



CENTRAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PREPARATION

September 13, 2026

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

WORDS FOR REFLECTION

"Ephesians is a letter of vision; perhaps we should say the visionary letter. It gives you, in a dozen or so pages of Greek, or seven of English, a wide-ranging panorama of the Christian gospel and its implications. It looks back all the way to the creation of the world, and to God's purpose from the beginning. It looks on all the way to the time when, as Paul says elsewhere, God will be all in all. It foregrounds at every point the work of Jesus the Messiah, and the closely linked work of the holy spirit. It maps out the question of what the church is, and what it's here for, and it does so particularly in terms of what it means to be genuinely human, becoming the sort of humanity that God has created, and is creating, in and through, Jesus."

—N. T. WRIGHT, *THE VISION OF EPHESIANS*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Keep your Church, Lord God, with your perpetual mercy, and because the frailty of man without you cannot but fall, keep us always under your protection, and lead us to everything that makes for our salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMON LECTIONARY READINGS

FIRST READING: Exodus 14:19-31

PSALM: Psalm 114

SECOND READING: Romans 14:1-12

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRELUDE

Instrumental Prelude

Caroline Cassio

The Church's One Foundation

Samuel J. Stone · Samuel S. Wesley · Brian Moss

The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord,
She is his new creation by water and the Word.
From heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;
With his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one over all the earth;
Her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
And to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation, and tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation of peace forevermore;
Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
And the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the three in One,
And mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we
Like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

WELCOME

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 96

LEADER Oh sing to the LORD a new song;

PEOPLE Sing to the LORD, all the earth!

LEADER Sing to the LORD, bless his name;

PEOPLE Tell of his salvation from day to day.

LEADER Declare his glory among the nations,

PEOPLE His marvelous works among all the peoples!

LEADER For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

PEOPLE He is to be feared above all gods.

HYMN

Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun

Isaac Watts · John Hatton

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does its successive journeys run;
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
'Til moons shall wax and wane no more.

To him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown his head;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With ev'ry morning sacrifice.

(Added chorus at the 5 p.m. service)

*To our King be highest praise,
Rising through eternal days.
Just and faithful he shall reign.
Jesus shall reign!*

People and realms of ev'ry tongue
Dwell on his love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name.

Let ev'ry creature rise and bring
Honors peculiar to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen! *Chorus (5 p.m. only)*

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Most merciful God, you have purposed to unite all things in Christ. Yet we confess that we have lived for ourselves, seeking our own glory rather than yours, and allowing pride, fear, and selfishness to divide us from you and from one another. Forgive us, we pray, for the sake of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, renew us in holiness, bind us together in love, and make us a people who live to the praise of your glory. Amen.

SILENT CONFESSION

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Colossians 1:13-14

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

LEADER Hear and receive the good news of the gospel:
 in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

PASSING OF THE PEACE

LEADER The peace of the Lord be with you always.

ALL **And also with you.**

HYMN

Living Hope

Phil Wickham

How great the chasm that lay between us,
How high the mountain I could not climb.
In desperation, I turned to Heaven,
And spoke your name into the night.
Then through the darkness, your lovingkindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul.
The work is finished, the end is written:
Jesus Christ, my Living Hope.

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of Ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame.
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven;
The King of Kings calls me his own.
Beautiful Savior, I'm yours forever,
Jesus Christ, my Living Hope.

Hallelujah! Praise the One who set me free!
Hallelujah! Death has lost its grip on me!
You have broken every chain;
There's salvation in your name:
Jesus Christ, my Living Hope.

Then came the morning that sealed the promise:
Your buried body began to breathe.
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared, "The grave has no claim on me!"

Then came the morning that sealed the promise:
Your buried body began to breathe.
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared, "The grave has no claim on me!"
Jesus, yours is the victory. *Chorus*

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven,

And is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic Church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER WITH CHILDREN

All preschool and elementary age children are invited to the front of the church and will be dismissed to Children's Church with their teachers where they will read, sing, learn, and play in an environment suited to their language and style. Alternatively, children are always welcome to remain in the sanctuary to worship alongside the adults for the duration of the service.

COMMISSIONING OF COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS

WELCOMING OF NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Jane-Murry Hartch
Gabe Jasso

OFFERING

*If you are our guest today, please feel no obligation to give. For members and regular attenders of Central, give generously as you are able. We give because all we have has been graciously given to us by God. Our offerings express our joyful dependence upon God and our commitment to join God in his work of renewal. You can give online by texting **centralchurchnyc** to **833-737-6262** or visiting centralchurchnyc.org/give.*

OFFERTORY

Yes and Amen

Shane Barnard

Blessed be the God and Father
Of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
Who has blessed us in our Savior
With every spiritual prize.

