



PENBROOK UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

An Open and Affirming Congregation
of the United Church of Christ

No matter who you are,
or where you are on life's journey,
you are always welcome here!

SEPTEMBER 27, 2026
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

56 Banks Street
Harrisburg, PA 17103
717-236-5275
office@penbrookucc.org

WELCOME TO PENBROOK UCC

We are so blessed that you have joined us today, to remember and celebrate the gifts of God. If this is your first time or if you are a long-time member, we hope this service helps you to ponder your relationship with God and neighbor, and that you find your blessing and go from this service to share in the World.

We are an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. If you are interested in knowing more about the United Church of Christ or Penbrook UCC or have questions about membership in this family of faith, please feel welcome to speak with any of the leaders listed below.

Those who serve today:

Pastor: Rev. Donna Hughes

Liturgist: Brian Johnson

Choir Director: Faith Brown

Pianist/Organist/Accompanist: Dawn Shertzer

Acolyte: George Long

Greeter/Usher:

Welcome/Announcements:

Streaming Operator: Mel Amago

PowerPoint Operator:

Your Executive Team:

President: Mary Kelly

Vice President: Mel Amago

Secretary: Mackenzie Weinhold

Treasurer: James Wheeler

About today's worship service:

♦ Throughout today's service, this symbol ♦ indicates an invitation to rise either in body or in spirit.

Bold print indicates a unison response or prayer.

"NCH" refers to the New Century Hymnal.

THE CELEBRATION OF WORSHIP

Welcome to worship. At the ringing of the steeple bell, please enter a time of quietness in preparation for our worship together.

THE RINGING OF THE STEEPLE BELL

THE PRELUDE

Holy Forever

Chris Tomlin, Jenn Johnson, Phil Wickham, Brian Johnson, Jason Ingram

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THE WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SHOUT-OUTS

♦ THE CALL TO WORSHIP (RESPONSIVE)

Come, all who have said yes for a long time and are now noticing where the going has not happened.

Turn us, Lord.

Come, all who have said no for a long time and are wondering if it is too late.

Turn us, Lord.

Come, all whose spiritual life has been more said than done, and who are ready for it to become something else.

Turn us, Lord.

Come, and let us worship the God who does not stop asking, whose vineyard is still open, whose door does not close.

Come, let us go, at last, to the work.

♦ OPENING PRAYER

God of mercy, teach us to trust you even when the way is hard. Give us the mind of Christ, humble and willing. Help our actions match our words. Amen.

♦ THE HYMN NCH #9

We Sing to You, O God

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Tune: Richard Proulz, 1979, © 1980 GIA Publications, Inc.

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CALL TO CONFESSION

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND YEARNING (RESPONSIVE)

God who does not stop asking. . .

We confess that we have been the second son. We have said the right things. We have shown up in the right places.

We have worn the right badges. And too often, we have not gone.

We confess the yeses we have offered as substitutes for action — the pledge that stood in for love, the affirmation that stood in for hospitality, the theology that stood in for justice, the worship that stood in for a changed life.

We confess that we have watched change happen in people we thought were beyond it, and have not been moved.

We have seen tax collectors and prostitutes turn, and have stayed exactly where we were. Forgive us for the hardness that has learned to admire other people's transformation from the safety of our own unchanged lives.

SILENT REFLECTION

WORDS OF GRACE

Hear the good news. The father in the parable does not give up on the second son. He asks. And even now, Jesus stands in the temple, still asking the same question, still willing to hear a different answer. Metanoia is possible. Change of mind is possible. Your yes can still become an action. Come, let us turn, and go, at last, to the vineyard.

♦ THE PASSING OF THE PEACE AS GOD'S PENTECOST PEOPLE

(The congregation may greet each other with a sign of reconciliation and peace, such as a handshake, an embrace, or other appropriate signs of peace, accompanied by these or similar words: "The Peace of God be with you," and in response, "And also with you.")

