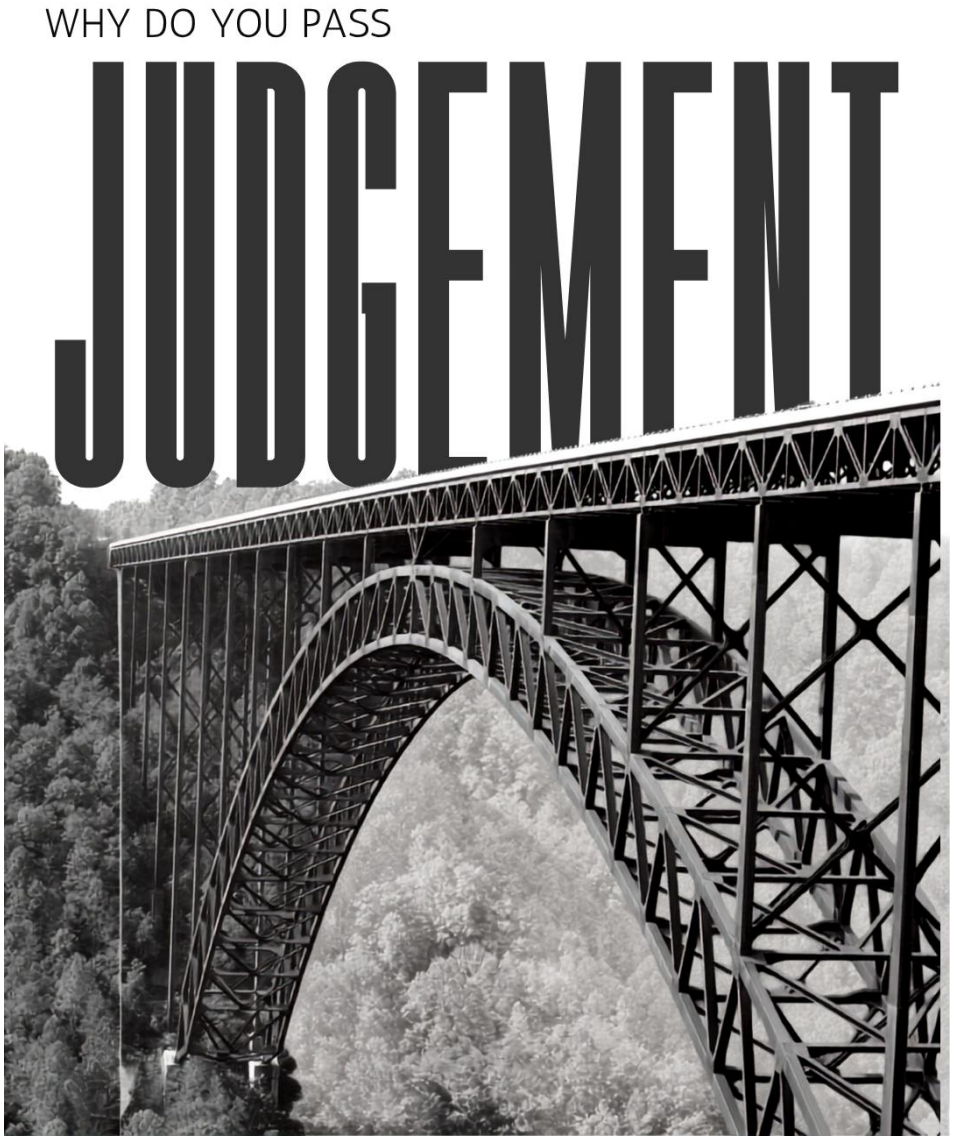
Welcome to

St. Paul's United Church of Christ

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

September 13, 2026



GOD IS STILL SPEAKING

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE, OR WHERE YOU ARE ON LIFE'S JOURNEY YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!

Worship Leadership

Preacher: The Rev. John J. Ward-Diorio
The Rev. Allyssa A. Boyer
Lector: Pam Smith

Ministry of Music

Minister of Music: Benjamin D. Eisenhour
Assistant Music Director: Mark A. Dundore
Organist: Eric R. Riley
Assistant Organist: Patrice G. Miller

Ministry of Audio and Video

Jeffrey A. Dundore

Ministry of Service

Lead Greeter: David Scott
Greeters: Nancy Richey, Crystal Cline, Jane Leister
Acolyte:
Kids' Place: Deb Cashman
Flower Preparation: Susan Gabriel
Flower Delivery: Teri Guelcher and Cindy Baldwin
Counting Team:

Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr. Thomas E. Herrold

Ministers

The Entire Congregation

Visit the church website, under the 'Sign Up' menu heading,
to help as a Sunday volunteer or Worship Participant.
We're grateful for your generosity.

Text "SPUCCGIVE" to 73256 to give using your mobile device.
or at https://onrealm.org/saintpaulsuccmech/-/form/give/now

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ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SERVICE OF WORSHIP

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST September 13, 2026

The livestream starts with the Announcements. If you'd prefer not to be on camera, kindly choose a seat in the back three pews of the Sanctuary. Leave prayer requests in the bowl in the Common area or give them to the Lead Greeter.

Those who are comfortable doing so, are invited to stand.

THE RINGING OF THE CHIMES

THE WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE ORGAN PRELUDE Concerto del Signor Vivaldi, I. Allegro Johann Gottfried Walther

CALL TO WORSHIP "When Giving Is All We Have" Alberto Rios

One river gives
Its journey to the next.

We give because someone gave to us.
We give because nobody gave to us.

We give because giving has changed us.
We give because giving could have changed us.

We have been better for it,
We have been wounded by it—

Giving has many faces: It is loud and quiet,
Big, though small, diamond in wood-nails.

Its story is old, the plot worn and the pages too,

But we read this book, anyway, over and again:

Giving is, first and every time, hand to hand,
Mine to yours, yours to mine.

You gave me blue and I gave you yellow.
Together we are simple green. You gave me

What you did not have, and I gave you
What I had to give—together, we made

Something greater from the difference.

*THE HYMN No. 531 "God, Speak to Me, That I May Speak"

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION (unison)

God of All of Creation, guide us in recognizing and respecting the diversity in the natural world and in humanity that You have created. While we seek to create community, may we remember that does not mean we all need to think and act exactly the same. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

In this time of growing division, but in past times as well, we tend to gravitate towards people we believe are just exactly like us. When disagreement occurs, we can feel offended and even betrayed. We do not necessarily remember God's Diversity or reflect on what Jesus taught us and modeled for us as ways to proceed with understanding and shared hope. We forget community is strongest when many gifts and talents are offered for a common goal grounded in Jesus' Words and Ways. Let us join in a time of Silent Prayers of Confession.

SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Responsive):

One: God forgives us and welcomes our attempts at building communities of faith.

ALL: Let us continue to pursue authentic community grounded in Jesus' Words and Ways, recognizing that to do so calls us out of a "my way or the highway" approach. Amen.

If you are able, please rise and greet one another with signs of Peace.

*THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

*THE GLORIA PATRI (#759 is the tune, but not all the same words)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

BLESSING OF THE PRAYER SHAWLS (unison)

May God's grace be upon these shawls…warming, comforting, enfolding, and embracing. May these mantles be safe havens…sacred places of security and well-being…sustaining and embracing in good times as well as difficult ones. May the ones who receive these shawls be cradled in hope, kept in joy, graced with peace, and wrapped in love. Blessed be!

Children are invited to the front at this time.
Everyone who comes forward will be on camera.

SING THE CHILDREN TO THE FRONT Jesus Loves the Little Children

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.
Shy and Joyful, Bold and Bright,
They are precious in his sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

THE WORD FOR THE YOUNG

SING THE CHILDREN TO THEIR SEATS Jesus Loves Me

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong. They are weak but He is strong.
Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.

Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

THE GOSPEL READING Matthew 18:21-35

THE READING OF THE PSALM Psalm 103:1-14

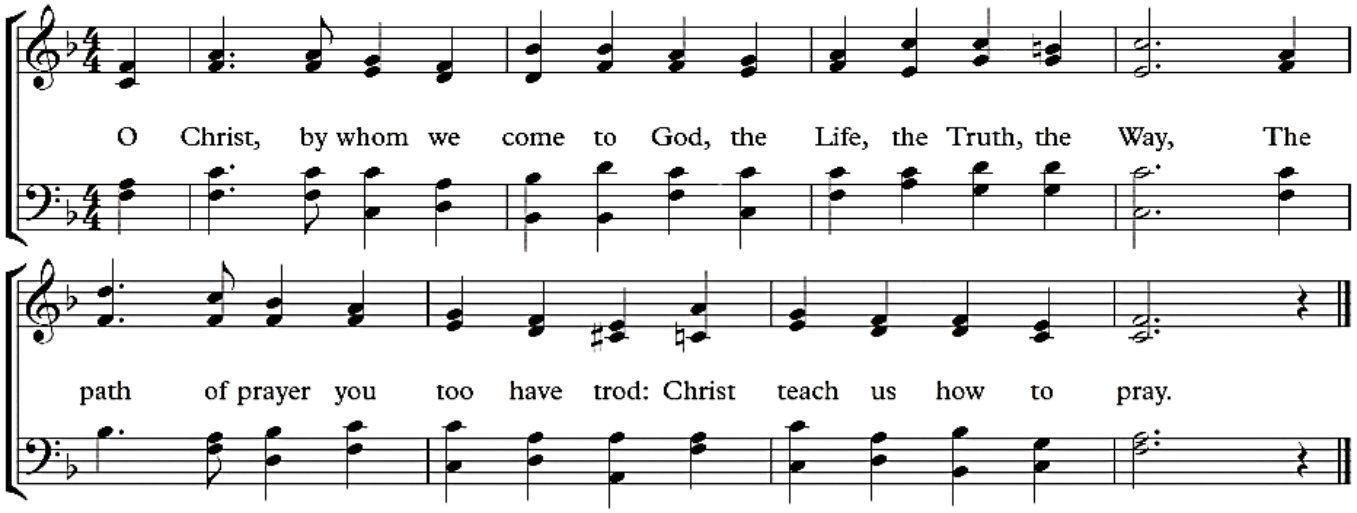
*THE HYMN No. 320 "Deep in the Shadows of the Past"

THE RESPONSE:
One: God is Still Speaking.
All: Thanks be to God!

THE EPISTLE READING & MESSAGE: Romans 14:1-12
"Welcoming and Respecting Our Differences"

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER
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, forever. Amen.

THE CHORAL RESPONSE (unison)



Please place your pew pad sheets in the Offering Plate.

THE OFFERTORY "Teach Me Your Way, O Lord" Lloyd Larson
Chancel Choir

*DOXOLOGY
From all who dwell beneath the skies,
Let the Creator's praise arise!

Let the Redeemer's name be sung.
Through every land, by every tongue! Amen.

*THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (Unison)

We honor You, O God, as we give. We know we do not live or die to ourselves but are a part of a large community, linked in ways beyond our knowing with You and all generations of Your children. We are accountable to You and share in responsibility for one another and for the care of this planet. Thus, we dedicate our resources and our lives to You for the work of Your realm. Receive our gifts and draw us to Yourself. Amen.

*THE HYMN No. 5 "Praise to God"

*THE BIDDING TO MISSION

*THE WORLD PEACE PRAYER

One: Lead us, O God.

All: Lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.
Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen.

*THE BENEDICTION

* THE THREE-FOLD AMEN

The online livestream ends after the Postlude.
You're welcome to converse in the Narthex after the Three-fold Amen.

THE ORGAN POSTLUDE Concerto del Signor Vivaldi, III. Allegro Johann Gottfried Walther

References:
The Call to Worship is found on page 105 of How to Love the World: Poems of Gratitude and Hope, edited by James Crews, 2021, Storey Publishing. The poem "When Giving Is All We Have" by Alberto Rios is from his book A Small Story About the Sky, 2015, Copper Canyon Press.
The Prayer of Blessing is by Janet Bristow, 2008, www.shawlministry.com.
The World Peace Prayer is a paraphrase of a verse from the Upanishads, the most ancient scriptures of Hinduism, also prayed daily by Roman Catholic Benedictine nuns.
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ALTAR FLOWERS

The Altar flowers are given to the Glory of God by
Susan Stump, "In honor of David's 70th birthday."
Mary Runkle, "In memory of my mother, Elizabeth Randolph."