



# Community UCC

*We're worth our words*

Welcoming Progressive Community

*Vibrant Messengers of Hope*



Champaign, Illinois

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

September 17, 2023

## Thoughts before worship:

"What is forgiveness then if not releasing the debt and the debtor? It is not the same as reconciliation, which includes restoring the relationship. In the most ideal scenarios, forgiveness and reconciliation companion on the journey to restoration. That is the way of the incarnation, the cross, and the empty tomb. That is the example and high bar that Jesus sets. At the same time, God meets us where we can be met. Forgiveness—as just letting go—is a good first step. We release and are released by it." - Cheryl A. Lindsay

## Prelude

Aaron Ames

## \*Call to Worship

*I Am Welcome*

Songbook 28

*During this worship series, we will share our gratitude each Sunday.*

## \*Invocation

As we begin this morning's worship, let us pray together

**God who calls, it is you who gathers us together and forms us as a community. It is you who makes us uniquely individual and who designs us for companionship. Let us journey together this day in your presence reminded of our interdependence with one another. May we see your glory and be inspired to demonstrate your goodness and care through our lives. Amen.**

## Introit

*Hallelu, Let the People All Sing*

## Welcome, a Word About Worship, and an Invitation to Check-In

## \*Opening Hymn

*Awake, Awake to Love and Work*

NCH 89

## \*Call to Confession

## \*Prayer for Transformation and New Life

God of grace, we need your strength in our weakness. We confess that we can be judgmental and hyper-critical of our neighbors, family, and friends. We project our own shortcomings on others in order to deflect attention from our mis-

*We welcome you to our service this morning. Celebrating the diversity of creation, Community United Church welcomes persons of any age, ability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or life condition. May the Divine Presence become real to you through this time of worship. We hope you come back!*

**Note:** *Our worship services are live streamed. If you prefer not to have the back of your head seen on the live stream worship please do not sit in the first seven pews on the left side (organ/piano) of the sanctuary.*

**Note 2:** *The congregation responds to the liturgy parts in **BOLD***

\*Everyone is invited to stand in body or in spirit.

takes. We withhold and condition forgiveness, mercy, and grace from those who wrong us at the same time we seek it for the wrongs we have done. Even still, we struggle to forgive ourselves. You have shown us the better way. Help us to follow your path—receiving and extending forgiveness in a world in need of an infusion of grace for transformation. In your mercy, O God, hear our prayer, and let us forgive as you forgive. Amen.

### **\*Words of Grace**

Beloved, grace has always been part of God's relationship with humanity. God does not want you condemned or held captive by unresolved anger leading to bitterness. Rather, Creator desires you to be released as both forgiven and forgiver so that all may live a life that is whole, free, and flourishing.

### **\*Passing of the Peace**

As we share signs of peace with one another, you are invited to either to stay in your pew and offer a wave or peace sign to those around you, or to move from your space and exchange signs of peace with one another. As a church, we recognize that some folks may want to refrain from shaking hands. Respect one another's lead in this as we pass the peace. Peace be with you!

### **Anthem**

*Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal*

CUCC Choir

*Hark, I hear the harps eternal Ringing on the farther shore,  
As I near those swollen waters, With their deep and solemn roar.*

*Hallelujah, praise the Lamb,  
Hallelujah, Glory to the great I AM.*

*And my soul though stained with sorrow, Fading as the light of day,  
Passes swiftly o'er those waters To the city far away.*

*Hallelujah, praise the Lamb,  
Hallelujah, Glory to the great I AM.*

*Souls have crossed before me, saintly, To that land of perfect rest;  
And I hear them singing faintly In the mansions of the blest.*

*Hallelujah, glory, praise the Lamb, sing glory.  
Hallelujah, Glory to the great I AM.*

### **Call to Prayer**



After the sermon, we will offer up our joys and concerns. Your prayer requests will be offered aloud. Whether you are sitting here in the sanctuary, or worshipping with us remotely, you are invited to add your joys and concerns to the prayer list: go to [community-ucc.org/pray](https://community-ucc.org/pray) (a Google Form), or scan the QR code found here or there are prayer cards on the table at the back of the sanctuary that you may fill out and hand to the usher.

### **Prelude to Scripture**

Whether we take what is written in the Bible as fact, metaphor, myth, or story, let us listen now for the meaning it might hold for us on this day.

### **Sacred Reading from the Gospels**

Matthew 18:21-25

<sup>21</sup> Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church\* sins against me, how often should I for-

give? As many as seven times?' <sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven\* times.

