

September 6, 2026

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Summer Worship Series:

A Curriculum of Love: Deepening our Love for God, our Neighbors, and Ourselves
Week Fourteen: Loving Your Enemies

PRELUDE (A Time for Quiet Meditation)

Just As I Am

David Paxton

WORDS OF WELCOME / ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP #507**

Come to the Table of Grace
(verse 1)

Table of Grace

Come to the table of grace. Come to the table of grace. This is God's table; it's not yours or mine. Come to the table of grace.

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***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Isaiah 55)**

One: "Come," says the Lord. "All you who are thirsty, come to the waters."

All: "Here there is bread and wine for your soul."

One: "Come," says the Lord, "come be my people, and I will be your God."

All: We are your people. You are our God. Let us walk in the way of the Lord! Let us worship God!

***GATHERING SONG #186**

Come Now, You Blessed, Eat at My Table
(verse 1)

Come Now, You Blessed

"Come now, you blessed, eat at my table," said Jesus Christ to the righteous above. "When I was hungry, thirsty, and homeless, sick and in prison, you showed me your love."

(verse 2)

When did we see you hungry or thirsty? When were you homeless, a stranger alone? When did we see you sick or in prison? What have we done that you call us your own?

(verse 3)

"When you gave bread to earth's hungry children, when you gave shelter to war's refugees, when you remembered those most forgotten, you cared for me in the smallest of these."

(verse 4)

Christ, when we see you out on life's roadways, looking to us in the faces of need, then may we know you, welcome, and show you love that is faithful in word and in deed.

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CALL TO CONFESSION

One: As we worship God, let us take time to honestly name the ways that we have fallen short, collectively and individually. Trusting in the gracious mercy of our Lord, let us confess (first together and then in silence):

*Please stand as you are able.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: Lord God, we've relied upon your grace, time and time again, while hastily denying that you are eager to give it not only to us, but to our enemies, also. We tend to focus on the sin, brokenness and foibles of others, rather than on the growth and work we are called to. We've made assumptions about what others want and need, robbing them of the freedom to speak for themselves. We've tuned out the voices expressing views that are different from ours. We have judged others harshly, unfairly and casually. Help us to see others as you see them; help us to see you with faith and trust.

(Time of Silence)

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (Exodus 34:6, Ezekial 33:11)

One: The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, calling all to turn from sin, and live. By the grace of God, our sins are forgiven.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

*SONG OF RESPONSE #695

Change My Heart, O God *Change My Heart*
Change my heart, O God; make it ever true. Change my heart,
O God; may I be like you. You are the Potter; I am the clay.
Mold me and make me; this is what I pray. Change my heart, O God;
make it ever true. Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

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*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: Forgiven and set free, let us be reconciled with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And, also, with you.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: Holy Spirit, open our eyes and our ears, our minds and our hearts, that we may hear your Word, walk in your ways, and truly live. Amen

RESPONSIVE FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 10:12-18

One: Rise up, O Lord; O God, lift up your hand; do not forget the oppressed.

All: Why do the wicked renounce God, and say in their hearts, 'You will not call us to account'?

One: But you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief, that you may take it into your hands;

All: The helpless commit themselves to you; you have been the helper of the orphan.

One: Break the arm of the wicked and evildoers; seek out their wickedness until you find none.

All: The Lord is king for ever and ever; the nations shall perish from his land.

*Please stand as you are able.

One: O Lord, you will hear the desire of the meek; you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear,

All: To do justice for the orphan and the oppressed, so that those from earth may strike terror no more.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
Performed by: Ron Cechner

Daniel Carter

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ 'You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." ⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

THE MESSAGE

"Loving Your Enemies"

Rev. Dr. John Wahl

UNISON AFFIRMATION OF FAITH (Romans 12:9-21)

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' ²⁰ No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

CALL TO OFFERING

We take this time to reflect and recognize all contributions of time, talent, and treasure. A basket is available for making monetary donations.

OFFERTORY

Adagio in D Minor

Girolamo Frescobaldi

***DOXOLOGY #709**

God, We Honor You

Abundant Blessings

God, we honor you. God, we trust in you. God, we worship and adore you. Take what we bring, offered to you. Teach us to show your abundant blessings. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, amen.

