The Mount Carmel Congregational Church

A United Church of Christ

When Two Or More Are Gathered,
Anthony Falbo (2012-2013)

Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost
September 6, 2026

Prelude "O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig"
JS Bach

Greeting and Announcements

Passing of the Peace of Christ

Call to Worship

One: The change in our calendar reminds us that summer is ending and the seasons are changing.

All: But we can see that without a calendar, in the natural rhythm of cooling days and nights, of fading crops, and changing leaves.

One: Our schedules aside, we are a part of the great melody of all creation, sharing our world with all that lives and breathes as companions.

All: If we pay attention, we see every bush ablaze with the glory of God.

One: And so we come to worship our God whose love knows no bounds, whose presence is unending, whose call compels us to respond.

All: This is the day our God has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

***Hymn** "God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending" NCH #565

Unison Prayer

Loving God, we know we often fall short. We turn our backs when we could embrace. We remain silent when we could speak up for someone. We speak as though we were experts when we would do better to listen and learn. We close doors in fear when we could fling them wide open in hope. We judge when we could ask questions and seek better understanding. We cling to what we have when we could share and grow in our trust of your abundance. Forgive us, O God, and help us to continue to grow into the people you created us to be, through Christ we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 18:1-20 Nancy Olson

On that occasion the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in God's realm?"

Then he called a child over and stand among them and said, "I assure you that if you don't turn your lives around and become like children, you will definitely not enter the God's realm. Those who humble themselves to be like this little child will be the greatest in the God's realm. Whoever takes in a child in my name takes me in.

"Whoever sets a trap for one of these little ones who trust in me would be better for them to have a huge stone hung around their necks and be drowned in the bottom of the lake. How terrible it is for the world because of the things that cause people to trip and fall into sin! Such traps are unavoidable, but the person who is responsible for a trap has it coming! If your hand or your foot sets a trap for you, chop it off and throw it away. It's better to enter into life maimed or crippled than to be thrown into the eternal fire with two hands or two feet. If your eye sets a trap for you, tear it out and throw it away. It's better to enter into life with one eye than to be cast into *Gehenna* with two eyes.

"Be careful that you don't sneer at a single one of these little ones, since I tell you that their angels in heaven never stop looking into the face of God. What do you think? If someone had one hundred sheep and one of them wandered off, wouldn't he leave the ninety-nine on the hillsides and go in search for the wandering one? If he finds it, I assure you that he has more joy about having that one sheep than about the ninety-nine who didn't wander. In the same way, God is not willing to lose a single one of these little ones.

"If your brother or sister wrongs you, go and prove to them what they have done when you are alone together. If they listen to you, then you've won over your brother or sister. But if they won't listen, take with you one or two others with you so that every statement gets confirmed from the mouth of two or three witnesses."

"But if they still won't pay attention, report it to the assembly. If they won't pay attention even to the assembly, treat them as you would someone from another nation. I assure you that whatever you fasten on earth will be fastened in heaven. And whatever you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven. Again I assure you that if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, then God will grant it. In fact, wherever two or three gather because of my name, I'm there in the middle of the gathering."

Sermon

Hymn "We Love Your Realm, O God" NCH #312
(*Please remain seated for this hymn.*)

A Season of Prayer for Our Church and the World
Please remember the following in your prayers: Fred Tiedemann; Rhonda Pruzinsky; Cari Jansen; Carol Fitzsimmons; Randy States; and Jean Vancamp. We also pray for the family and friends of Evelyn Montano, that they may find peace during this difficult time.

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy names. 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 "Psalm Prelude III"
Herbert Howells

***The Doxology**
Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God for all that Love has done,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit—One. Amen.

***Unison Prayer of Dedication**
Gracious and Giving God, each time we gather we are reminded that you are what binds us together. We are here because you love us and you made us capable of loving each other. May our gifts be a token of our gratitude for your love which nurtures, sustains, and challenges us. Amen.

Hymn "Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation" NCH #400

Benediction

Postlude "Grand Chœur in F"
Theodore Salome

ANNOUNCMENTS

Due to Labor Day weekend, there will be no coffee hour or communion. Please join us next Sunday for our special Homecoming Sunday worship with Communion, followed by a luncheon!

The Bell Choir is starting up again! No audition or prior experience is required, just a willingness to learn. Rehearsals will take place at 8:30 AM when our regular 10:00 AM services resume.

Please join Shirts and Skirts for their annual Penny Auction, taking place on Tuesday, September 22 at 5:00pm! Admission is $3.00 per person, and we ask that that you RSVP by Sunday, September 20. For more information, please see our September Bell Tree!

SEPTEMBER WORSHIP: A LOOK AHEAD

Please join us every Sunday at 10am for our worship service!

September 13, 2026: Homecoming Sunday

Communion, *Sixteenth Sunday After Pentecost*
Scripture: Exodus 14:19-31
Psalm 114
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

September 20, 2026

Seventeenth Sunday After Pentecost
Scripture: Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105:1-6, 37-45
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16
Sermon: Aren Alberico

September 27, 2026

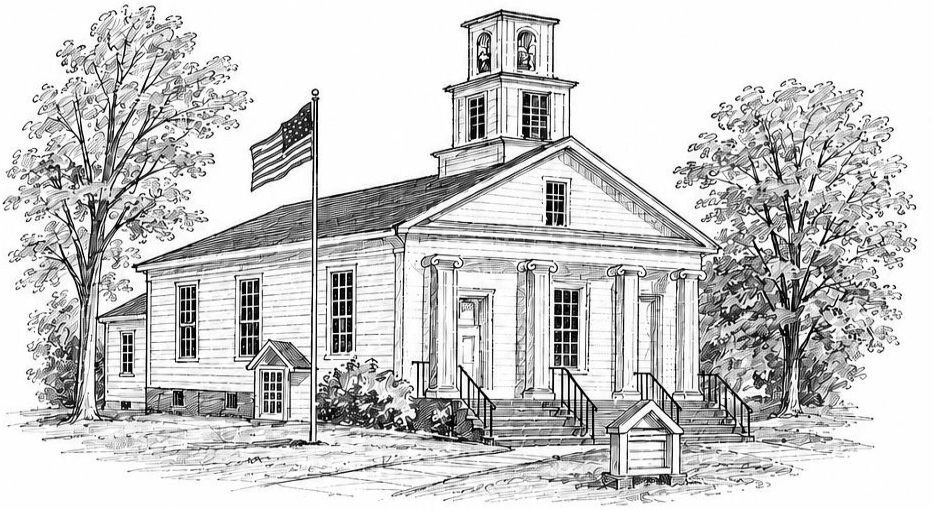
Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Scripture: Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78:1-4,12-16
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

October 4, 2026: Communion

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Scripture: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20
Psalm 19
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

HOMECOMING SUNDAY

Worship & Communion • Luncheon



Sunday, September 13

Worship followed by Homecoming Sunday Luncheon

Bring a dish to share!

Salads • Chips • Desserts

Large deli tray and finger sandwiches provided.

RSVP / Sign up to bring a cold dish

by Tuesday, September 1

Debbie Wooley — ce@mccucc.com

Aren Alberico — office@mccucc.com

Come home. Gather together. Begin a new church year.

September 6, 2026

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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.