<sup>23</sup> 'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents\* was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

### Postlude to Scripture

Together, let us say:

**May the Spirit bless us with wisdom and wonder as we ponder the meaning of these words for our lives.**

**\*Hymn** *God, How Can We Forgive* Songbook 45

**Message** *Following Christ in a Cruel World: The Necessity of Forgiveness*

### Quiet Meditation

### Community Joys and Concerns

### Pastoral Prayer

**Prayer Response** *Listen, Lord*

### Call to Offering

Be the church. We are called to be the church. But what does that mean in 21<sup>st</sup> century America?

**Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Embrace diversity. Reject racism. Forgive often. Love God. Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Enjoy this life.**

When we give, this is the work to which we commit, the way in which we follow, the love we share, the community we keep. As our ushers come forward to receive this morning's offering, know that you can also give by going to [www.community-ucc.org](http://www.community-ucc.org) and clicking "give". May God bless the gifts and the givers. Amen.

**Offertory** *There is a Balm in Gilead* Xiaoyi Zha

**\*Doxology** NCH 780

### Commissioning of the Community

**\*Hymn** *In All Our Living* NCH 499

### \*Benediction

**\*Benediction Response** *Go Forth to Serve*

**\*Postlude** Aaron Ames

*Please join us in the Parlor for the after party.*

### **Acknowledgements**

Call to Worship, "I Am Welcome," Words and Music by Bryan Sirchio, [www.sirchio.com](http://www.sirchio.com)

Invocation, Prayer for Transformation and New Life, Words of Grace, Forgiveness: Service Prayers for the Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost written by The Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology, United Church of Christ

Introit, "Hallelu, Let the People All Sing, Edouard Toppenberg, arr. Rufo Odor

Anthem, "Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal," Alice Parker

Sacred Reading, *New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition*, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>

Morning Prayer, written by Rev. Connie Bandy

Prayer Response, "Listen, Lord," Graham Maule, John L. Bell

Offertory, "There is a Balm in Gilead," arr. Harry T. Burleigh

Benediction Response, "Go Forth to Serve," Thomas Tallis arr. Hal Hopson

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## Serving Today

**Ministers:** The Community of Community UCC  
**Preacher & President:** Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser  
**Liturgist:** Rocio Arroyave-Jamison  
**Usher:** Kelly Tull, Dennis Jamison

**Organist:** Aaron Ames      **Singers:** Kathy Lee, CUCC Choir  
**Audio/Video:** Marilou Hinrichs, Roger Wade, Sean Walker

## **Community United Church of Christ Staff**

<b>Pastor:</b> Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser leah@community-ucc.org	<b>Director of Music Ministries:</b> Kathy Lee   music@community-ucc.org
<b>Director of Youth Ministries:</b> Open	<b>Organist:</b> Aaron Ames, Organist
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<b>Faith Community Nurse</b> Johnalene Radek   johnalene.radek@carle.com	
<b>Parish Associate:</b> Rev. Connie Bandy   connie@community-ucc.org	

## **Your Ministry Team Leaders**

<b>Moderator:</b> Johnalene Radek* <b>Past Moderator:</b> Erin Ewoldt* <b>Incoming Moderator:</b> Julie McClure* <b>Clerk:</b> Jeff Radek* <b>Pastoral Relations Committee:</b> Cara Finnegan <b>Personnel Committee:</b> Stephen Kolderup <b>Community Building:</b> Peg Wade* <b>- Care Team:</b> Marilou Hinrichs - <b>Prayer Shawls:</b> Elena Kasper - <b>Meal Train:</b> Jennifer Robbenolt - <b>Driver's Ministry:</b> Marilou Hinrichs - <b>Healing Music Ministry:</b> Marilou Hinrichs - <b>Card Ministry:</b> Peg Wade - <b>Visitor's Ministry:</b> Marilou Hinrichs - <b>Health and Wellness Team:</b> Chelsey Byers Gerstenecker - <b>Hospitality Team:</b> Rocio (Ro) Arroyave Jamison and Dennis Jamison	<b>Children &amp; Family:</b> Julie McClure* and Alison Anders <b>Finance:</b> Roger Wade* (treasurer), David Willcox (financial secretary) <b>Identity:</b> Keri Evans* and Ramona Oswald <b>Mission:</b> Jeanne Ward* and Kristy Brownfield <b>Sound &amp; Ethical Practices (SEP):</b> Shane Brownfield and (Open) - <b>Buildings &amp; Grounds:</b> Tom Ward and Matthew Hart - <b>Contracts &amp; Insurance:</b> Andrew McClure <b>UCC Campus Ministry Liaison:</b> Ilsa Kantola* <b>Worship:</b> (Open) and (Open) - <b>Sound Coordinator:</b> Roger Wade
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\*denotes Church Life Board Member

## **United Church Foundation (UCC Campus Ministry)**

**Director of Campus Ministry:** Reverend Nate Brantingham | info@ucccampusministry.org  
[www.community-ucc.org/campus-ministry](http://www.community-ucc.org/campus-ministry)

## **Community United Church of Christ**

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