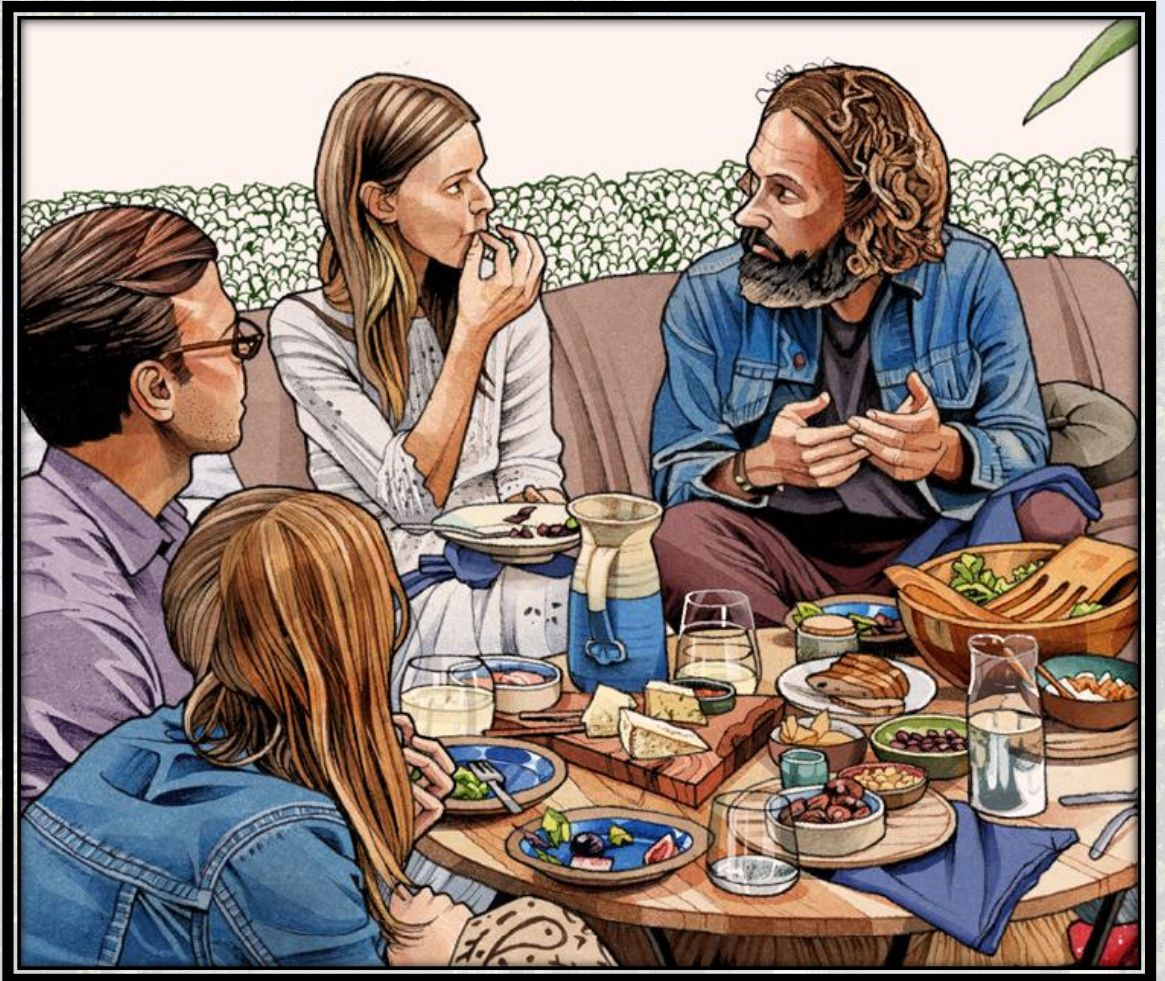


# The Mount Carmel Congregational Church

*A United Church of Christ*



*Reclining at a Table with Jesus, Adam Cruft c. 2022*

**Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost**  
**September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

## Prelude

“Amazing Grace”

*Arr. Robert Hobby*

## Greeting

### Passing of the Peace of Christ

#### Call to Worship

One: The voice of God calls us to worship this morning;

**All: The warmth of God brings us together as one people.**

One: So we come, with joy and sorrow in our hearts,

**All: With acts both mighty and faltering,**

One: With kindness and with selfishness,

**All: With doubt and with faith.**

One: We bring all that we are to worship God.

**All: Let us worship with all that we are.**

#### \*Hymn

“Come, We Who Love God’s Name”

NCH #382

## The Call to Confession

### Unison Prayer of Confession

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgmental and critical of our neighbors, family, and friends. We often project our own shortcomings onto others to deflect attention from our mistakes. We have withheld forgiveness, mercy, and grace from those who have wronged us, even as we have sought grace for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves. You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world that needs an infusion of grace for transformation at almost every turn. In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer: let us forgive as you forgive. Amen.

## Words of Assurance

**The First Lesson:**

Psalm 103

Mark Leach

Let my whole being praise the Lord!

Let everything inside me bless God's holy name!

Let my whole being bless the Lord

and never forget all God's good deeds:

how God forgives all your sins,

heals all your sickness,

saves your life from the pit,

crowns you with faithful love and compassion,

and satisfies you with plenty of good things

so that your youth is made fresh like an eagle's.

The Lord works righteousness;

does justice for all who are oppressed.

God made the way known to Moses;

made God's deeds known to the Israelites.

The Lord is compassionate and merciful,

very patient, and full of faithful love.

God won't always play the judge;

the Lord will not be angry forever.

God doesn't deal with us according to our sin

or repay us according to our wrongdoing,

because as high as heaven is above the earth,

that's how large God's faithful love is

for those who honor the Lord.

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 God's own.

**Hymn**

“There is a Balm in Gilead”

NCH #533

***[Please remain seated for this hymn.]***

**The Second Lesson:**

Romans 14: 1-12

Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.

For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.

Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.

What's important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for God's sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's God we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.

So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture:

“As I live and breathe,” God says,  
“every knee will bow before me;  
Every tongue will tell the honest truth  
that I and only I am God.”

So mind your own business. You’ve got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

## **Sermon**

**\*Hymn**            “Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound”    NCH #547

## **The Joys and Concerns of the Parish Family**

Please remember the following persons in your prayers: Kayla Amato, Barabara Strauss, Sterling Marenholz; Karl Paulette; Amos Hewitt; Rhonda Pruzinsky; Gilbert Spencer; Ron Vanacore; and Kathy Willey.

## **Moments of Silent Prayer**

### **Pastoral Prayer**

#### **The Lord’s Prayer**

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 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.

### **Call to Offering**

#### **Offertory**

“There is a Balm”  
*Arr. Gilbert Martin*

**\*The Doxology**

*Proclaim again that God is good,  
Whose mercy is forever sure,  
Whose truth at all times firmly stood,  
And shall from age to age endure. Amen.*

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**\*Hymn**                   “Christian, Rise and Act Your Creed”   NCH #537

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude**               “Come We That Love the Lord”  
*Arr. Edwin T Childs*

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*As a community of faith, gathered in Christ's love,  
we strive to support one another in hearing the Word,  
living the Word, and sharing the Word.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**The Deadline for October Bell Tree Submissions is this coming Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>. Please submit any materials to the office by 12pm in order to ensure inclusion in October’s newsletter!**

**As a reminder, Prayer Shawls are always available to those who need them. If you or anyone you know are in need of one, please contact Aren in the office and he will arrange a shawl for you.**

**Please join us on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup> at 2pm for Reverend Milton’s Installation as our Minister, followed by a reception in the Hall. More information is to come, so stay tuned!**

## **FALL WORSHIP: A LOOK AHEAD**

*Please join us every Sunday at 9am for service!*

### **September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

*Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

**Scripture:** Exodus 16: 2-15  
Psalm 105: 1-6, 37-45  
Philippians 1: 21-30  
Matthew 20: 1-16

### **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023**

*Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

#### **Holy Communion**

**Scripture:** Exodus 17: 1-7  
Psalm 78: 1-4, 12-16  
Philippians 2: 1-13  
Matthew 21: 23-32

### **October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

*Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

**Scripture:** Exodus 14: 19-31  
Psalm 114  
Romans 14: 1-12  
Matthew 18: 21-35

### **October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

*Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost*

**Scripture:** Exodus 32: 12-23  
Psalm 106: 1-6, 19-23  
Philippians 4: 1-9  
Matthew 22: 1-14

September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023



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