

Peace United Church of Christ
September 20, 2026
Just Peace Sunday
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost
10:30am



Woven Bird, Tree, and Flower Motif, William Morris

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Prelude

Byron Klimek, cello

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

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

Today is a Sabbath.

We are called to rest.

For all who are lonely,

May we find belonging.

For all who are weary,

May we find rest.

For all who labor,

May we find renewal.

Today is a Sabbath.

**Let us find rest, and worship together the One who provides rest
and belonging.**

*Song *Let Us Build a House (All Are Welcome)* see insert

*Prayer of Confession

**God of justice, we come to worship you and be fully known by you,
trusting that you will meet us with love. We confess that we have
made mistakes. We have not embodied your grace, mercy, and
love. Expand our hearts to love fully. Build our courage to receive
truth and accountability. Bring us to reconciliation with all our kin
and with you, O God. Amen.**

*Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends, let us proclaim the good news:

**Through Christ we are forgiven, restored, and transformed for new
life. 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 2-3

Betty Greene, reader

paraphrase from *The Book of Belonging*, Mariko Clark

God planted a spectacular garden where Eve and Adam would live and work. A safe and lovely place of belonging. You see, God loved Eve and Adam and had a beautiful dream for them. "I made you like me, so I want you to care for the gardens and the animals just as I would," God told Eve and Adam. Step by step, they would learn God's wisdom, which leads to a good and peaceful life.

I belong with you, and you belong with me. Come, let me show you how to live.

In the middle of their garden were two trees: the Life Tree and the Good and Bad Knowledge Tree. God warned them, "Eat from any tree in the garden except the Good and Bad Knowledge Tree." God knew that having so much knowledge without learning wisdom would only hurt and harm them. God was asking them to trust God's dream. So there they were: God, Eve, Adam, the fish, the birds, and the animals—all together, just as they belonged, among the great, green growing things.

But like most fairy tales, this story has a crisis. The crafty snake approached Eve and Adam as they frolicked through the garden, wild and naked and free. "God is keeping things from you! The fruit from that tree will make you smart like God!" said the snake. Eve and Adam were faced with a choice, one we all make over and over again as we grow older and wiser: Will I trust who God says God is and who God says I am, or will I trust other names?

God said over and over during the creation story: *It's good! They're very good! Good, good, good. They're just as they should be!* But you are not as you should be, the snake had suggested.

Eve stood in the garden with Adam, and she reached out her hand and she chose. Eve ate the fruit. Adam ate the fruit. They didn't trust God. They believed what the snake said more than they believed what

God said. It was like pressing fast-forward on their lives. Like going to college right after kindergarten. All at once, they knew what God knows without walking with God: They missed out on the wonder of learning and living! Imagine the weight of their world.

God knew that what happened that day would happen again: Eve and Adam would forget that God said, "You are Beloved, you are Delightful, and you Belong!" But God created people to belong with God, and they always will. Places of belonging will always exist. Places where heaven touches earth. Eve and Adam would grasp for goodness and beg for blessing. They would soar and stumble, but they would never be alone. They would learn wisdom by walking with God in the wide and wild world.

Choir Anthem

Live in Hope, Kate Marrolli

Sophia Farell

Gospel Reading

Matthew 20:1-16

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place; and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?'"

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

Sermon

Mark Lagenfeld

Song

O God, as with a Potter's Hand

#550, *New Century Hymnal*

***O God, as with a potter's hand, when earth was morning bright,
you shaped from clay a human form that gave your eye delight;
You breathed in love your Spirit's breath: a living creature stirred
and stood within the garden green, awake to hear your Word.***

***Can clay defy the potter's touch, alone its form define,
or spoil with wild, rebellious will the artist's true design?
Yet we, in whom your hand has formed an image good and fair,
disfigure what you meant to be a work beyond compare.***

***But once you shaped from human clay a life whose truth and grace
revealed an image pure and whole that sin could not deface.
And when we seized your choicest work and broke its fragile clay,
your hands restored the shattered shards on earth's first Easter
day.***

***O God, you hold our earthen lives within your shaping hand
and turn our forming clay to show the image you have planned.
Forgive the sin that mars your work and strives against your will.
Conform our lives to Jesus Christ with wisdom, love, and skill.***

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

*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 *God the Spirit,* #355, New Century Hymnal
 Guide and Guardian

***God the Spirit, guide and guardian,
windsped flame and hovering dove,
Breath of life and voice of prophets,
sign of blessing, power of love:
Give to those who lead your people
fresh anointing of your grace;
Send them forth as bold apostles
to your church in every place.***

***Christ our Savior, sovereign, shepherd,
Word made flesh, love crucified,
Teacher, healer, suffering servant,
friend of sinners, foe of pride:
In your tending may all pastors learn
and live a shepherd's care;
Grant them courage and compassion shown***

through word and deed and prayer.