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Christ who is still asking — read us your word in the voice that once diagnosed the priests and the elders, that still names the yes that has not gone. Turn our hearing into readiness. Turn our seeing into willingness to change. Turn us, Lord. Amen.

THE PSALTER (RESPONSIVE)

Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16

Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth. ²I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, ³things that we have heard and known, that our ancestors have told us.

⁴We will not hide them from their children; we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and God's might and the wonders that God has done.

In the sight of their ancestors God worked marvels in the land of Egypt, in the fields of Zoan.

¹³God divided the sea and let them pass through it and made the waters stand like a heap.

¹⁴In the daytime God led them with a cloud and all night long with a fiery light.

¹⁵God split rocks open in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep. ¹⁶God made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers.

THE HEBREW BIBLE LESSON

Exodus 17:1-7

SPECIAL MUSIC

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Koinonia Singers

Setting by Kevin McChesney

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Onelicense.net song #hb329 and 98181

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CHILDREN'S TIME

Faith Brown

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 21:23-32

THE MESSAGE

Yes and. . .

♦ THE HYMN (Bulletin insert)

Once a Father Told His Children

Tune (NCH #459): Public domain

Text: Copyright © 2011 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.

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THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

PRAYER HYMN

O Lord, Hear Our Prayer

**O Lord, hear our prayer, O Lord, hear our prayer.
When we call answer us.**

**O Lord, hear our prayer, O Lord, hear our prayer.
Come and listen to us.**

Music: Jacques Berthier. Text: Taizé Community.

© 1982 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent.

Onelicense.net song #00134

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Friend, our Mother, our Father in heaven: hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

THE INVITATION TO GENEROSITY
STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Bob Lane

THE RECEIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

THE OFFERTORY

To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice

Keith Green

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♦ THE DOXOLOGY FOR PENTECOST SEASON NCH #778

**Praise God, the wind that stirs our hearts,
Praise God, the one who grants fresh starts,
Praise God, the source of each new birth,
Praise God who loves all those on earth.**

Music: Public Domain. Words: Rev. John Danner, Pastor of the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ,
Sanibel, Florida. Used by permission.

♦ THE PRAYER OF DEDICATION (UNISON)

Bountiful God, all that we can offer you stems from your generosity. May the gifts that we return to you become a blessing for your whole community, enriching and empowering us for the work to which you call us. Amen.

♦ THE HYMN NCH #372

God, You Have Set Us

Tune: George William Warren, 1892.

Text: Jane Parker Huber, 1984; rev. 1993.

Text © 1984 Jane Parker Huber (admin. Westminster John Knox Press)

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♦ THE BENEDICTION

Go, and let your actions match your words. Go, in humility, like Christ who humbled himself for us. And may God, who is at work in you, complete what God has begun.

♦ THE BENEDICTION RESPONSE NCH #78 (verse 3)

Part in Peace

**Part in peace! Our voices raising, in God's presence always be.
This the worship and the praising, bringing peace to you and me.**

Text: Sarah Flower Adams, 1835. Music: Southern Harmony, 1835.

Harmonization: Carlton R. Young, 1964 © 1965 Abingdon Press.

Onelicense.net song #03971

THE POSTLUDE

Autumn Reflections
James Michael Stevens
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- Today's Call to Worship, Prayer of Yearning, Words of Grace, and Prayer for Illumination are by John Fairless; the Opening Prayer and Benediction are by Rev. Jason Elder; and the Prayer of Dedication is from Binary Breaking Worship.
- The Doxology for the Season of Pentecost is by John H. Danner, and is found at the blog *Gifts in Open Hands*, <https://giftsinopenhands.wordpress.com/2014/05/26/2978> [retrieved May 15, 2024]. Used by permission.
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Announcements and Information

WRITING OF THE NAMES

Thank you to everyone that helped with the Writing of the Names. It was a powerful experience to honor those Palestinians who have died.

FALL FAITH FORMATION

Fall Faith Formation, meeting in the Ross Room (across from the Sanctuary) at 9:30 a.m., is currently studying the book *Separation of Church and Hate* by John Fugelsang. This is billed as "A Sane Person's Guide to Taking Back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleecing Frauds." Please talk to Becky Boone if you are interested in participating and require a book.

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Next Sunday, October 4, 2026, is World Communion Sunday, and we would like to highlight cultures around the world by having a table full of bread from around the world. If you are able to purchase or make "international" bread, let Rev. Donna know. After worship we will share the bread at our International Munch and Mingle.

SEPTEMBER'S SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING: FOCUS ON CHILDREN (HOFFMAN HOMES)

Our September special mission offering focuses on children, and will benefit Hoffman Homes for Youth, which has been dedicated to serving individuals and families in Pennsylvania for

over a century. Our second-mile offering was on the third Sunday in September, last week, but we continue to take contributions to this UCC-supported program through the rest of September. Please give generously.

BLANKET SUNDAY – LET’S BLANKET THE WORLD WITH LOVE!

“And don’t forget to do good and share with those in need.” – Hebrews 13:16

Blanket Sunday is October 4, 2026. Throughout the month of October, we will be collecting contributions for the Church World Service Blanket Program. CWS Blanket Program funds purchase and ship blankets worldwide, wherever they are needed. A CWS blanket costs just \$10 but has a multitude of uses. With climate change contributing to ever more devastating storms, fires and flooding, and with refugees from those events as well as earthquakes, war and civil unrest around the world, the need for blankets is remains significant. When we raise \$1000, CWS will send us an additional patch for our blanket banner in recognition of our contribution. Penbrook UCC has met this goal every year since 1987, so please pitch in to help keep the record of success and worldwide assistance going! When everyone contributes, we all share in the success. If you have questions, call Ruth Dunnewold, our Blanket Sunday coordinator, at 717-599-1606 (cell) or email her at rdunnewold@verizon.net.

BOOK CLUB

Rev. Donna and Rev. Eva will be starting a monthly Book Club beginning October 13, 2026, from 7 pm – 8:30 pm, and continuing on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, in the Ross Room. We will begin with the same book that Faith Formation is using, *Separation of Church and Hate*, by John Fugelsang. We will read half of the book for the first time and then half for November. If purchasing the book is a hardship, see Rev. Donna.

AUTUMN CLEANUP – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Indoor & Outdoor Autumn Cleanup around Penbrook UCC is scheduled for Saturday, October 17, 2026, from 9:00 am to noon. Details to follow!

RETREAT: SAVE THE DATE

November 6-8, 2026, at Living Waters Camp (UCC). Cost is \$50.00 per person and we are looking for 1-2 people to coordinate food. Since we will be there in November, we will focus on gratitude practices for a time of rest, relaxation, fellowship, fun and spiritual connection. For more information, to sign up for the retreat, or if cost is an issue, contact Rev. Donna. **The signup deadline has been extended to October 15.**

MANNA FOOD PANTRY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Manna Food Pantry needs volunteers on the first three Thursdays and Fridays of each month, for the following: **Thursday Mornings (9:00–11:00 a.m.)** Volunteers help prepare for Thursday evening distribution by setting up tables, picking up eggs, milk, and produce from the Food Bank, unloading deliveries, and organizing produce into baskets or bags.

Thursday Evenings (5:30–7:30 p.m.) Volunteers assist with food distribution by helping clients select items, transporting groceries to vehicles, staffing food stations, and completing cleanup tasks afterward. **Spanish-speaking volunteers are especially needed.**

Friday Mornings (8:00/8:30–11:00 a.m.) Volunteers restock pantry shelves and help unload and store deliveries from the Food Bank truck, which typically arrives anytime between 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

Interested in volunteering? Contact Gail Mahoney at 717-503-0102 or email manna.foodpantry@gmail.com.

