



*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ*



Order of Worship for
September 6, 2026 10:00 am

Welcome to Worship at Center Church!
We are delighted that you are with us today.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
ROOTED: HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY CHURCH
WEEK 15: ALIGNED VISION

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026 – ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

GATHERING MUSIC Great is Thy Faithfulness

B. Walters

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *†

Please remember to take a prayer card and write down prayers you would like to share with the congregation today. The cards will be collected and re-distributed during today's service.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Teach us, O Lord, the way of your statutes,
People: **that we may walk in them with our whole heart.**

Leader: Turn our eyes from what is worthless,
People: **and give us life in your ways.**

Leader: As we have been forgiven a debt beyond counting,
People: **so may we forgive one another from the heart.**

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who teaches and forgives.
People: **We open our hearts to your instruction and your grace. Amen.**

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

*OPENING HYMN NCH 332 As We Gather at Your Table

BEACH SPRING

*PASSING OF PEACE

The children are dismissed to their classrooms as the congregation sings.

***Halle, Halle, Hallelujah,
Halle, Halle, Hallelujah,
Halle, Halle, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!***

Traditional Caribbean Melody

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SCRIPTURE Habbukuk 2: 1-3
 Ephesians 3: 20-21

SERMON *Do You See What I See? : The Importance of Maintaining Vision in the
 Communal Life of A Church*

Rev. Dr. Eric J. Hearst

MUSICAL RESPONSE NCH 342 Be Known to Us in Breaking Bread

ST. FLAVIAN

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

All: We believe.

One: Sometimes our belief is confident,
 Like a child on a dance floor—
 Unashamed and wildly genuine.

One: We believe.

**All: Sometimes our belief is distant,
 Flickering and calling out to us
 Like a lighthouse on the sea.**

All: We believe.

One: Sometimes our belief shows up as passion,
 Guiding the way we vote, shop, give, live, trust, and hope.

One: We believe.

**All: Sometimes our belief is like a shadow—
 Faith stitched to our heels, unmoveable, unloseable,
 A gift for winding journeys.**

All: We believe.

One: Sometimes our belief exists like growing pains.
We step forward. We fall back.
But again and again,
Jesus invites us to listen,
To grow, and to take another step.

**All: So again and again,
We speak these truths out loud:
We believe.**

One: We believe.

All: Again and again, we believe.

One: Thanks be to God. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: Listening God,

**All: Take what is closed in us and open it.
Take what is distracted in us and settle it.
Take what is hurting in us and hold it.**

**Take any and all parts of us that create distance from you.
For we are like Peter, O God.
We argue what we don't know. We fear what we cannot see.
And we almost always speak sooner than we listen.**

**So open us, settle us, hold us, and forgive us.
We long to hear you more clearly.
We long to know you more fully.**

**With hope we pray,
And with gratitude we confess.
Amen.**

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

One: Siblings in Christ,
We confess with gratitude because we know that God already has heard and forgiven us.
No matter what we have done or left undone, we are held in God's hand.
So rest in this good news:

**All: God invites us in.
God meets us where we are.
God hears our prayers.
God forgives us.**

One: Thanks be to God for a love like that.

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION

Words of Institution

Invitation

**All: Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life,
we gather at your table to know you in the breaking of bread.**

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Sharing the Elements

As you serve one another, share the elements with these blessings:

“The body of Christ, broken for you and for all.”

“The cup of the New Covenant, renewing our hope.”

Questions Around the Table

1. What vision did those before us write on the tablets of this congregation?
Where do we still see it?
2. What present-day reality in our city or in our own community are we
tempted to look past rather than face?
3. What are we writing plainly enough today for someone not yet part of this
church to pick up and carry forward?

Prayer of Thanksgiving and the Lord's Prayer

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY Be Thou My Vision
Dan Theriault, soloist

SLANE

*DOXOLOGY Give Thanks

D. Moen

*Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ, His Son
And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich
Because of what the Lord has done for us"
Give thanks...*

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God,

You have taught us your ways and forgiven us more than we could ever repay. As we bring these gifts, we offer them not to settle a debt, but in thanksgiving for the mercy already shown to us. Take what we bring, and use it to your glory — to teach, to heal, and to forgive, just as you have taught, healed, and forgiven us.

May our giving reflect the generosity we have received, and may our hearts remain turned toward you and your ways.

In the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*CLOSING SONG NCH 347 Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

LINSTEAD

BENEDICTION

SENDING FORTH Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (*Reprise, verse 1*)

Thank you to everyone who participated in worship today, Go in Peace!