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*Please stand as you are able.

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

INVITATION TO THE LORD'S TABLE

CHORAL CALL TO COMMUNION #507

Come to the Table of Grace

Table of Grace

(verse 3)

***Come to the table of love. Come to the table of love. This is God's table;
it's not yours or mine. Come to the table of love.***

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PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

SHARING THE BREAD AND CUP

UNISON PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we thank you for this feast of grace and life. As we have been served, help us to serve our neighbors. As we have been fed, help us to feed all who are hungry. As we have been loved, help us to love the world – because in Christ you have loved us. Amen.

***SENDING SONG #754** *Help Us Accept Each Other*

Baronita

(verse 1)

***Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us; teach us as sister,
brother, each person to embrace. Be present, Lord, among us and bring
us to believe we are ourselves accepted, and meant to love and live.***

(verse 2)

***Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life we struggle to be
human and search for hope and faith. Teach us to care for people, for all,
not just for some, to love them as we find them, or as they may become.***

(verse 3)

***Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved in living
situations to do the truth in love; to practice your acceptance until we
know by heart the table of forgiveness, and laughter's healing art.***

(verse 4)

***Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need, who hunger
for acceptance, for justice and for bread, we need new eyes for seeing,
new hands for holding on: renew us with your Spirit; Lord, free us;
make us one!***

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***BLESSING**

POSTLUDE

Laudation

Gilbert M. Martin

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Summer Worship Series

Week Thirteen: Loving Your Enemies

Questions to Ponder/Discuss:

- Have you ever reconciled with someone you once held a grudge against? What happened?
- Do you think anyone has ever considered you an enemy? How could you change that?
- Growing up, did you consider anyone your enemy? Did that change?

Spiritual Practice:

Every day, try to say this famous mantra: “May all beings everywhere be happy and free.” We will apply it in a formula. First, we say it universally. Second, we apply it to those we love. Third, we apply it to acquaintances we feel neutral about. Fourth, we apply it to strangers, animals, the earth, all living things. Fifth, we apply it to our enemies. Sixth, to ourselves.

Good Futures – I-Spy Community Assessment

Valley members are invited to assist the Good Futures Initiative Team by participating in an I-Spy activity. This tool is about gaining a deeper understanding of the wider community in which our congregation is located. All that is required of you is to take a 30-minute walk around your neighborhood (or some of the places beyond work and home that you regularly visit) and take note of what you see; and to engage in three short conversations with locals that you encounter in those locations. All the materials you will need to complete this activity will be available when you sign up at the Church (or by contacting the Church office) beginning Sunday, August 30.

On Sunday, September 27, we invite all participants to a 30–45-minute community conversation, beginning at 11:45 a.m. in Fellowship Hall, where we will share what we have seen and heard.

Sarah Circle 2026-27

We’d love to have you join us!

**The first meeting for 2026-27 will be:
Tuesday, September 8**

Our study this year:

***United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other —
Paul’s First Letter to Corinthians***

Meet September – May the second Tuesday of each month, 10:30 a.m. – noon, in the Church Library. For more information, please contact Glenna Pool at 419-789-9446 or e-mail gpool205@yahoo.com.

Mid-week Lunch Group – September 8



All are welcome to gather for lunch together at Buckeye Café (located across from the Church in Tanglewood Square) at noon on the second Tuesday of each month (September 8, October 13, November 10, etc.) for a time of good food, great coffee, and even better conversations.

Faith Garden

In Valley's Faith Garden (located outside of the Church Library), we grow fresh produce to be donated to the Chagrin Falls Park Community Center Food Bank. There are garden gloves and tools in the shed, or feel free to bring your own. Summer garden workdays are below:

Summer Garden Workday

Wednesdays at 10 a.m. — September 9 & 23

Choir Starting for 2026-27



The Adult Choir will be starting rehearsals on September 10th at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary with our first Sunday participating in worship on September 13th. We practice in the front of the Sanctuary until 8:30. SO.....We are always looking for new members to join us and add their talents to our choir!!!!!!

Choir practices are unforgettable,

Harmonies are created,

Our fellowship is strong,

Individual talents are shared, and we

Rejoice through song to praise and worship our Lord!



Choir Practice in Sanctuary
September 10th at 7:00 p.m.
COME!!!!!!!!!!!!

Knitting For Others

Inviting all folks from 12-100 years of age, who like to knit or who would like to learn, to be a part of Valley's Knitting Group.



The group will meet on Sunday, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.:
September 13 & 27

This group has been busy knitting prayer blankets and shawls for members of our congregation. It takes a lot of yarn to knit or crochet these items. Many of us have made items in the past but have not used quite all the yarn. Knitting for Others can use the leftover yarn to make items to share with others. We are currently making items for babies and young children. If you have any size-3 or 4 yarn that you will not be using and could share with Knitting for Others, we certainly would appreciate your donation. Yarn can be left in the box marked "yarn" in the Library. Thank you so much for your help.

For questions, please call one of our Co-Chairs, Beverly or Bev:

Beverly Wahl
502-553-7255

Bev Keough
330-888-5385

CFPCC Food Bank Needs

Please consider donating the following items to help stock the shelves at Chagrin Falls Park Community Center:



Any meat, fresh fruit / vegetables, milk, eggs, lunch meat, bread, snacks, or anything you would like to donate.

CFPCC is receiving donations at your car. Someone will come out and retrieve donations. You can, also, leave them in the blue donation bin in the Narthex.

Guest Preacher – Rev. Mary Ellen Hoffman

September 13



Valley is pleased to welcome Rev. Mary Ellen Hoffman to lead worship on Sunday, September 13. Mary Ellen recently retired from Claridon United Church of Christ, is a longtime Bainbridge resident, and a faithful volunteer at Pass-It-On.

Community Meal

Tuesday, September 15



Community Meal

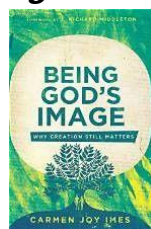
The community-wide dinner is offered at no charge for anyone who is hungry, who is feeling stretched, or who might need to be reminded that they are loved.

Menu: Chicken casserole, green beans, dinner rolls, apple crisp

If you are interested in helping, we will be cooking meals from 9:30-11:30 a.m.; assembling from 3-4 p.m.; and distributing / delivering from 4-5:30 p.m. In addition, if you would like to bake apple crisp (your recipe of choice) at home, please drop off by 10 a.m. on September 15th.

See the September Valley Voice, Church website, or weekly e-mail for the links to sign up for the meal and volunteering.

Book Study – *Being God's Image: Why Creation Still Matters* by Dr. Carmen Joy Imes



I was recently introduced to the deep theological insights and scholarship of the author during my study leave seminar at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship in Michigan. Her book is insightful, but easy-to-read, and includes suggested scripture readings and discussion questions for each chapter. Weekly sessions will last 60-75 minutes and include an accompanying video from The Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/videos/all>.

Eleven weekly sessions - Mondays at 7:00 p.m. (beginning Sept. 21) or Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m. (beginning Sept. 23) in the Church Library. Sign up by contacting the office or at Church beginning Sunday, August 30. Books will be available in the Church office for \$15.

Pass-it-on Resale Store



The **store will be open** on:
Friday, September 25 (1 – 4 p.m.)
Saturday, September 26 (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.)

Pass-it-on is accepting donations. Please contact Brenda Wahl at
440-829-7841 or passitonamissionoflove@gmail.com.

Donations – Credit Card or Zelle

Credit card donations are available on-line at the Valley Presbyterian website below:

<http://valleypresbychurch.org>

Look for “Donations” in the header. Can only be used for donations.

Can not pay for holiday flowers, VBS, books, etc. at this link.

Use the following QR Code to donate or purchase via **Zelle**:



VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.valleypresbychurch.org

VPC Guest Wifi Password: VPC12345

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Director of Music: Nancy Sullivan
Liturgist: Sue Doughman

Organist: John Kautzman
Greeter: Ruth Gurd