



CHURCH OF THE
GOOD SHEPHERD
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

07/26/26

11:00am

I'm absolutely
convinced

that **nothing—nothing**
living or dead, angelic or demonic,
today or tomorrow, high or low,
thinkable or unthinkable—

⇒ **absolutely nothing** ⇒

can get between us and

God's love ♥

because of the way that
Jesus has embraced us.”

—— Romans 8:39 ——



No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

July 26, 2026

WELCOME.....

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: When words fail us, and prayer feels like sighing,

Many: The Spirit prays within us.

One: When we are worn down by the weight of the world,

Many: Love is already at work, weaving good, right here.

One: Who can separate us from the love of God?

Many: Nothing can separate us from the love of God—not death nor life, not powers or fears, not anything in all creation.

One: For we are held by a love wider than our doubt.

Many: We are held by a love stronger than despair.

One: So let us celebrate the God who walks with us.

Many: Let us celebrate the God who will not let us go.

HYMN #407 How Firm a Foundation

1 How firm a foundation for you has been laid,

by God in the Word, in the sacrifice paid!

What more can God say than to you has been said,

to you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dismayed,

for I am your God, and will still give you aid;

I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand

upheld by my gracious, omnipotent hand."

3 "When through the deep waters I call you to go,

the rivers of woe shall not over you flow;

For I will be with you, your troubles to bless,

delivering you from your deepest distress."

OPENING REFLECTION.....

"Be Still My Soul, Be Still" with "Be Still My Soul" By Kristyn Lennox Getty, Keith Getty, Stuart

JOYS AND CONCERNS.....

PRAYER.....

SCRIPTURE.....

Romans 8:26-39, adapted from The Message

26-28 Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God’s Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don’t know how or what to pray, it doesn’t matter. God does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. God knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That’s why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

29-30 God knew what God was doing from the very beginning. God decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love God along the same lines as the life of God's Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what God's children should be like, God followed it up by calling people by name. After God called them by name, God set them on a solid basis with God. And then, after getting them established, God stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what God had begun.

31-39 So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn’t hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing themselves to the worst by sending their own Son, is there anything else God wouldn’t gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God’s chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ’s love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger

, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.

We're sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.

None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I'm absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God's love because of the way that Jesus has embraced us.

Romanos 8:26-39, La Palabra (Hispanoamérica)

26 Asimismo, a pesar de que somos débiles, el Espíritu viene en nuestra ayuda; aunque no sabemos lo que nos conviene pedir, el Espíritu intercede por nosotros de manera misteriosa. 27 Y Dios, que sondea lo más profundo del ser, conoce cuál es el sentir de ese Espíritu que intercede por los creyentes de acuerdo con su divina voluntad. 28 Estamos seguros, además, de que todo colabora al bien de los que aman a Dios, de los que han sido elegidos conforme a su designio. 29 Porque a quienes Dios conoció de antemano, los destinó también desde el principio a reproducir la imagen de su Hijo, que había de ser el primogénito entre muchos hermanos. 30 Y a quienes Dios destinó desde un principio, también los llamó; a quienes llamó, los restableció en su amistad; y a quienes restableció en su amistad, los hizo partícipes de su gloria.

31 ¿Qué añadir a todo esto? Si Dios está a nuestro favor, ¿quién podrá estar contra nosotros? 32 Dios que no escatimó a su propio Hijo, sino que lo entregó a la muerte por nosotros, ¿cómo no va a hacernos el don de todas las cosas juntamente con él? 33 ¿Quién acusará a los elegidos de Dios? ¡Dios es quien salva! 34 ¿Quién se atreverá a condenar? ¡Cristo Jesús es quien murió, más aún, resucitó y está junto a Dios, en el lugar de honor, intercediendo por nosotros! 35 ¿Quién podrá arrebatarnos el amor que Cristo nos tiene? ¿El sufrimiento, la angustia, la persecución, el hambre, la desnudez, el peligro, el miedo a la muerte? 36 Ya lo dice la Escritura:

Por tu causa estamos en trance de muerte cada día;
nos tratan como a ovejas destinadas al matadero.

37 Pero Dios, que nos ha amado, nos hace salir victoriosos de todas estas
pruebas. 38 Estoy seguro de que ni muerte, ni vida, ni ángeles, ni potestades cósmicas, ni
lo presente, ni lo futuro, ni poderes sobrenaturales, 39 ni lo de arriba, ni lo de abajo, ni
cualquier otra criatura, será capaz de arrebatarnos este amor que Dios nos tiene en Cristo
Jesús, Señor nuestro.

A TIME FOR ALL AGES.....
HYMN #485 “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go”

1 O Love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul in you; I
give you back the life I owe,
that in its ocean depths its flow may may swell with ardor true.

2 O Light that follows all my way,
To you I yield my flick'ring flame;
Renew my spirit's feeble ray,
That from your brilliant sunlit day it may new brightness claim.

3 O Joy that seeks me through my pain,
To you I cannot close my heart;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
and know the promise is not vain that you will ne'er depart.

SERMON.....Rev. Dr. Sarah Townes

PASTORAL PRAYER.....

PRAYER OF JESUS

Our Father, Our Mother,
Who is in Heaven, Holy be Your name,

Kin(g)dom come, Your will be done,
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For yours is the Kin(g)dom and the
Power and the glory,
Now and forever, Amen.

SHARING OUR GIFTS.....

OFFERTORY.....

*"Peace Like a River, Kum Ba Ya," Traditional Spirituals, arr. By Jean Anne Shafferman
Axel Catterall, Chris Keelan, duet*

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God the source of all our gifts.

Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts.

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

PRAYER OF DEDICATION.....

CLOSING HYMN #23 "There's Wideness In God's Mercy"

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,

like the wideness of the sea;

there's a kindness in God's justice,

which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earthly sorrows
are more felt than in God's heaven;
there's no place where earthly failings
have such kindly judgment given.

2 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our minds;
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

If our love were but more faithful,
we would gladly trust God's Word,
and our lives would show thanksgiving
for the goodness of our God.

LIFE OF OUR COMMUNITY.....

CLOSING REFLECTION.....

“By Faith” Words and Music by Kristyn Lennox Getty, Keith Getty, Stuart Townend arr. James Koertz. Carol Red, piano

*By faith we see the hand of God
In the light of creation’s grand design
In the lives of those who prove His faithfulness
Who walk by faith and not by sight
We will stand as children of the promise
We will fix our eyes on Him our soul’s reward
Till the race is finished and the work is done
We’ll walk by faith and not by sight*

BENEDICTION.....

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Thank you for joining us in worship today

We are delighted to have you worshipping with us today!



Church of the Good Shepherd, UCC is a dynamic congregation with a rich history and vibrant ministry in the community. Our church is a part of a blend of five major Protestant denominations that united together in 1957 to form the United Church of Christ: Congregational, Christian, Afro-Christian, German Evangelical and Reformed. We celebrate the words of Pastor John Robinson, who in his farewell remarks to the Pilgrims as they were leaving for the "new world," said, "There is still more light and truth to break forth from God's holy word." We say at our church that "God is still speaking!" "There is still more light and truth to break forth from God's holy word."

- We are a church that:
 - Centers our faith and practice in the life and ministry Jesus Christ.
 - Takes the Bible seriously, not literally.
 - Builds community partnerships across differences.
 - Worships God with joyful hearts and open minds.
 - Includes children in the life and ministry of the church.
 - Celebrates creativity and the arts.
 - Encounters Christ in Creation, community, sacraments, music, scripture, and service.
 - Listens and responds to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
 - Celebrates an open table and seeks to be inclusive of ALL people.
 - Seeks to live out our faith in the world as we build God's reign of love and justice on earth.
 - Believes that growth in wisdom and understanding happens at all stages of life.
 - Embraces solidarity, not just charity.
 - Is committed to work for justice for all people and for the environment.
 - Cares for one another, laughs easily, and rests in God's love.

Vision Statement

Church of the Good Shepherd desires to be an

Mission Statement

The mission of Church of the Good

An Open and Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Christ

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No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.