

Columbiana First United Methodist
210 S Main St. • Columbiana, Ohio 44408
(330) 482-2382

August 16th, 2026

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor's Welcome

Announcement:

- Adult Sunday School, 9:30 am. We are learning about the Holy Spirit.
- **Chef Brad's Brunch — Today:** Join us after the worship service for an extended time of fellowship and a great meal.
- Street Fair parking will take place September 10, 11, and 12. If you're available to help, please contact Anne Brown. You may leave a message with the church secretary or call Anne directly.
- **Newsletter Article Deadline:** Please submit all articles for the September/October edition by **August 26**. Send submissions to Miranda.

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, we gather with gratitude for the gift of this new day. Fill this hour with Your Spirit—steady our hearts, open our minds, and draw us together in Your grace. Guide our worship, strengthen our faith, and lead us in the way of Christ. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

***Opening Hymn: Christ for the World We Sing #568**
(sung to the tune, Come Thou Almighty King)

Call to Worship:

L: Family of God, we gather today to unite our voices and our lives in praise to God!

P: How good and pleasant it is when we live together in unity!

L: We gather to celebrate how God binds us together to live, work, play, and rest as the Body of Christ!

P: How good and pleasant it is when we live together in unity!

L: We gather to remember how God has worked through us to share Christ's love with one another and our neighbors through our

prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service, and our witness.

P: How good and pleasant it is when we live together in unity!

L: Family of God, today we come as diverse and unique members of the Body of Christ to learn and grow not in uniformity but in unity to love God, self, neighbor, and all creation.

P: How good and pleasant it is when we live together in unity!

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Offertory:

*Doxology

#95

*Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, You pour Your blessing upon Your people like dew upon the earth and oil upon the head, flowing beyond all boundaries we would draw. We thank You for the gift of unity—good and pleasant, beautiful and life-giving—meant not only for us, but for the healing of the world. Receive these offerings as signs of our desire to live together in Your love, to practice radical welcome, and to share Your abundance with all Your children. Let what we give today flow outward in compassion and service, that our life together may reflect Your kingdom of peace, justice, and joy. Amen.

Hymn of Preparation:

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace

TFWS #2171

Old Testament Reading: Genesis 45:1-15

Gospel Reading: Matthew 15:10-28

Gloria Patri

#70

Message: "From Wounds to Welcome"

Pastor Cyndi

***Closing Hymn: In Unity We Lift Our Song 1,2,4 TFWS #2221**

(sung to the tune, A Mighty Fortress is Our God)

*Benediction

***Sending: "God Be with You"**

*Postlude

**Indicates for the congregation to stand if you are able*

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come before You once again to worship and praise Your holy name, for You are an awesome God. You are what we need day in and day out. You created us with the hope that we would delight in all You have made—because all that You created is good.

If we pause for just a moment and set aside our endless desires, we can see the gifts You have already placed before us: the sunrises and the sunsets, the way light rests on the land below and illuminates the sky above. No one paints beauty like You do.

You give us exactly what creation needs—rain to keep the trees and grass green, just enough moisture for flowers to flourish and brighten the earth around us. You bring color into a world that could so easily be dark and gray.

You have allowed us to enjoy another week. Each morning You woke us, giving us strength and energy to face whatever awaited us. You allowed my family to enjoy Your creation, one another, and the gift of time that felt perfectly appointed by You. You allowed us to find peace in a place that reflects so much of Your presence—and now You have allowed Riley, Rhea, and Victoria to enjoy it as well. Thank You, Father, thank You Jesus, thank You Holy Spirit.

Though I have been away from this church family, You have not. You have watched over each one. You have continued to bless, protect, guide, and bring healing to those who need Your touch. You have soothed hearts and lifted spirits.

Some still need Your healing hand. We ask that You be with Cheryl's brother Tom who is dealing with back issues, and Eric a friend of the Rouse's, who is recovering from a lung transplant. Extend Your healing hand upon them, find favor in them and allow their treatments to be known and their recovery to be quickened. All for Your glory. Some still need Your comforting voice. Some simply need to be held by You. So, we pause now, offering to You what we feel we need. And in that quiet moment, whisper to us what we truly need—and remind us that You will provide.

Draw us closer to You through this time of worship. Help us to feel Your presence, hear Your voice, and desire the desires of Your heart.

Stir the hearts of those who do not yet know You and use us as Your instruments—sharing the stories You have written in and through us, stories of Your love and Your faithfulness.

Let us be Your Church. Let us bring Your peace. And let us multiply Your kingdom.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

“From Wounds to Welcome”

Scripture Reference: Genesis 45:1-15

Joseph Revealed to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, “Make everyone go out from me!” So no one stood with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard it.

3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph; does my father still live?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near to me.” So they came near. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a [a]lposteriority for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 “Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph: “God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not [b]tarry. 10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children’s children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for there are still five years of famine.” ’

12 “And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my mouth that speaks to you. 13 So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and bring my father down here.”

14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin’s neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

Matthew 15:10-28

10 When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear and understand: 11 Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.”

12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

13 But He answered and said, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.”

15 Then Peter answered and said to Him, “Explain this parable to us.”

16 So Jesus said, “Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. 20 These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

A Gentile Shows Her Faith

21 Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.”

23 But He answered her not a word.

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”

24 But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

26 But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”

27 And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Opening

Beloved, today’s Scriptures place us in the middle of two emotionally charged scenes—one in Egypt, one in Galilee. Both moments revolve around people who have been pushed to the margins, people carrying wounds, people longing for restoration. And in both stories, God reveals something essential about the heart of grace: **God’s mercy breaks through the boundaries we create, and God’s healing often begins in the very places where we have been hurt.**

I. Joseph: The Tears That Tell the Truth

Genesis gives us one of the most powerful reunions in Scripture. Joseph—once betrayed, abandoned, sold, and forgotten—now stands as a ruler in Egypt. His brothers come seeking food, not knowing the man before them is the brother they wounded.