*You shouldered my shame,
Gave me your name,
No longer enemy, now friend.
Shout out your grace,
Your glorious grace.
You will now keep me till the end.
I have been chosen,
Oh, yes and amen.*

He has chosen for adoption
Sons through Jesus' name,
For the purpose of his will,
To the praise of his glorious grace. *Chorus*

Forgiveness, rich inheritance,
Predestined for your purpose,
Holy Spirit guarantee
Salvation, hope, and power in me.

Forgiveness, rich inheritance,
Predestined for your purpose,
Holy Spirit guarantee
I have been given everything. *Chorus*

THE DOXOLOGY

Old Hundredth LM

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

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SCRIPTURE READING

Ephesians 1:1-10

The passage can be found on page 976 of the pew Bible.

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.

SERMON

***The World God Is Making* | What is the point of church?**

Rev. Jason Harris

THE THANKSGIVING

LEADER Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE **We lift them up to the Lord.**

LEADER Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

PEOPLE **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

LEADER It is indeed right, our duty and joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

We do not presume to come to this, your Table, O Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but solely in your great mercy. We are not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your Table, but you are the same Lord who always delights in showing mercy. Grant us, therefore gracious Lord, that we who now receive these gifts of bread and wine, according to our Savior's Word, may share in the body and blood of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, that we may dwell in him forever and he in us. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus Christ, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reasons for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me, and open to me the reality of who you are. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life that you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I acknowledge that you are so holy and I am so sinful that you had to die for me. Yet you are so merciful and I am so loved that you were willing to die for me. I confess that I have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed by what I have done and by what I have failed to do. I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment on the cross, and offering forgiveness and new life. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, I turn from my sins and receive you as Savior and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus, I know that if I do not love you with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my soul, and with all my strength, I shall love something else with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. Grant that by loving you first I may be liberated from all lesser loves and loyalties and have you as my first love, my chief good, and my final joy. Amen.

Communion is served with wine and gluten-free bread. Individually wrapped wafers and grape juice are available near each station. Your communion server can point you to them if desired.

COMMUNION HYMN

King of Kings

Jason Ingram · Brooke Ligertwood · Scott Ligertwood

In the darkness we were waiting,
Without hope, without light,
Till from heaven you came running,
There was mercy in your eyes.
To fulfill the law and prophets,
To a virgin came the Word,
From a throne of endless glory
To a cradle in the dirt.

*Praise the Father. Praise the Son.
Praise the Spirit, three in one.
God of glory, majesty.
Praise forever to the King of Kings.*

To reveal the kingdom coming
And to reconcile the lost,
To redeem the whole creation,
You did not despise the cross.
For even in your suffering
You saw to the other side.
Knowing this was our salvation,
Jesus for our sake you died. *Chorus*

And the morning that you rose,
All of heaven held its breath,
Till that stone was moved for good,
For the Lamb had conquered death.
And the dead rose from their tombs,
And the angels stood in awe,
For the souls of all who'd come
To the Father are restored.

And the Church of Christ was born,
Then the Spirit lit the flame.
Now this gospel truth of old
Shall not kneel, shall not faint.
By his blood and in his name,
In his freedom I am free,
For the love of Jesus Christ
Who has resurrected me. *Chorus*

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.

BENEDICTION

We begin our worship with God's gracious invitation, and we conclude with God's blessing, his good Word. It is appropriate to look up and open our palms as we receive the Benediction to symbolize how Jesus Christ lifts our heads and to demonstrate our eagerness to receive God's blessing.

DISMISSAL

LEADER Let us go forth to serve the world as those who love our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

ALL **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

Members of our prayer team will be available immediately following the service at the front of the sanctuary to pray confidentially for you about any need or concern you might have. We encourage you to avail yourself of this opportunity to receive prayer. ☞

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

We welcome anyone who would like to serve in one or more of our volunteer roles, including Sunday Service Teams, Hospitality Team, Children's Ministry, and Youth Ministry. Learn more about volunteer opportunities at centralchurchnyc.org/callforvolunteers.

REQUEST FOR CARE

If you have a financial or practical care need for which you'd like to request assistance from Central, our deacons are readily available to discuss that with you. Please email care@centralchurchnyc.org and detail your situation so one of our deacons can contact you directly.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

2026 Projected Expenses: \$4,740,000

Year-to-Date Giving: \$2,791,000

2026 Remaining Need: \$1,949,000