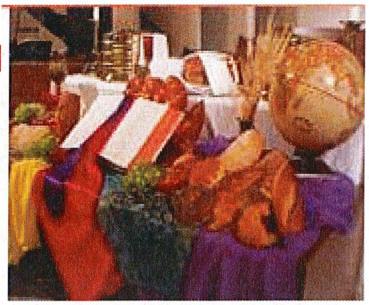
Grace Devotion



Week of October 4, 2026

Jesus said [to the high priests of the temple], "Yes, and I tell you that [crooks and outcasts] are going to precede you into God's kingdom. John came to you showing you the right road. You turned up your noses at him, but the [crooks and outcasts] believed him. Even when you saw their changed lives, you didn't care enough to change and believe him. — Matthew 21: 23-32

Dear friends,

This Sunday, our *Come to the Table* worship series comes to an end with The Table of Joy. There is just something about a table. Throughout this series, we have talked about what happens when we make room at the table—hospitality, love, peace, and now joy.

I think we sometimes misunderstand joy. It is easy to use joy and happiness interchangeably. We can think that joy just means being happy all the time. Joy is someone who walks around with a perpetual smile, always seems to have a good day, and that things are just always going right. But, my friends, I don't think that is the kind of joy that Jesus is talking about

Paul writes to the Philippians, "***If you've gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care — then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends." — Philippians 2: 1-13*** I love that Paul connects joy with community. Joy isn't just something that happens inside of us...it can also happen between us. It happens when we sit around a table and laugh until our sides hurt. It happens when someone remembers a story that we had forgotten. It happens when we realize that we don't have to pretend to have it all together. Sometimes, joy happens when we discover that we have more in common than we thought. In Matthew, Jesus tells us a rather uncomfortable story to the religious leaders. He reminds them that the people they dismissed were finding their way into God's kingdom before they were. Ouch!

God's table has always had a way of surprising us—the people we think don't belong may already have a seat, the people we have overlooked may be teaching us something about faith, and the people we have judged may be experiencing God's love in ways we haven't noticed. That's part of the joy of God's table. We don't get to decide who belongs. There is room for each of us. There is room for the person sitting beside us. There is room for the person we don't understand. There is room for the person who sees the world differently than we do. Somehow, when we stop worrying about who belongs and we simply make room, we discover the beauty of joy. Joy of knowing that we don't walk through life alone. Joy in being loved and of loving one another. Joy of gathering around God's table and discover that there is still room for more. God's table is bigger than we could ever imagine, and there is always room for us.

Prayer:

Loving God, Thank You for the joy we find around the table. Thank You for the people who make us laugh, and those who listen. Help us make room for others. May we carry the joy of this table with us into the world. Amen.

With Joy and Love,

Pastor Amy

Pastor Amy

October 4, 2026
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
World Communion Sunday

Westminster Chimes and Prelude
Welcome/Announcements

+"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" **#44

** Call to Worship **Taking Our Place, Opening to Others**

Lector: We hear God's calling to have joyful spirits as Christ's followers.
Congregation: We lift our hearts to be filled with vim and vigor!
Lector: We know that sometimes it is difficult to be joyful in life.
Congregation: We recognize that joy is a practice, not just a happy feeling.
Lector: We open ourselves to the joy that comes with justice.
Congregation: We make room at this table for joy in all its forms.

** Opening Prayer: (pray silently or aloud)
Welcoming God, You invite us to Your table just as we are. Open our hearts to receive Your grace and make room for those who may feel left out or forgotten. Teach us to see one another as you see us—as beloved children, welcomed and loved. May we carry Your welcome with us as we leave this place. Amen.

° Hymn: "Come to the Table" **see insert

** Sharing the Peace of Christ

Celebration of Our Gifts
** Offertory Response: "Doxology" **#625**
** Prayer of Dedication

Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

Joys and Concerns/Praying for Others/Lord's Prayer

° Hymn: "In Christ There is No East or West" **#285

Scripture Reading:
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32

Time for the Young at Heart

Message: "The Table of Joy"

"At This Table" **see insert**

Holy Communion
**Prayer of Thanksgiving
As we have been shown the joy of Jesus, may we take on the mantle of joy in our own lives, providing wellbeing and healing for the sorrows of this world. We have been fed. We have been nourished. We have been transformed. It is with Great Thanks that we have come to this table. Amen!

+" This Is Amazing Grace" **#21

** Final Blessing
** "A Choral Benediction"
Postlude
** Please stand, if you are able.
+ Black contemporary folder ° Blue hymnal

Come to the Table is a five-week worship series based on resources by Marcia McFee, Worship Design Studio. Used with permission.

Announcements

- Please consider sharing your talents by hosting snacks in the Gathering Place on Sunday mornings or acting as Lector. Both sign-up sheets can be found in the Gathering Place on the bulletin board.
- Neighbors in Need Offering will be collected on October 4th
- World Communion Sunday will be October 4th
- Confirmation Sunday will be October 11th
- Bible Study Group has been canceled for October 14th
- Starting October 4th at Grace, we're beginning our Harvest Home collection. It's a way for us to remember that while we may not be able to solve someone's food insecurity, we can make sure a family has something good to put on the table. We'll be collecting donations to create "Meals That Stretch" kits—simple meals that can feed a family for more than one meal. Stay tuned for items to donate!
- Help us collect snacks and candy for Trick or Treat

Upcoming Events

Monthly Movie – October 9th @ 3:00 PM
Grace UCC Helpers – October 17th @ 9:00 AM
Trick or Treat – October 27th @ 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Upcoming Meetings

- Faith Formation Committee Meeting – October 19th @ 5:00 PM
- Worship & Music Committee Meeting – October 27th @ 3:30 PM



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Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

Prayer Line: 717-632-1146 LINE 3

Thank you for today's Worship Leaders:

Pastor - Amy Fawks

Lector - Jenn Weaver

Music Director – Grace Neilson

Head Usher – Anita Kincaid & Susan Dienes

At Christ's table, all are welcome. Our bread and juice are always gluten-free so everyone may share in this meal.

The Lord's Prayer

F E V P K S Y Y H D
O A S T F A T H E R
R R D M L M I H A S
G T L A M Z M M V U
I H Q S E O S A E S
V D Q S D R E E N E
E T I G U E B E V J
P R N B M Y R O L G
J I W A J W L O I Y
K M N J S V L I V E

forgive Kingdom Father heaven
glory Jesus bread earth
evil name

JESUS CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

Discover the hidden words.

M	G	R	A	I	N	C	L	W	T	S	B	A	Q	A
C	D	O	P	N	I	W	R	A	H	E	S	N	H	C
W	O	I	D	H	Z	E	A	R	I	L	T	G	Q	Y
A	H	F	C	W	V	X	N	K	E	B	S	E	U	I
W	U	O	W	O	Z	T	I	E	V	A	E	R	J	N
A	X	T	S	M	V	J	M	T	E	T	I	I	Z	D
G	N	S	H	H	S	E	A	P	S	X	R	Z	L	Y
P	A	D	U	O	Q	S	L	L	V	W	P	L	M	E
P	I	G	F	O	R	E	S	A	U	D	P	Z	Y	H
R	J	H	E	U	T	I	O	C	M	H	F	M	C	Q
V	W	N	S	W	W	Z	T	E	V	I	M	I	E	F
K	Y	L	H	R	T	M	L	Y	T	J	E	S	U	S
F	X	C	M	L	O	H	W	M	S	Z	R	Q	S	U
V	O	W	R	I	X	W	O	N	H	U	W	F	W	K
I	A	B	D	H	C	G	O	C	J	M	D	X	O	H

Word Bank

JESUS
AUTHORITY
PRIESTS
PASSOVER
GOD
MARKETPLACE
WHIP
ANIMALS
TABLES
ANGER
THIEVES
WORSHIP



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