Joseph tries to hold it together, but the truth of love overwhelms him. Scripture says he *wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it*. His tears are not weakness; they are revelation. They tell the truth about what pain can do to a person—and what grace can do to a heart.

Joseph had every reason to stay hardened. Every reason to seek revenge. Every reason to say, “You don’t deserve my help.”

But Joseph chooses something else. He chooses reconciliation over retaliation. He chooses mercy over memory of wrongs. He chooses future over past.

And notice this: Joseph doesn’t pretend the harm never happened. He names it. He acknowledges it. But he also sees God’s hand working through the broken pieces.

“God sent me before you to preserve life.”

Joseph’s healing becomes the doorway for his family’s healing. His forgiveness becomes the bridge that carries them into a future they could not have imagined.

II. Jesus and the Canaanite Woman: A Boundary Broken Open

Then we turn to Matthew.

Jesus teaches the crowd that what defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth, but what comes out of the heart. It’s a lesson about inner truth, about the spiritual condition beneath our actions.

And immediately after this teaching, a Canaanite woman approaches him.

She is not part of Israel. She is not part of the religious community. She is not someone the disciples think belongs near Jesus. She is, in their eyes, an outsider.

But she is a mother with a hurting child. And pain has a way of pushing us past boundaries.

She cries out, “Lord, help me.”

The disciples try to send her away. Even Jesus’ initial response reflects the boundaries of his mission. But she persists. She refuses to believe that God’s mercy is limited to certain people.

And Jesus sees her faith—bold, resilient, unashamed—and he breaks the boundary wide open.

“Great is your faith.”

Her daughter is healed. Her voice is honored. Her persistence becomes a testimony.

This moment is not about Jesus changing his mind; it is about revealing the wideness of God’s mercy. It is about showing that faith can rise from unexpected places, and that God’s healing is not restricted by human categories.

III. The Thread Between the Two Stories

Joseph’s brothers were insiders who acted like outsiders through betrayal.

The Canaanite woman was an outsider who acted like an insider through faith.

Both stories show us that God's grace does not follow our lines of belonging. Both stories show us that God's healing often begins where human relationships have fractured. Both stories show us that God listens to the cry of the wounded—whether the wound was inflicted by family or by society.

And both stories ask us a question:

Where are the boundaries we have drawn—around forgiveness, around compassion, around who deserves help—and where is God calling us to break them open?

IV. A Living Witness: Faith That Cannot Be Taken

And if anyone knows what this kind of faith looks like in today's world, it is my own family. We are Holocaust survivors.

My grandmother—our beloved *Babci*—was the godliest woman I have ever known. She had every reason to carry a hardened heart. She raised children inside a concentration camp in Germany. Her husband and oldest son were taken from her and forced into a war they did not choose. Everything they owned was stripped away. She worked building railroads, pounding in ties with her bare hands. She lost her son to the war. She lost a daughter when they were separated before being taken from their home in Poland.

If anyone had reason to say, “I have nothing left,” it was her.

But she did not.

Because the one thing that could not be taken from her was her faith in God.

That faith kept her going. That faith kept her children alive. That faith kept her heart soft when the world tried to turn it to stone.

She was loving. She was welcoming. She was the kind of person who opened her door to anyone who needed help. She lived the Gospel long before I ever preached it. And in my dreams, she still comes to me like a breath of fresh air—because that is exactly what she was throughout her life.

Her story reminds me of Joseph's tears—how suffering did not destroy his compassion. Her story reminds me of the Canaanite woman—how faith can rise from places the world tries to silence. Her story reminds me that evil can take everything except the soul anchored in God.

Babci lived the truth that both Scriptures proclaim today: God's mercy is stronger than human cruelty. God's healing is deeper than human wounds. And faith—true faith—can survive anything.

V. For Us Today

We live in a world full of dividing lines—political, cultural, generational, even within families and churches. We carry wounds from one another. We carry assumptions about who belongs and who doesn't. We carry stories of hurt that feel too heavy to revisit.

But Joseph shows us that reconciliation is possible—even when the hurt is deep. And the Canaanite woman shows us that faith can flourish—even when the world says you don’t belong. And Babci shows us that faith can endure even the darkest cruelty humanity can inflict.

These Scriptures invite us to ask:

- Where do I need to let grace soften a hardened place in my heart.
- Who have I kept at a distance because of past pain.
- Where is God asking me to listen more deeply, to see more compassionately, to welcome more generously.
- And where might God be calling me to persist in faith, even when the world seems to say “not yet.”

VI. The Gospel Truth

The Gospel truth is this:

God’s mercy is always larger than our boundaries. God’s healing is always deeper than our wounds. God’s grace is always reaching toward reconciliation, restoration, and renewal.

Joseph’s tears, the woman’s persistence, and Babci’s unwavering faith all reveal the same divine heartbeat: God is always moving us from wounds toward welcome.

So may we be people who forgive boldly, who welcome widely, who listen deeply, and who persist in faith. May we trust that God is still weaving redemption through the broken places of our lives—just as God did for Joseph, just as Jesus did for a mother who refused to give up hope, and just as God sustained a grandmother whose faith could not be taken.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, You meet us in our wounds and lead us toward welcome. You soften hearts that have every reason to be hardened, and You lift faith out of places the world tries to silence.

Teach us to forgive as Joseph forgave, to persist as the Canaanite mother persisted, and to trust You as deeply as Babci trusted You through every darkness she endured.

Send us out with hearts made tender by Your mercy, with courage shaped by Your Spirit, and with love wide enough to welcome all Your children.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.