

**Peace United Church of Christ
September 27, 2026
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost
10:30am**



Woven Bird, Tree, and Flower Motif, William Morris

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Prelude

Hallelujah, Leonard Cohen

Possibilities Quartet

Welcome and Announcements

Ringling of the Bells

Choral Call to Worship

***Come and remember who you are here
Do this to remember who I am
Come and remember you belong here
All belong here***

*Call to Worship

from Psalm 25

To you, O God, we lift up our souls. We trust you!
Make your ways known to us. Teach us your truths.
To you, O God, we lift up our souls. We follow you!
Lead us in your ways. Your path liberates and saves.
To you, O God, we lift up our souls. We worship you!
Guide us in humility and goodness. Let us worship God!

*Song

I Sing the Praise of Love Almighty

#50, New Century Hymnal

***I sing the praise of Love almighty,
which shines revealed in Jesus' face.
I offer up all that delights me,
all mean desires, each fond embrace,
Turn from myself, in pure devotion,
and eager plunge in love's vast ocean.
How lovingkind you are, how gentle,
how your heart reaches after mine!
My heart responds in elemental
sympathy, beating perfect time.
This mutual love, this strong attraction,
I know no other satisfaction.
Secure my heart and all my being,
in you, my Savior, crucified.
You gave your life to work my healing,
bleeding for me, you groaned and died.
Beloved Jesus, my salvation,
you have, through love, restored creation.
May my heart bear the deep impression
of love that Jesus shares with me,
My life become a pure expression***

***of all that Christian love can be:
Each word, each act, a bright reflection
of joy in Love's own resurrection.***

***Prayer of Confession**

Holy One, you lead us in your ways of love, community, and belonging. We confess that we struggle to keep these priorities at the center of our relationships. Teach us to be loving even as we struggle. Lead us to trust in you and one another. Transform us that we would seek your guidance in all things. Amen.

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

Beloved, our God always meets us with compassion and care. Through Christ, we are forgiven and transformed for new life, in trust and in faith. Thanks be to God!

Story for All Ages

Amanda McElray Hunter

Sending the Children

***Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
Gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Immanuel) everywhere!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves
abound!
Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves
abound!***

Hebrew Bible Reading

Genesis 12-15

Laurie Berner, reader

paraphrase from *The Book of Belonging*, Mariko Clark

Have you ever noticed how long walks help straighten out your thoughts? *Left, right, left, right.* Abraham had been walking for so long that all his thoughts lay smooth. *God knows me, God spoke to me, God made big promises,* Abraham thought. "Follow me to a new land, where I will make your family grow into a nation," was God's invitation. "From that new land, through your great family, I will bless the whole world." Abraham and his wife Sarah were being invited to join God's dream. To start a new place of belonging, where everyone could learn about God and God's good names for them.

Abraham and Sarah were old—as old as your great-grandparents—yet they had never been able to have children. Their hearts held questions. And God was with them. "Don't be afraid, Abraham," God soothed. "You're protected, and you're never alone. I will bless you." As Abraham stood, bathed in starlight and dust, he considered his journey with God to this new place. His travels with Sarah had been long and their mistakes many, but God had always been with them. When they stumbled, God scooped them up. When they failed, God had been faithful. When they were in danger, God had delivered them.

"Okay," Abraham finally said to God. Throwing his hands up in a gesture both exhausted and amused, he sighed and said, "I trust you." Abraham's

circumstances shifted like dust, and his hopes flickered in and out like the stars. But God was a solid place to belong. Abraham rested in that belonging and trusted in God's dream. It was exactly right, exactly good, exactly as it should be.

Choir Anthem

Gloria, Antonio Vivaldi

Gospel Reading

Matthew 21:23-32

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

Song

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

#23, *New Century Hymnal*

***There's a wideness in God's mercy,
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice,
which is more than liberty.
There's no place where earthly sorrows
are more felt than in God's heaven;
there's no place where earthly failings
have such kindly judgment given.
For the love of God is broader than
the measures of our minds;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more faithful,
we would gladly trust God's word***

***and our lives would show thanksgiving
for the goodness of our God.***

Community Prayers and Pastoral Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

**Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom 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. Lead us not into
temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, the power, and
the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Sung Amen

Offertory *Habanera from Carmen, Georges Bizet*

*Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost! Amen!**

*Prayer of Dedication

*Closing Song *Praise to the Living God* #8, New Century Hymnal

***Praise to the living God, the God of love and light,
Whose word brought forth the myriad suns and set the worlds in flight;
Whose infinite design, which we but dimly see,
Pervades all nature, making all a cosmic unity.***

***Praise to the living God, from whom all things derive,
Whose Spirit formed upon this sphere the first faint seeds of life;
Who caused them to evolve, unwitting, toward God's goal,
Till humankind stood on the earth, as living, thinking souls.***

***Praise to the living God, who knows our joy and pain,
Who shares with us our common life, the sacred and profane.
God toils where'er we toil, in home and mart and mill;
And deep within the human heart God leads us forward still.***

***Praise to the living God, around, within, above,
Beyond the grasp of human mind, but whom we know as love.
In these tumultuous days, so full of hope and strife,
May we bear witness to the Way, O Source and Goal of life.***

*Benediction

*Postlude

Assisting in Today's Service:

Mike Swanoski, Ushers

Possibilities Quartet: Jean Leibfried, violin; Melanie Sever, flute; Deb Rausch, horn;
Charlie Leibfried, trumpet

Peace United Church of Christ Staff

Alex Nelson – Livestream Technician

Amanda McElray Hunter – Children, Youth and Small Group Coordinator

Bri Dornbush – Office Coordinator

Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis – Pastor

Carrie Kelsey – Kitchen Manager

Dan Shepard – Maintenance

Jim Pospisil – Music Director

Rev. Laurie Crelly – Pastoral Care Chaplain

Mali Lorenz – Bookkeeper

Rachel Burnett – Business Manager

Sophia Farell – Soundboard Technician



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Peace United Church of Christ

September 27, 2026

Today's Forum: Sasabe Empowerment Project: Border Town Resurrection Story

Presentation by David Damien and Rita Danks. Sasabe, Senora was a small, quiet border town until October 2023 when fighting broke out between rival Mexican cartels. Businesses closed, violence escalated, and 2,000 citizens fled across the border. By the end of December, the violence had subsided and the town was empty. Samaritans, a humanitarian group, and film director David Damien have been instrumental in reclaiming the town and bringing it back to life. There is a new central plaza, a community library, educational classes, and intramural sports teams. A new café is open on weekends and people are returning to reclaim their homes.

Birth Story Sharing Circle, Tuesday, September 29, 7:00–8:30pm

God is always with us, especially in the thin places....and Birth is one of these places! As a way to build community at Peace Church, we are hosting a Birth

Story Sharing night. The goal for this circle is to gather people who would like to share their own birth story, or to be a listening presence for others. Anyone who has given birth, witnessed a partner give birth, cared for someone giving birth, or who simply loves to honor birth stories, is welcome. Questions? Ask or email Monica Liddle: monimliddle@gmail.com

***Liturgies for Resisting Empire*, after the 10:30am service on the 1st and 3rd Sundays**

The group that gathered to discuss *Liturgies for Resisting Empire* has decided to meet the 1st and 3rd Sundays each month at 11:30am to engage in book discussions that will help us more deeply understand the themes in Kat Armas's book and/or that will guide us as we move out to avoid and resist the ways of empire in our work, ministries, and daily living.

Wednesday Night Schedule

5:00–6:00pm – Dinner

By using crock pots and heating devices, we will keep food hot and ready until 6:00pm so folks coming from work and school will have time to eat.

5:30–7:00pm – Nursery Open for ages 0–5

Same as last year, with paid and trained nursery staff.

5:45–6:30pm – Kids' Club for grades K–5

More overlap with Bible Study so parents can attend, starting a little later so kids and families have time to eat.

5:45–6:45pm – Bible Study

Feel free to bring your soup to the Fireside Room if you're running late.

6:15–7:30pm – Choir

Rehearsals in the Sanctuary for the Sunday services.

6:30–7:30pm – Middle School & High School Youth Group for Grades 6–12

The Middle Schoolers and High Schoolers will meet separately most weeks, but their youth groups will meet at the same time to ease transportation challenges for families.

7:15–8:15pm – Confirmation 2

Second-year confirmands in 11th grade meet in the Chapel for a deep dive into our faith and practices.

7:30–8:30pm – Confirmation 1

First-year confirmands in 10th grade meet in the Fireside Room to learn about the Bible and the core stories of our faith.

Taizé is returning to Peace!

The first Sunday of each month, beginning Sunday, October 4, 2026 and continuing through May 2027, we will have the opportunity to practice Taizé, musical centering prayer, together at the 8:30am service. To assist the sense of quiet, we will not celebrate communion on Taizé Sundays at the 8:30am service, but the 10:30am service will continue the tradition of communion on the first Sunday of the month.

Monthly ASL Interpretation Starts Sunday, October 4

Community requests have led us to reintroduce ASL interpretation in our worship services. On the first Sunday of each month at the 10:30am service, interpreters from KY Interpreting Services will be present to allow for a more accessible worship experience for Deaf members of our community. Please share with those in your networks whose experience in worship would be improved with ASL interpretation.

This Week's Schedule

Monday, September 28

9:00am Yoga with Robin in the Fireside Room and Zoom

5:00pm Making Meaning out of Malignancy in the Fireside Room and Zoom

7:00pm Boy Scouts in the Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, September 29

7:00pm Birth Story Sharing Circle in the Chapel and East Timor Room

Wednesday, September 30

8:30am Chum Breakfast Making in the Kitchen

1:30pm Peace Bell Folding in the Fireside Room

3:00pm Tea & Talk in the Fireside Room

5:00pm Soup Supper in the Fellowship Hall

5:30pm Childcare Available in the Nursery

5:45pm Bible Study in the Fireside Room and Zoom

5:45pm Kids' Club for grades K-5 in the Wildwoods Room

6:15pm Choir in the Sanctuary

6:30pm Middle School Youth Group in the Fellowship Hall

6:45pm High School Youth Group in the Wildwoods Room

7:15pm Confirmation 2 in the Chapel

7:30pm Confirmation 1 in the Fireside Room

Thursday, October 1

8:00am Men's Breakfast at Perkins on London Road

Sunday, October 4

8:30am Taizé Worship

9:30am Self-Serve Coffee in the Narthex

9:30am New Member Orientation in the Music Room

9:30am Forum: Washington D.C. Youth Trip in the Fireside Room

10:00am Childcare Available in the Nursery

10:30am Intergeneration Worship with **Communion** and **Sermon** by Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

11:30am Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall