

*They are guided by  
a very small rudder*

**TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
2340 State Street, East Petersburg, PA 17520  
717-569-1632

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The Rev. Dr. Christopher M. Rankin, Pastor

The Rev. Harry G. Royer, Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Carolynne Call, Covenanted Minister of Mission

Mr. Michael Slechta, Director of Music/ Sounds of Trinity Choir Director

Mrs. Christine Oetama, Organist

Mrs. Carmen Richards, Pianist

Mrs. Carol Kratz, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Sean McKelvey, Preschool Director

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**SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**  
**8:00 A.M. SERVICE**

**Today's Theme:** Three weeks ago we heard John's gospel's version of Peter's confession of faith. This week we hear Mark's version, when Peter says, "You are the Messiah." In John, the stumbling block is Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh, given for the life of the world. In Mark too the scandal has to do with Jesus' words about his own coming death, and here Peter himself stumbles over Jesus' words. But Jesus is anointed (the meaning of "messiah") in Mark only on the way to the cross (14:3); so we are anointed in baptism with the sign of the cross.

**Prayer:** *O God, through suffering and rejection you bring forth our salvation, and by the glory of the cross you transform our lives. Grant that for the sake of the gospel we may turn from the lure of evil, take up our cross, and follow your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND INVITATION TO THE TABLE**

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that as the church was gathered, often in the homes of believers, Christians devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and community, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.

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

Let all who seek the gifts of Christ receive the bounty of this meal.

## **CONFESSION OF SINS**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Calling to mind the frailty of our human condition, let us confess our sin to God.

*(SEATED OR KNEELING)*

### **SILENT CONFESSION OF SINS**

### **CONFESSION OF SIN**

Let us confess our sins to the one who welcomes us with an open heart.

**God our comforter, like lost sheep, we have gone astray. We gaze upon abundance and see scarcity. We turn faces away from injustice and oppression. We exploit the earth with our apathy and greed.**

**Free us from our sin, gracious God. Listen when we call out to you for help. Lead us by your love to love our neighbors as ourselves. In Jesus' name. Amen.**

### **KYRIE**

Lord, have mercy.      Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.      Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.      Lord, have mercy.

### **ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

### **ACT OF PRAISE**

O God, open my lips.

**And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.**

**Amen.**



## TIME WITH THE CHILDREN

### THE WORD OF GOD

#### THE PSALTER

Psalm 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

**Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.**

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

**In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hidden from its heat.**

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes;

**The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.**

Moreover by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

**But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.**

Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.

**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.**

#### THE EPISTLE LESSON

James 3:1-12

*This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.*

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## THE HOLY GOSPEL

St. Mark 8:27-38

*This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.*

*Glory be to You, O Lord.*

## THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD

*Praise be to You, O Christ.*

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

## SERMON

“Stumbling Blocks”

Pastor Rankin

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

## PEOPLE'S OFFERING

### OFFERING DEDICATION

We offer the treasures of this world as a way of recalling all of us to a right relationship with you, O God, the source of all wisdom and truth. Your design for life is more to be desired than the finest gold. To learn from you and to serve you is our highest joy. May our offerings and our daily lives communicate this message. Amen.

### THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord!

Let us give thanks to God Most High.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Holy God, we praise and bless you for creation and the gift of life and for abiding love which brings us close to you, the source of all blessing. We give you thanks that in the fullness of time you sent Jesus, born of Mary, to live in our midst, to share in our suffering, and to accept the pain of death at the hands of those whom Jesus loved. We rejoice that in a perfect victory over the grave you raised Christ with power to

become sovereign in your realm. We celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit to gather your church by which your work may be done in the world and through which we share the gift of eternal life. With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name.

**Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God, Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

*(PLEASE BE SEATED)*

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION AND PRAYER OF CONSECRATION**

### **THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom 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. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

### **COMMUNICATION**

As this grain was once scattered in the fields, and has come together in one bread, so we, with different needs and hopes, come together as one, for we share one bread.

**The Bread of Life, broken for us.**

The cup which we share is the cup of the New Covenant written in our hearts and witnessed by Jesus.

**The Cup of Blessing, poured out for us and for the many.**

(You are invited to partake of the elements)

*(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)*

### **POST COMMUNION PRAYERS**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Revealing God, you have made yourself known through bread and wine, water and word. Continue to nurture your church, that it is a place where your presence is experienced and shared. Be with the Penn Central Conference today as they install Rev. Dr. Carrie Call as Conference Minister. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Creating God, you brought life into being and called it good. Bring new creation to lands devastated by tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, and other disasters. Restore forests and curb overflowing waters. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Protecting God, you desire all people to live in peace and safety. Provide for all who are in danger. Strengthen first responders to help meet the complex needs of others. Provide care and compassion as they face trauma themselves. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Transforming God, you announce release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed. Break chains of discrimination and injustice. Amplify voices that go unheard and inspire us to advocate for those who are overlooked. Be with those are in need of your healing love this day. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Forming God, you gather this community together. Shape our communal life, that in our prayer, praise, and worship, we honor you and encourage one another. Keep our disagreements civil and increase our joy in working together. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, through the gift of this meal you heal our brokenness and strengthen our spirits. Increase our faith in you, that the power of this holy sacrament might bring us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## CLOSE OF WORSHIP

### BENEDICTION



### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chancel Flowers are given by Jeff Hackenberger in memory of my mother, Edna Hackenberger.

**The Baptismal Font Flowers** are given by **Ken Geib** in memory of Grace Geib “Amazing Grace” in celebration of our 73<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

**The Worship Aids** are given by **Charlene Cristy** in memory of all the lives lost on September 11, 2001.

**Greeting Ushers:** Steve Shenk, Scott Summers, Karen Olley, Mark & Chris Eyer

**Money Counters:** Nevin Cooley, John Bailey, Pat Sensenig, Charlene Cristy

**Building Trustee:** Dave Connor

**Lector:** Diane Rice

**Happy Birthday!**

Today – Mike Wagner, Dr. Rebecca Wagner

Monday – Mary Witmer

Tuesday – Denise Huggins, Christine Oetama

Wednesday – Dr. Scott DeLong

Friday – Beth Bossert, Christine Eyer, Jill Otthofer

Saturday – Lon Wible

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:** The church office is open Monday-Friday from 9 AM-2 PM.

**THE SEPTEMBER PARISH POST** is available on both floors of the church building.

**WORSHIP SCHEDULE:** Our services will be at 8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. The Eucharist will be celebrated every week at 8:00 a.m. We will continue to stream the 8:00 a.m. service on the Trinity Facebook page and upload the recording to our website ([www.trinityeastpete.org](http://www.trinityeastpete.org)).

**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CLASSES:** Christian Education classes will be held for all ages at 9:00 a.m. Here are the locations for the classes:

1. **Children’s Class** will meet in the classroom on the first floor.
2. **Middle School/High School Class** will meet in the classroom on the second floor.
3. **The Combined Adult Class** will meet in Isenberg Hall.

**There will be no koinonia at this time!**



**PRAYER CONCERNS:** The family of Georgia McCune (friend of Trinity Church) the family of Ron Burger (son of Marge Burger/brother of Lori Daly), Ronald Himelwright (grandson of Brenda & Harry Himelwright), Barry Richards (son of Jerry & Carmen Richards), Tyler Miller (grandson of Iris DeMaio), Joan Kalbach (mother of Dr. Cathy Hoshauer), John Shelsky (friend of Trinity Church), Donna Denlinger, Cathy Hoshauer, Mike Wagner, Pat Miller, Nancy Patton, Gary Reynolds (friend of Mike & Shelley Wagner), Jackey Hoover, Rev. Bob & Nancy Musser, Phyllis Zimmerman, Donna Zirkel, Dave Connor, Linda Brown (sister of Mike Wagner), Sharon Brown (sister of Sandy DeLong), Jose Arroyo (husband of Sandy & George DeLong's niece), Chris Rice (nephew of Diane Rice & Karen Olley), Jaimie & Aurora Commero (friends of Sarah Paulukow), Mark Zody (friend of Denise Huggins), Jim & Kathy Long (friends of Jerry & Carmen Richards), John Siebern (Bob Siever's brother-in-law), Carl Roth (Gretchen Leinbach's brother), Scott Summers, Ron Rogers (Jamy Shelly's stepfather), Rev. Frank Lantz, Lainie Christensen, Sandra Englert (niece of Betty Tyndall), Charles & Betty Booraem, Emma Nissley (sister of Jane Starr, Nancy Patton, and Pat Miller), Betty Tyndall and family, Virginia Schoffstall (grandmother of Kayla Brennan), David Potts (neighbor of the Himelwrights), Dorothy Fasnacht, Jo Jo Richards & family (Carmen & Jerry's granddaughter-in-law), Doug & Mary Lou Shaab, Bob & Marlyn Wible, Lily Kilgore & family, Barry Moore (Donna & Ron Denlinger's brother-in-law), Sam & Rosemary Minder, Jordan Sensenig (grandson of Pat & Joan Sensenig), Judy Wisniewski (sister of Chuck Husted), Elaine Sturgis (friend of Sue Husted), Rev. Jere & Judy Chapman, Doris Leaman, Kelsey (Minnich) and Tom Burgo, Judie Bistline, Hilma Slechta, and the Bonilla-Rodriguez family (friends of Trinity Church).

**PRESCHOOL SUB COUPONS:** We have about 15 more S. Clyde Weaver sub coupons to sell for the Trinity Preschool fundraiser. The cost is \$8 per coupon. You can call Carol in the church office or email the preschool at [preschool@trinityeastpete.org](mailto:preschool@trinityeastpete.org) to order your coupons.

**THE 2021 WORSHIP AIDS & CHANCEL FLOWERS:** You can either contact the church office or use the website under resources to sign-up for flowers and worship aids for 2021! Worship Aids dates available are: **November 21**. Chancel Flowers dates available are: **November 28**.

**EAST PETERSBURG PARADE:** Trinity Church will once again have a float in the East Petersburg parade on Saturday, September 18. We will decorate the float the night before (6 p.m.). We will leave the church on Saturday around 8:00 a.m. Contact Pastor Chris or Anne Rankin if you are interested in helping.

**WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS:** We are looking for worship volunteers at the in-person worship services:

**Greeters/Ushers:** To welcome worshippers at the door and to seat them in the sanctuary (10:30 a.m. service only)

**Lectors:** Assist with the worship service or to just read the scripture lessons at the 8:00 a.m. and/or 10:30 a.m. services.

Please contact Pastor Chris or Carol Kratz if you are willing to volunteer

**CROP WALK RALLY:** The Lancaster CROP Walk Planning Committee invited to attend a rally for the 2021 CROP Walk at the Lancaster Food Hub on September 12 at 2 p.m. There will be a special program, tours of the food hub, and CROP Walk t-shirts available. Pastor Rankin and Rev. Bob Hunsicker serve on the planning committee.

The actual walk is on October 17 at the Greek Orthodox Church in Lancaster. Mark & Chris Eyer are serving as our walk coordinators.

You can register as a member of the Trinity East Pete team at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/2021/team/trinity-east-pete>. You can also make donations at this website.

**INSTALLATION OF CONFERENCE MINISTER:** The Rev. Dr. Carrie Call, a member of Trinity Church, will be installed as the sixth Conference Minister of the Penn Central Conference at Lancaster Theological Seminary today at 3 p.m. Participants in the service will be at Lancaster Seminary, but the service will be livestreamed <https://www.facebook.com/penncentralconferenceucc>

## **A Wrinkle In Time**

**By Morgan Gould, from the book by Madeleine L'Engle**

For this year's Rally Day, we are able to make recordings and put them together to create a video of the Rally Day play, "A Wrinkle In Time," (by Morgan Gould, from the book by Madeleine L'Engle), which can be streamed for one day, September 12. Look for the link to find it on the church's website Home Page on Sunday, September 12.



## MT. GRETTA BIBLE FESTIVAL 2021

All Programs are in the Historic Tabernacle • 3<sup>rd</sup> St. & Glossbrenner Ave.

Parking GPS Address: 41 Boulevard St, Mt. Gretna PA 17064

Please visit [MtGretnaTabernacle.org](http://MtGretnaTabernacle.org) for any program cancellations.

A freewill offering will be received at each program.

**ALL PROGRAMS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE** Updates will be posted on our website and Facebook page

**MASKS REQUIRED** at all programming in the Tabernacle during the 2021 Season.

All programs will conform to strict CDC Guidelines. Visit our website for updates.



### October 2

Saturday 2 p.m. Concert

**The Massed Choir** Composer Lloyd Larson will direct over 100 voices in a joyous Saturday afternoon concert. *Sponsored by Losers Music Inc. and Cornwall Manor*

## STEWARDSHIP SEMINARS

**October 14:** Planning Your Funeral with  
Jeremy DeBord (DeBord-Snyder Funeral Home)  
& Michele DeRosa (Groff Funeral Home)



**All seminars will begin at  
7 p.m. in Isenberg Hall.  
Refreshments will be provided.**



**October 21:** Hospice Care with Gretchen Thomas from  
Hospice & Community Care

**All Seminars are free!**

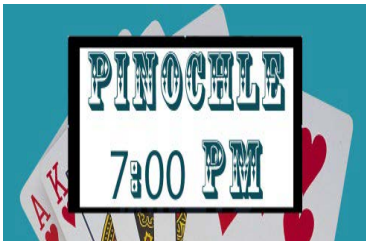
Please R.S.V. P. to 717-569-1632 or  
email: [secretary@trinityeastpete.org](mailto:secretary@trinityeastpete.org)

**October 28:** Wills & Estates with the  
Rev. Elizabeth Hambrick-Stowe, Esq.



**LUNCH WITH THE PASTOR:** As we continue to resurrect community again in the life of our church, Pastor Rankin is inviting members to have lunch in Isenberg Hall on **Thursday, September 16** from noon-1 p.m. You bring your own lunch and enjoy the fellowship with your fellow church members. Hope to see you there!

**PINOCHLE FELLOWSHIP:** Mark your calendars now because the Pinochle Fellowship will meet again on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM. Look for more information in the October Parish Post. You can respond using the electronic version that Carol already sent via e-mail or on the website under Ministries! Speak with Karen Olley for more information!





**Parish Resource Center**  
**2160 Lincoln Highway East #18,**  
**Lancaster, PA 17602**  
**717-299-1113**  
**info@parishresourcecenter.org**  
**www.parityresourcecenter.org**



**Parish  
Resource  
Center**

Solutions For Churches & Communities

**KAIROS GRADUATION  
& REUNION**

Sept. 11, 2:00-4:00pm

**BECOMING YOUR BEST SELF:  
INTRO TO THE ENNEAGRAM**

Sept. 25, 2021  
9 am - 4 pm

Ellen Kanagy, LCSW  
Rhonda Myers, LPC

**"The Path  
Between Us"  
Conference**

The Enneagram and  
Healthy Relationships

with Suzanne Stabile

Oct 5, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm | Oct 6, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

**TECHNOLOGY SERIES**

OCT. 18, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

**Excel  
201**

Rhoda Shirk

**Black Religion:  
A Theology Resurrected from White Oppression**

Oct. 21, 7:00-8:30pm | Dr. Larry Covin

**HOW TO ASK GOOD  
QUESTIONS**

Oct. 26, 7:00-8:30pm  
Vicki Scheib

**A Church  
Dismantled | A Kingdom  
Restored**

NOV. 2, 7:00 - 8:30 PM  
Conrad Kanagy

**Restorative Practices  
with Children**

Nov. 4, 7:00-8:30pm  
Rob Fennimore

**Anticipating Winter:  
a Silent Retreat**

Nov. 6,  
9am-4pm

Amy Shutt

**Using  
Intuition  
in Your Life**

Nov. 6,  
10-11:30am

Annmarie Early  
PhD, LMFT

**THE ART OF CHURCH  
HOSPITALITY**

NOV. 9, 7:00-8:30 PM

LED BY MISTY WINTSCH,  
PASTOR

**TECHNOLOGY SERIES**

NOV. 16, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

**Google  
Workspace**

Rhoda Shirk

**Historic Churches  
of Lancaster City  
Bus Tour**

April 4, 8:15 am - 1:30 pm  
Led by Bob Frick

## CHURCH COVENANT IN THE MIDST OF THE PANDEMIC

As an individual who attends Trinity United Church of Christ I covenant to work with my fellow church members, family and friends to keep our community safe and healthy.

I covenant to. . .

*Wear a face mask as a symbol of love and care for others.*

*Sit six feet apart from others, leaving room for God to work in the in-between spaces.*

*Clean up after myself in the spaces I use because germs are everywhere I go too!*

*Honor and respect the sacredness of each person in this space and to stay home if I don't feel well, knowing God is with us wherever we are, whether inside or outside the walls of the church.*

*Work together with my church family in creating a safe and healthy space to gather for worship, fellowship, or church activities as one body, united in God's love.*

*Acknowledge the hard work ahead, and the commitment to care for one another.*

Together, we as the church, covenant to care and love one another in new and different ways as we:

- Share God's love with our community
- Serve God's children
- Bring healing and wholeness to those in need
- Share the Gospel in liturgy, music and study

## **OUTDOOR MINISTRY EVENTS**

*September-October*

*The Wittel Farm (Elizabethtown), Camp Nawakwa (Near Gettysburg), and  
Camp Kirchenwald (Near Mt. Gretna)*

### **THE GROWING PROJECT**



Volunteer for The Growing Project through October at The Wittel Farm! This project reclaims a portion of the acreage for farming. The crops harvested are donated to assist those in need in Lancaster County. To volunteer as an individual, or a multi-generational group, youth group or family, contact Pastor Matt Lenahan at [pastormattl@dejazzd.com](mailto:pastormattl@dejazzd.com)

### **CAPTURE THE FLAG SPECTACULAR**

**October 3; 3-5:30 p.m. @ Kirchenwald [Free]**

Review your camp map, paint your face, and practice your cone zone celebration



dance! Invite your friends and family – of all ages! - to join you in this Capture the Flag event. Campfire worship to follow. <https://www.lutherancamping.org/event/capture-the-flag-spectacular-2021/>

### **ADULT STUDY RETREAT**

**October 5-7 @ Nawakwa [\$150/person]** All meals (7) are included in the price



and served at the Dining Hall. This mid-week retreat begins Tuesday morning and ends with lunch on Thursday. Lodging in Zinn-Tozer Lodge. <https://www.lutherancamping.org/event/adult-study-retreat-2021/>



## **A MESSAGE FROM OUR U.C.C. LEADERS**

As we approach the 20th anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, we are sobered once again by the impact these events had on our collective psyche.

We all remember exactly where we were that day and what we were doing, as pictures and images began to invade our seemingly secure lives. There was an initial disbelief that what we were seeing was actually possible. As the day wore on, it began to dawn on us all that these acts were intentional, well-orchestrated, and designed not just to kill many but to inflict terror on all. Soon it would become painfully obvious that we were now living in a different world than the one we woke up to that morning.

In the days and weeks to come, stories would surface of heroic acts by first-line rescuers that day; of family members who did not survive the attacks; of miraculous accounts of those who had somehow escaped and survived; of kindnesses that were extended to the wounded and dying; and of the courage on board United Airlines Flight 93, bound for the U.S. Capitol, which crashed in Pennsylvania. Mixed in with the trauma and the grief was empathy, kindness, and courage.

Four days after the attacks, in Mesa, Arizona, 42-year-old Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh-American born in India and wearing a turban, was racially profiled and murdered by Frank Silva Roque, who told friends earlier he was going to go out and “shoot some towel-heads.”

For 20 years now, the attacks that happened on Sept. 11 have engendered sympathy around the world, have heightened a fear that politicians in America have used to their advantage, have justified otherwise unjust wars, have initiated the roll-back of laws that kept the government out of our private lives, and have manufactured a new brand of racism that identifies people of the Muslim faith as terrorists.

We mourn not just the loss of innocent lives, but of a time before Timothy McVeigh and 9/11 made the threat of terror less a distant and remote possibility than a pervasive and ever-present expectation.

As we approach the 20th anniversary, the wounds are still fresh and in need of healing. But we also know that the suffering that came from that day is no longer a suffering we bear alone. The news and images of Afghani families being slaughtered, tortured, and imprisoned in their homeland while waiting for a disappearing America to come to their rescue is heart-breaking. Long after this war began, a war built on American rage and



eschewing the global empathy that was there to be exploited for common gain and good, we were asking hard questions about why we were there, what we accomplished, and what we are leaving behind in our wake. Time and history may indeed conspire to reveal that we had other options, ones that bore more hope for better outcomes both at home and abroad.

It is our hope and our prayer that this 20th anniversary will rekindle within us all a desire less to retaliate than to heal, less to avenge than to understand. The world is aswarm with over 82 million refugees, a figure only exacerbated by wars that devastate. Terror is not only something to be grieved and avenged; it is as well something to be understood. Behind every terror attack is a history of someone else's long-suffering. An emerging fear in the aftermath of the 20-year war in Afghanistan is what it has done to exacerbate both their long-suffering circumstances and our complicity in creating them.

What are our pathways to understanding the root causes of terror? Where is the journey that leads to a new understanding of how we live in peace as a human, global community in which every action produces a reaction? What is a gospel that speaks of forgiveness, kindness to the stranger, love of enemy, and compassion for all calling us to do and be as disciples of the risen Christ?

We, the Elected Officers of the United Church of Christ, call for and invite a turning towards the ways that make for peace between all peoples. Let us unlearn the ways of war. Let us no longer cultivate fear for the purchase of political power. Let us be eager to know both the conditions that make for suffering, and the requisite empathy needed to alleviate it.

We call for continued prayers for those grieving loved ones who died in the attacks on Sept. 11, for whom this anniversary will serve to re-open their healing wounds.

We name our complicity with the ways in which a centered Christianity in America has authorized Islamophobia and marginalized Muslim peoples.

And finally, we embrace the hope that people of faith will unite in a common love for all. That love is the only pathway we see to the vision we have of a just world for all.

Echoing the words of St. Francis, we pray:

**Make us instruments of your peace.**

**Where there is hatred, let us sow love;**

**Where there is injury, pardon;**

**Where there is despair, hope;**

**Where there is sadness, joy.**

Amen and Ashe.

**Faithfully,**

**The National Officers of the United Church of Christ**

*The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer, General Minister and President*

*The Rev. Traci Blackmon, Associate General Minister, Justice and Local Church Ministries*

*The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, Associate General Minister, Wider Church*

*Ministries and Operations; Co-Executive, Global Ministries*

**September 7, 2021**

**FIRST LESSON. Proverbs 1:20-33**

Wisdom cries out in the street; in the squares she raises her voice. At the busiest corner she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks: "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge? Give heed to my reproof; I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you. Because I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded, and because you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you, when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently, but will not find me. Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the LORD, would have none of my counsel, and despised all my reproof, therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices. For waywardness kills the simple, and the complacency of fools destroys them; but those who listen to me will be secure and will live at ease, without dread of disaster."

**SECOND LESSON. James 3:1-12**

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits. How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine yield fresh. No more can salt water yield fresh.

**GOSPEL. Mark 8:27-38**

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."