and that by other demands on our time and energy. Forgive us, gracious God, when we so quickly drop our commitments to serving you. Heal our spirits and give us the bold courage to truly be your disciples. For we ask these things in Jesus' Name. 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 Deb Perkl

SCRIPTURE READINGS Deb Perkl

OLD TESTAMENT Exodus 17:1-7

17 The whole Israelite community broke camp and set out from the Sin desert to continue their journey, as the LORD commanded. They set up their camp at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²The people argued with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why are you arguing with me? Why are you testing the LORD?"

³But the people were very thirsty for water there, and they complained to Moses, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst?"

⁴So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with this people? They are getting ready to stone me."

⁵The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people, and take some of Israel's elders with you. Take in your hand the shepherd's rod that you used to strike the Nile River, and go. ⁶I'll be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Hit the rock. Water will come out of it, and the people will be able to drink." Moses did so while Israel's elders watched. ⁷He called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites argued with and tested the LORD, asking, "Is the LORD really with us or not?"

GOSPEL Matthew 21:23-32

²³When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and elders of the people came to him as he was teaching. They asked, "What kind of authority do you have for doing these things? Who gave you this authority?"

²⁴Jesus replied, "I have a question for you. If you tell me the answer, I'll tell you what kind of authority I have to do these things. ²⁵Where did John get his authority to baptize? Did he get it from heaven or from humans?"

They argued among themselves, "If we say 'from heaven,' he'll say to us, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' ²⁶But we can't say 'from humans' because we're afraid of the crowd, since everyone thinks John was a prophet." ²⁷Then they replied, "We don't know." Jesus also said to them, "Neither will I tell you what kind of authority I have to do these things.

²⁸"What do you think? A man had two sons. Now he came to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.'

²⁹"'No, I don't want to,' he replied. But later he changed his mind and went.

³⁰"The father said the same thing to the other son, who replied, 'Yes, sir.' But he didn't go.

³¹"Which one of these two did his father's will?" They said, "The first one."

Jesus said to them, "I assure you that tax collectors and prostitutes are entering God's kingdom ahead of you. ³²For John came to you on the righteous road, and you didn't believe him. But tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Yet even after you saw this, you didn't change your hearts and lives and you didn't believe him.

SERMON "Walk the Talk" Pastor Julie

HYMN *"Here I Am, Lord"*

#559 W&R Daniel L. Schutte

**1 I, the Lord of sea and sky
I have heard my people cry
All who dwell in dark and sin
My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night
I will make their darkness bright
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?**

[Chorus]

**Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night
I will go, Lord, if you lead me
I will hold your people in my heart**

**2 I, the Lord of snow and rain
I have borne my people's pain
I have wept for love of them
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone
Give them hearts for love alone**

I will speak my words to them
Whom shall I send? *[Chorus]*

3 I, the Lord of wind and flame
I will tend the poor and lame
I will set a feast for them
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied
I will give my life to them
Whom shall I send? *[Chorus]*

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 *"My Heart is Ever Faithful"* J.S. Bach

Doxology *"We Give You But Your Own"*

#785 NCH Wm. 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

God who Provides, as we present our offerings
before you, sanctify them for your glory and
magnify them for your people. Amen.

HYMN *"O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing"*

#42 NCH (vs 1-3) Charles Wesley

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories ever echoing,
the triumphs of God's grace!

2 My gracious Savior and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of your name.

3 Jesus! the name that calms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
is music in the sinner's ears,
is life and health and peace.

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 *"O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing"*

#42 NCH vs 4 Charles Wesley

4 Glory to God and love and praise
be ever, ever given
by all the saints in every age,
the church in earth and heaven.

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE



RADIO BROADCAST

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

This week's radio broadcast is
sponsored by Marge Felser
in fond remembrance of husband,
Joe Felser's October 7th birthday.

Tuesday, September 29th
- 1:00 PM – Bible Study

Wednesday, September 30th
- 4:15 – 5:30 PM Confirmation at Julie's home
- 5:00 – 5:45 PM – JAM at Calvary church

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 27, 2026
<https://youtube.com/live/HMfcPq5GZgQ>

Coffee fellowship after worship -
Sign up on back bulletin board

Sept 27 – Nancy & Kirk Rodman
Oct 4 –
Oct 11
Oct 18
Oct 25 - Circle of Friends

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, September 27th

- 9:30 AM Worship

Deacon – Sally Sadowska
Greeters – Steve & Leslie Buchholz
Ushers – Jerry Hamm,
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, October 4th

Deacon – Karlene Wallace
Greeters – Audrey Vradenburg & Jim Vradenburg
Ushers – Mickey Marty & Joel Raine
Power Point – Paul Vine
AV – Emile Miller



**for the October
Newsletter to the office
no later than Tuesday,
September 29th – 9 AM**