

**Peace United Church of Christ
July 12, 2026
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
9:30am**



Sower at Sunset, Vincent van Gogh

1111 North 11th Avenue East, Duluth, MN 55805

www.peaceucc.org
office@peaceucc.org

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Ringling of the Bells

*Call to Worship

Wellspring of Truth,

May your wild edges unravel what we thought we knew.

Where beauty and terror breathe as one,

Strengthen us to stay and witness your mystery in all that is both glorious and income.

We reject the lies we are sold about ourselves and the world.

We reclaim the truth that has been buried beneath their weight.

*Song

Morning Has Broken #11, Praise & Worship

***Morning has broken,
like the first morning.***

***Blackbird has spoken,
like the first bird.***

***Praise for the singing,
praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing
fresh from the word!***

***Sweet the rain's new fall,
sunlit from heaven.***

***Like the first dewfall,
on the first grass.***

***Praise for the sweetness
of the wet garden!***

***Sprung in completeness
where his feet pass!***

***Mine is the sunlight,
mine is the morning.
Born of the one light,
Eden saw play.***

***Praise with elation,
praise every morning,
God's re-creation
of the new day!***

*Prayer of Confession

God of Unmasking, we resist empire's illusions that offer a sterile holiness, a conditional love. Forgive us for the times we believed this, for bowing to false gods, for letting empire name us. Let your mercy fall like rain, softening the soil of our hearts. Allow us to receive forgiveness as renewal so that we might sow a new kingdom of justice, truth, and love. Amen.

*Assurance of Forgiveness

God holds us in mercy even when we uphold systems of injustice or are crushed by them. God turns us toward life that sustains and nourishes.

Through Christ, we are forgiven and set free for abundant life, honoring all of creation as a sanctuary of the sacred. Thanks be to God!

*Passing of the Peace

Story for All Ages

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!***

Scripture

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Gudrun Witrak, reader

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. If you have ears, hear!"

"Hear, then, the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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

Special Music

One Voice, The Wailin' Jennys

Gudrun Witrak
Phyllis Messenger

Sermon

Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

*As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's victory known.*

*Turn our worship into witness
in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.*

*Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.*

Sacrament of Holy Communion

God be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**
Let us give thanks to God. **It is a joy to give God thanks and praise.**

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.

Prayer of Consecration

Sharing the Bread and Cup

(In the United Church of Christ all are welcome to participate in Communion. Gluten free crackers are on the tray and we use non-alcoholic grape juice.)

Prayer after Communion

Bountiful God, we give thanks for all we have received at this table through the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world with courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Offertory

Blackbird, Paul McCartney

*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!**

*Closing Song *My Eyes Have Seen the Glory* #610, *New Century Hymnal*

***My eyes have seen the glory
of the coming of the Lord,
who is trampling out the vintage
where the grapes of wrath are stored,
And has loosed the fateful lightning
of a terrible swift sword;
God's truth is marching on.***

Refrain:

***Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
Glory, glory, hallelujah!
God's truth is marching on.***

***God has been there in the watch-fires
of a hundred circling camps,
where they built a sacred altar
in the evening dews and damps;
I can read the righteous sentence
by the dim and flaring lamps;
God's day is marching on.***

Refrain:

***God has sounded forth the trumpet
that shall never call retreat;
and is sifting out the hearts of all
before the judgment seat;
O be swift, my soul, to answer
and be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.***

Refrain:

***In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea,
with a glory in whose bosom
that transfigures you and me;
As Christ died to make us holy,
let us die to make all free;
While God is marching on.
Refrain:***

*Benediction

May fear release its grip and pride be surrendered so our eyes may be opened to see the world as it is and as it yearns to be. Ignite our imagination with holy curiosity, for truth is a gentle flame. We trust that in our honest reckoning, we will find a path toward healing and wholeness. Amen.

*Postlude

Assisting in Today's Service:

Cyndi Brown, Deborah McLeod, and Nadine & Guy Hubert, Ushers
Jill Ellison, Susan Kehtel & Amy Galarowicz, Coffee Hour Volunteers

Our liturgy in this season is adapted from
Liturgies for Resisting Empire by Kat Armas.

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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Summer Worship Series: *Liturgies for Resisting Empire* by Kat Armas

In *Liturgies for Resisting Empire*, Cuban American theologian and writer Kat Armas provides a roadmap for Christians seeking a countercultural way of living that prioritizes community and humanity over dominance and power.

Armas combines spiritual practices and biblical theology to help us create authentic belonging to God, ourselves, each other, and creation. She begins by examining how empire affects us daily through its pervasive ideologies and systems of control. Drawing from decolonial and postcolonial biblical interpretation, she explores how the New Testament church resisted Roman imperial power while building communities centered on God's kingdom values rather than worldly dominance.

Pastor Corinne, Pastor Laurie, and Amanda selected this book to guide our summer worship and after-worship discussions. It speaks to themes we've been hearing from many folks at Peace Church: they are hungry for a deep Christian faith that speaks to the hard stuff going on in our world, or they are deconstructing from faith traditions that harmed them and seeking a path toward reconstruction. Join us Sundays through August 30 for worship and table conversation at coffee hour, and buy a copy of the book at bookshop.org or one of our local bookstores!

Peace Church Directory App



Have you joined the Church Center app yet? This is a great way to stay connected, engaged, and involved at Peace Church! This has replaced our Instant Church online directory. Use the QR code to download the app from the app store.

Once logged in, you can update your directory profile photo and manage what information other members are able to see. You can give online and connect with your church groups too!

Please note that you can create an account at any time but will need to have been invited to join and share in Peace United Church of Christ's private directory. Email office@peaceucc.org if you do not have access to the directory yet.

Help Tell the Story of Peace

As part of our Capital Campaign, we're gathering photos that capture the life of Peace over the years. If you have photos from worship, fellowship, retreats, mission trips, children's or youth activities, choir, service projects, community events, or other moments that reflect life at Peace, we'd love to see them. Please email your photos to office@peaceucc.org. Whether they're from last week or 20 years ago, they may help tell the story of our church and the ministry we've

shared together. Thank you for helping preserve and celebrate the story of Peace!

Peace Bell Articles are Due!

Please submit your Peace Bell articles for August and September to Bri at office@peaceucc.org by Wednesday, July 15. Make sure if there is any information about events, meetings, and any other important information you want the congregations to know you submit it.

This Week's Schedule

Monday, July 13

6:30pm Welcome Circle on Zoom

Tuesday, July 14

6:00pm Property Team Meeting in the Staff Lounge and Zoom

Wednesday, July 15 – Peace Bell Articles Due!

4:00pm Finance Meeting in the Staff Lounge and Zoom

5:00pm Bible Study in the Fireside Room and Zoom

Thursday, July 16

6:00pm Sanctuary Schools Meeting in the Fireside Room

7:00pm Pastoral Relations Committee Meeting in the Staff Lounge

Sunday, July 19

9:30am Worship with Holy Communion. Sermon by Rev. Corinne Freedman Ellis

10:30am Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall

10:30am Liturgies for Resisting Empire Book Discussion in the Music Room