*Great Creator, life bestower,
truth beyond all thought's recall,
Fount of wisdom, womb of mercy,
giving and forgiving all:
As you know our strength and weakness,
so may those the church exalts
Oversee its life steadfastly yet
not overlook its faults.*

*Triune God, mysterious being,
undivided and diverse,
Deeper than our minds can fathom,
greater than our creeds rehearse:
Help us in our varied callings
your full image to proclaim,
That our ministries uniting
may give glory to your name.*

*Benediction

*Postlude

Assisting in Today's Service:

Darlene Leafgren, Paul O'Brien, Phyllis Cook, and Bridget Reistad, Ushers

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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Happening Today**Guest Preacher Mark Langenfeld**

Mark Langenfeld, Psy.D., holds a doctorate in clinical psychology from Alliant International University in Fresno, California. He currently works as a professor of psychology and sociology at Northwood Technical College in Superior, Wisconsin. Before teaching, he worked as a counselor since 1994. He practices a blend of Paganism and Buddhist meditation and is an avid hiker and gardener. Join us on Sunday, September 20 at the 9:30am forum as he discusses his new book *Wisdom from the Woods*.

Book Event with Mark Langenfeld, *Wisdom from the Woods*, 9:30am in the Fireside Room

We are delighted to welcome friend of Peace Church Mark Langenfeld, whose recently published book, *Wisdom from the Woods*, promises: "Learn to make peace with the storms in your head, nurture yourself like a snowy owl, and remove emotional thorns. With the easy-to-understand wisdom of bears, ravens, cats, and more, this contemplative book gently guides you along your own path to happiness and enlightenment, one observation at a time."

Langenfeld is a professor at Northwood Technical College and he is donating all royalties from his book sales to the students' Nutrition Assistance Program through the Northwood Technical College Foundation.

After Church Forum: Peace Church's Sound System 11:30am in the Fireside Room

Alex Nelson is giving a presentation on Peace Church's sound system and A/V technology on September 20 after the 10:30am service. This presentation is for anyone who may have questions, comments, or concerns about all things audio in the Sanctuary. Alex will go over microphones, amplifiers, speakers, and how all those things come together to make Peace Church sound as good as possible.

Community Potluck from 5:00pm–7:00pm at Trinity Lutheran Church, 1108 E 8th Ave

Enjoy a community meal and meet new neighbors in the Twin Ports area. Families welcome! Sponsored by the Interfaith Committee for Migrant Justice (ICMJ). Extend a warm welcome!

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. Confirmation schedules will be

Samaritans Showing, September 26 from 7:00pm–9:00 pm at Zinema Theater, 222 E. Superior St

This documentary film tells the story of humanitarian aid efforts by ordinary Americans as they care for migrants crossing the southern border. Film director and producer David Damian Figueroa will be present for a question-and-answer session following the film. No tickets or admission fee; however, there will be the opportunity to give financial support to the Samaritans who are still offering aid, water and food to travelers in the desert south of Tucson.

This Week's Schedule

Monday, September 21

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

5:30pm Property Team Work Night Lower Level

7:00pm Boy Scouts in the Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, September 22

6:30pm Capital Campaign Team Meeting on Zoom

7:00pm Econoclast Documentary Showing in the Sanctuary

Wednesday, September 23

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

Friday, September 25

5:00pm TPAC Harvest Moon Potluck in the Fellowship Hall

Saturday, September 26

7:00pm Samaritans Film Showing at Zinema Theater 222 E Superior St

Sunday, September 27

8:30am Worship with Holy Communion. Sermon by Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

9:30am Self-Serve Coffee in the Narthex

9:30am Forum: Sasabe Empowerment Project: Border Town Resurrection Story in the Fireside Room

10:00am Childcare Available in the Nursery

10:30am Worship with Sermon by Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis. Children's Church with Amanda McElray Hunter

11:30am Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall