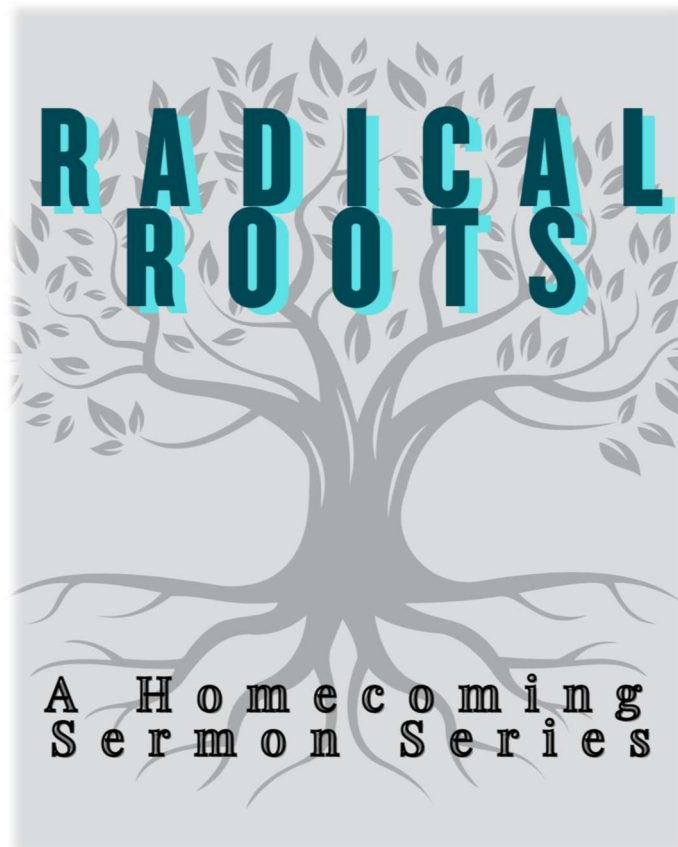




*An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ*



Order of Worship for
September 20, 2026 10:30 am

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

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
RALLY SUNDAY – CENTER CHURCH HOMECOMING
RADICAL ROOTS: J. ALAN MCLEAN

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 – ORDER OF WORSHIP

**Please rise in body or spirit.*

CHIMES

ORGAN PRELUDE Largo

A. Vivaldi

WELCOME & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *†

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Take off your shoes.

People: For the ground beneath us is holy.

Leader: Not because we have made it so -

People: but because God has never left it.

Leader: God said to Peter, and Peter said to the Church:

What God has made clean, you must not call profane.

People: We come to worship the God who makes all ground holy -

Leader: the burning bush, the rooftop in Joppa, this sanctuary, this street, this city.

People: We come as we are, beloved as we are, sent as we are.

Leader: Come, let us worship the God of Moses and Peter and Cornelius –

People: the God who is still calling us forward, out of our sandals, onto holy ground.

Let us worship together.

*OPENING HYMN NCH 24 The God of Abraham Praise

LEONI

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

The Congregation Sings, as the children are dismissed to Sunday School:

Traditional Caribbean Melody

SERMON *Radical Roots: The Reverend Alan McLean & What God Has Made Clean*
Rev. Liza Arulampalam

MUSICAL RESPONSE This is Holy Ground C. Beatty
Emily Gillespie, soprano
Warburton Music Intern

Leader: God of the burning bush, You meet us in ordinary places, and You turn them holy with Your presence. We give thanks for the ground You have claimed in our own lives: for this congregation, for the ones who taught us to believe before we knew how to say it, for the strangers who turned out to be family. We remember with gratitude those who walked this road before us — voices like Rev. McLean's, who dared to ask the church to take off its shoes.

People: God of holy ground, we give you thanks.

Leader: We pray for all who still stand outside the door, wondering if the ground under their feet is allowed to be holy — for LGBTQ siblings still waiting to be welcomed by churches that claim your name; for young people deciding whether faith has room for who they are; for anyone taught that they were profane rather than made in your image.

People: God of the open door, draw them near.

Leader: We pray for this church and every church — that we would keep listening for the voice that says *rise, kill and eat*, that says *do not call profane what I have made clean*; that we would have the courage of Peter.

People: God who makes all things clean, keep changing us.

Leader: We pray for those who carry grief, illness, fear, or loneliness this day, that they would know themselves standing on ground that you have already claimed as holy, whether or not it feels that way.

(names may be spoken aloud or held in silence)

People: God who is near to the brokenhearted, hold them close.

Leader: We pray for the wider world — for peace where there is violence, for justice where there is none, for your church everywhere to be a people who embrace difference.

People: God of every nation and every people, have mercy.

Leader: And we pray in the confidence of Christ, who taught us to pray together, saying:

LORD’S PRAYER

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT *Center Church Capital Campaign*

Kurt Moyer

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY I Need Thee Every Hour

A. Hawks/R. Lowry

*Stewart Battle & Emily Gillespie, soloists
Center Church Choir*

*“I need Thee, O, I need thee; Every Hour I need Thee,
O bless me now my Savior, I come to Thee”*

*DOXOLOGY

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God the source of all our gifts,
Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts,
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

*CLOSING HYMN NCH 394/395 In Christ There is No East or West MCKEE/ST. PETER
Vs 1-3 NCH 394; Vs 4 NCH 395

BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

ORGAN POSTLUDE Rigaudon

A. Campra

Thank you to everyone who participated in worship this morning. Go in Peace!