

**DUE TO IT BEING A HOLIDAY AND
OUR COMMUNION STEWARDS ARE
OUT OF TOWN, WE WILL
CELEBRATE COMMUNION NEXT
SUNDAY INSTEAD OF TODAY**

**SEPTEMBER 6, 2026
15TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LABOR DAY HOLIDAY**

St. John United Church of Christ

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Organist/Pianist – Sharon Banjavcic

Liturgy –

Ushers –

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print.

Bible translation – CEB Common English Bible

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior"

John M. Rasley

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Deaconess Parish Nurses

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

*written by Rev. Seth Wispelwey, Minister for Economic Justice in
the United Church of Christ*

One: Today is a Sabbath.

All: We are called to rest.

One: This space is for Sabbath.

All: We have come here to rest.

One: For all who are lonely...

All: May we find belonging.

One: For all who are weary...

All: May we find rest.

One: For all who labor...

All: May we find renewal.

One: For all who are not afforded belonging, rest, and
renewal:

**All: May we embody solidarity with those longing for
community, wages, and sabbaths that everyone
deserves.**

One: Today is a Sabbath.

All: Let us find rest, and worship together the One who provides rest from labor, loneliness, and weariness.

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION:**

This is a festival day, glorious God, a day of remembering those who labored through the centuries, that we might have a better life now. We celebrate your vibrant presence with our ancestors who came to this country for a better life, that unfortunately, many did not receive in their life times. But they planted a seed of equality and justice that all people could receive fair wages for jobs well done.

Today we also rejoice at the assurance that you take pleasure in us, that we are known by you, called by you, empowered by you to live honorably and humbly, I the spirit of Christ. We would exalt your name and sing for joy, knowing that we can trust you for the guidance and direction we need now and forever. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: “Worker God Who Built Creation”**

****New Song Commissioned & Written for Labor Sunday! Amanda Udis-Kessler, August 1, 2025;
Hymn to Joy (Tune of “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”)*

**Worker God who built creation, author of humanity,
Thoughtful planner, joyous potter, through your work
we come to be.**

**May we labor in your image.
May your love guide all we do.
Help us co-create your kingdom.
Help us make your dream come true.**

**Worker Jesus, teaching, healing, sharing gifts of wine
and bread,
Strengthening the broken-hearted, making sure the
poor are fed,
May we labor in your image.
May we set the captives free.
Send us ever to the margins.
Rouse our solidarity.**

**Worker Spirit, inspiration, you infuse each living soul,
Calling us to lives of justice till each heart is free and
whole.
May we labor in your image.
May we tend and heal and praise.
May we strive for life abundant,
glad and grateful all our days.**

***INVITATION TO CONFESSION:** On this Labor Day Sunday let us lift up all people who labor, either for pay or as volunteers, in jobs or at school, at home or in the workplace, here at home and all around the world.

***UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

We are workers, God, just like you. But we confess that our actions do not always affirm and honor each other. Our work is not always done in a spirit that is pleasing to you. We confess that, on some occasions, we have blindly bought goods made by people who are paid too little or work in unsafe conditions. We admit that we have failed to end an unjust system in which some workers have jobs that provide good wages and benefits while others may have no job, or one that pays little and provides few benefits.

Creator God, help us to be your people, working for a world where all workers are valued. A world where those who clean houses are also able to buy houses to live in. A world where those who grow food can also afford to eat their fill. And one where those who serve and care for others – in stores, schools, hotels, restaurants, nursing homes, and many other places – are, themselves, also served and cared for. A world where all workers everywhere share in the abundance that you have given us.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE:** Our God is a God of grace and transformation. When we ask, God gives us the courage and strength to live out our faith in the workplace and the marketplace, as well as in the sanctuary.

~ written by Dr. Edie Russell, former Minister for Economic Justice with the United Church of Christ. Posted on the United Church of Christ website. http://www.ucc.org/justice_worker-justice_labor-sunday_worship-resources#liturgy

***GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat twice)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

OLD TESTAMENT: Exodus 12:1-14

First Passover

12 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ² “This month will be the first month; it will be the first month of the year for you. ³ Tell the whole Israelite community: On the tenth day of this month they must take a lamb for each household, a lamb per house. ⁴ If a household is too small for a lamb, it should share one with a neighbor nearby. You should divide the lamb in proportion to the number of people who will be eating it. ⁵ Your lamb should be a flawless year-old male. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ You should keep close watch over it until the fourteenth day of this month. At twilight on that day, the whole

assembled Israelite community should slaughter their lambs. ⁷ They should take some of the blood and smear it on the two doorposts and on the beam over the door of the houses in which they are eating. ⁸ That same night they should eat the meat roasted over the fire. They should eat it along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Don't eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over fire with its head, legs, and internal organs. ¹⁰ Don't let any of it remain until morning, and burn any of it left over in the morning. ¹¹ This is how you should eat it. You should be dressed, with your sandals on your feet and your walking stick in your hand. You should eat the meal in a hurry. It is the Passover of the Lord. ¹² I'll pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I'll strike down every oldest child in the land of Egypt, both humans and animals. I'll impose judgments on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord. ¹³ The blood will be your sign on the houses where you live. Whenever I see the blood, I'll pass over^[b] you. No plague will destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ "This day will be a day of remembering for you. You will observe it as a festival to the Lord. You will observe it in every generation as a regulation for all time.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 149 Page 722

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 8.1-4, 13-15

Encouragement to give generously

⁸ Brothers and sisters, we want to let you know about the grace of God that was given to the churches of Macedonia. ² While they were being tested by many problems, their extra amount of happiness and their extreme poverty resulted in a surplus of rich generosity. ³ I assure you that they gave what they could afford and even more than they could afford, and they did it voluntarily. ⁴ They urgently begged us for the privilege of sharing in this service for the saints.

¹³ It isn't that we want others to have financial ease and you financial difficulties, but it's a matter of equality. ¹⁴ At the present moment, your surplus can fill their deficit so that in the future their surplus can fill your deficit. In this way there is equality. ¹⁵ As it is written, *The one who gathered more didn't have too much, and the one who gathered less didn't have too little.*

SECOND EPISTLE LESSON: Romans 13:8-14

⁸ Don't be in debt to anyone, except for the obligation to love each other. Whoever loves another person has fulfilled the Law. ⁹ The commandments, *Don't commit adultery, don't murder, don't steal, don't desire what others have*, and any other commandments, are all summed up in one word: *You must love your neighbor as*

yourself. ¹⁰ Love doesn't do anything wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is what fulfills the Law.

The day is near

¹¹ As you do all this, you know what time it is. The hour has already come for you to wake up from your sleep. Now our salvation is nearer than when we first had faith. ¹² The night is almost over, and the day is near. So let's get rid of the actions that belong to the darkness and put on the weapons of light. ¹³ Let's behave appropriately as people who live in the day, not in partying and getting drunk, not in sleeping around and obscene behavior, not in fighting and obsession. ¹⁴ Instead, dress yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ, and don't plan to indulge your selfish desires.

"THE REVOLUTION THAT STARTED AS A PARADE"

Labor Day, celebrated in the U.S. and Canada, falls on the first Monday of September, and was designed to honor working-class people and promote the work of labor unions. In many other countries, May Day serves a similar purpose. While for some Labor Day simply marks the end of summer, it emerged in the late nineteenth century (during the height of the Industrial Revolution) out of the organized labor movements in England, where increasing attention was being focused on the thousands of people from vulnerable populations who were dying every year from poor working conditions and long **hours**.

Inspired by the UK activist movements and labor strikes, unions in New York threw a parade in September 1882, to celebrate unions as a concept and the hardworking people comprising them. Workers gave up a day's wage to attend, and more than 20,000 people came out, which meant they weren't laboring for others. It was a celebration of historic proportions that sent ripples through the capitalist workforce system. Soon, unions in other states hosted September parades, and within five years, several states declared Labor Day official state holidays. After twelve years of radical parade shenanigans, President Grover Cleveland signed an act establishing Labor Day as a federal holiday in 1894. It is estimated that this year more than 40% of businesses will remain open this Labor Day, and the vast majority of staff members on the clock will be those from within the working-class—the people who are meant to be honored by the holiday."

HYMN: 563 "We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky"

PASTORAL PRAYER: Labor In the Pulpits

Litany Leader: Today we celebrate workers and their contributions. Just as people in our sacred texts had varying jobs, we recognize the various gifts of workers today.

Leader: We celebrate those in helping professions: medical professionals, teachers, social workers, and legal assistants.

All: We give thanks for the work of your hands. May God bless you so that through you others may thrive. Forgive the places that have been neglected due to injustice. Give us strength and courage to work toward fair access to services for all God's children and just treatment of those who give so freely of themselves.

Leader: We celebrate those who work in factories and building professions.

All: We give thanks for the work of your hands. May God bless you and your work that allows us to have safe shelter and vehicles, even as some of your working conditions are unsafe. We support your struggle for just wages and working conditions so that you too may be safe.

Leader: We celebrate those who work from the home: caring for children, elderly, and infirmed.

All: We give thanks for the work of your hands. May God bless your work and give you strength to carry on when the work is challenging. Our culture may not recognize fully your jobs as work, but we know that your work is often challenging. We will work with you for the respect you deserve.

Leader: We celebrate those who work in cleaning professions.

All: We give thanks for the work of your hands. May God bless you and the work you do. Through your work our hotels, offices, and streets are cleaned and prepared for our use, and yet we often do not see you and the strenuous effort required of you. Forgive us for not recognizing your contributions. We support you and your struggle for fair and just wages and benefits.

Leader: We celebrate those who wish to work but are unable to due to injury, illness, disability, or lack of access to jobs or transportation.

All: May God bless you and give you perseverance in this struggle. We repent for the ways in which we may have contributed to your situation. We support you and will journey with you in the process of searching for opportunities for work.

Leader: Let us pray:

All: Creator God, who created all things from the work of your hands, we commend to you all workers, those named here and those remain unnamed. Forgive us for the ways we contribute to injustice perpetrated on workers and on your creation. Carpenter Jesus, who draws us into your work with the marginalized, call us into your work of justice that we might change our own unjust ways and work toward fair and just treatment of workers. Powerful Holy Spirit, who empowers us for the journey, move in our lives and in our work that we might persevere in the face of injustice and claim the

power you have bestowed upon us to work for justice.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 775

And God will raise you up on eagle's wings,
Bear you on the breath of dawn,
Make you to shine like the sun,
And hold you in the palm of God's hand.

OFFERTORY INVITATION:

Adapted from Labor Sunday Liturgy by Rev. Ed Middleton

The witness of our sacred texts and generations of prophetic leaders is clear: when we have enough - and more than enough - to meet our needs, our call is to share until all others have their needs met. When this vision of thriving humanity is achieved, we all thrive. Let this truth settle upon us as a deeply held desire to love one another as God has loved us.

OFFERTORY: "Just As I Am" Edward Broughton

***DOXOLOGY:**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above you heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

***UNISON OFFERTORY BLESSING:**

God of Justice, Mercy, and Fairness: We commit ourselves and these offerings unto you, that your will and ways may be manifested in our lives, within your assemblies, and spread forth that the powers that be might serve your purposes until all are fed, housed, cared for, work with dignity, and all of these things done in ways that preserve the sanctity of this one precious earth. Amen

***CLOSING HYMN: 181**

"You Are Salt of the Earth O People"

BENEDICTION - *Adapted from Labor Sunday Liturgy by Rev. Ed Middleton*

Now as you go from this place, go to fulfill God's purposes that all may know of God's love, and that by seeking justice and mercy for all of God's people within our homes, neighborhoods, communities, cities, and nations, God's realm will be seen, known, and experienced now and throughout the ages.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571

O God of Love, O God of Peace
Make wars throughout the world to cease.

**The wrath of human wrong restrain;
Give peace, O God, give peace again.**

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: "Unto Thee Do We Give Thanks"
James Denton

PRAYER LIST: Patti French, Kim Holms, Becky Ballard,
Russ Hartmann, Marilyn Paul, Mary Lou and Urban
Baum, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, Jackie
Canterbury, Wayne Huss, our Beloved Country.

**SAFE TRAVELS FOR ALL THOSE RETURNING HOME LATER
THIS WEEKEND.**