

Grace Devotion

Week of September 20, 2026

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.^[c] ¹¹ For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to^[d] God." ¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.^[e] (*Romans 14:10-12 NRSVUE*)



Dear friends,

This Sunday, we continue our *Come to the Table* worship series with The Table of Peace. Peace sounds wonderful, but peace is not always easy. It is especially difficult when we disagree with someone, when someone has hurt us, or when we believe someone else is simply wrong. It can be tempting to judge, criticize, or distance ourselves from those who see things differently than we do. Paul reminds us that we are not called to be the judge of one another. Each of us will stand before God, and God sees what we cannot always see—the whole story, the struggles, the intentions, and the hearts of others. Then Peter asks Jesus a question many of us might ask: "How many times should I forgive someone who hurts me?" Peter thinks seven times sounds generous. Jesus responds with seventy times seven. Jesus is not asking us to keep a tally of forgiveness. Instead, Jesus is reminding us that forgiveness is not something we offer once and then stop. Forgiveness is a way of living. It is choosing again and again not to let anger, resentment, or judgment have the final word.

But forgiveness does not mean that hurt doesn't matter. Peace does not mean pretending that everything is fine when it isn't. Sometimes peace requires an honest conversation. Sometimes it requires setting a boundary. Sometimes it means holding someone accountable for the way they have treated us. Sometimes it means letting go of the need to make someone pay for the hurt they have caused.

There is room for all of these things at God's table. Around God's table, we will not always agree. We will not always understand one another. But we can choose to sit down together. We can listen. We can speak honestly. We can offer forgiveness. We can leave room for mercy.

This week, I invite you to think about where you might need a little more peace in your life. Is there a disagreement that needs your focus? Is there someone you need to forgive—or perhaps someone you need to ask forgiveness from? Maybe the first step is simply to stop judging and begin listening. God's table is a place where we are reminded that none of us has the whole story and none of us gets the final word. We come with our differences, our hurts, and our hopes, and we trust that God's mercy is big enough to hold us all. May we find our way to that table of peace.

Prayer:

God of peace and mercy, Thank You for meeting us even in the places where we disagree and struggle to understand one another. Help us to be slow to judge and willing to listen. Give us courage when difficult conversations are needed, wisdom to know when boundaries are necessary, and generous hearts that are willing to forgive. Help us remember that we, too, are recipients of Your mercy. May Your peace guide our words, our relationships, and the way we welcome one another to Your table. Amen.

With Grace and Love,

Pastor Amy

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Amy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

September 20, 2026
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Westminster Chimes and Prelude
Welcome/Announcements

**+“My Lighthouse”

#42

** Call to Worship **Taking Our Place, Opening to Others**
Lector: We gather today to listen, to learn, and to love.
Congregation: We are ready to share and to hear what others have to say.

Lector: Though we are all different, we yearn to find a mutual understanding.

Congregation: We are standing on common ground.

Lector: We take our seat at the Table of Peace.

Congregation: We know that God is already here!

** 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
** Prayer of Dedication

#625

Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

Joys and Concerns
Praying for Others
Lord’s Prayer

**° Hymn: “Blest Be the Tie that Binds”

#286

Scripture Reading:

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

Time for the Young at Heart

Message: “The Table of Peace”

**+“ Same Power”

#3

** 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.

Thank you to all who sang and accompanied today's Praise Band!

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 on October 4, 2026

Upcoming Events

Women's Ministry – IN PERSON @ 7:30 PM

Upcoming Meetings

- Worship & Music Committee Meeting – September 21st @ 3:30 PM
- Faith Formation Committee Meeting – September 21st @ 5:00 PM



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 - Len Bankert

Music Director – Grace Neilson

Head Usher – Jenn Weaver & Joleen Fennel

Romans 14

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

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|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| • DOUBTFUL | • NONE | • OCCASION | • MAKE |
| • ANOTHER | • LIVE | • UNCLEAN | • WORK |
| • THAT | • LIVING | • WITH | • NEITHER |
| • FALLETH | • THOU | • THEN | • BEFORE |
| • PERSUADED | • EVERY | • MEAT | • FAITH |
| • UNTO | • ACCOUNT | • ACCEPTABLE | |

MATTHEW 18:21-35

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

unmerciful	deserved	forgive	servant
family	heaven	wicked	master
sinner	prison	judge	money
mercy	debt	king	