PUCC LENDING LIBRARY

Our Lending Library has relocated, and is feeling lonely in the Ross Room. Please check out the book selection and take a book home to read, or share a book that you loved!

PRAYER REQUESTS

If you have special prayer requests, you may fill out a prayer request form located in the lobby outside the sanctuary and pass it to the preacher or put it in the wire basket in the office. Or you may email prayerchain@penbrookucc.org so we can send your requests out to the prayer warriors who will lift up your concerns.

SPECIAL REMEMBRANCES

During the moments of quiet this morning, please remember our homebound members and friends, and pray for those affected by violence, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual, within our society.

COMMUNITY AID PARTNERSHIP

Don't forget our partnership with the Community Aid Foundation, which enables PUCc to share in Community Aid's proceeds. When you drop off your unwanted household goods and clothing to Community Aid's locations in Harrisburg or Mechanicsburg (there are other locations, but those are the closest), provide them with our partner number, 50334, so that PUCc receives credit for the donations.

E-GIVING IS AVAILABLE!

Interested in giving electronically? Download the Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement App from either the Google or Apple app store, and make regular giving for the work of God and the kingdom effortless. Questions or concerns or issues with using the app, contact James at treasurer@penbrookucc.org.

CHURCH FINANCES – UPDATE

Weekly Income 09/13/2026	Year-to-date Income
Tithes, Offerings, Miscellaneous	
\$ 2,902	\$ 92,536
Fundraising/Other	
\$ 0	\$ 5,294
Total Income	
\$ 2,902	\$ 97,830
Weekly Expense 09/13/2026	Year-to-date Expense
\$ 3,296	\$102,573
Net Surplus (Deficit)	
(\$ 393)	(\$ 3,743)

MEMBERS' ASSISTANCE FUND

For many years, the membership of this church has given back to itself in order to help out those of our brothers and sisters who find themselves in a momentary pinch. We have been remiss in reminding you of this important internal ministry, but we find ourselves in a time of year when sudden expenses can crop up. In the past few years, members have received funds for a variety of purposes, from unexpected bills to support during the loss of a loved one. Each gift you make to the Members Assistance Fund is earmarked for this ministry. If you ever need

funds, please reach out to the pastor or treasurer for a confidential conversation about what we might be able to assist with.

PENBROOK UCC CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 27, 2026:

Today:	9:15 am	Koinonia Singers rehearsal (ASSR)
	9:30 am	Faith Formation (Ross Room)
	10:30 am	Worship (Sanctuary)
	12:00 pm	Outreach (ASSR)
	7:00 pm	A-pealing Praise rehearsal (ASSR)
Wednesday:	7:00 pm	NA (FH)
Thursday:	9:00 am	Manna Food Pantry Prep (Lower Level)
	6:00 pm	Manna Food Pantry (Lower Level)
Friday:	9:00 am	Manna Food Pantry Prep (Lower Level)
Saturday:	6:00 pm	Community Game Night (ASSR)

SIGN UP! SIGN UP! HELP WITH WORSHIP!

Does the volunteer roster below look a little bare? You know it does! Please volunteer to help with worship by signing up to be an Acolyte, Greeter/ Usher, Lectionary Reader/Liturgist, Purveyor of the Welcome/Announcements, Streaming Operator or PowerPoint Operator. You are here on Sunday anyway, right? Sign-up sheets are on the table outside the rear Sanctuary doors.

VOLUNTEERS SERVING DURING WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026:

Acolyte:

Greeter/Usher: Lorna Owens

Lectionary Reader/Liturgist: Ann Bailey

Welcome/Announcements:

Streaming Operator: Mel Amago

PowerPoint Operator: Mitch Amago

Once a Father Told His Children

D A D G D A⁷ D

1. Once a fa - ther told his chil - dren, "Go and do your dai - ly chores. Go and
 2. Once a church was filled with Chris - tians who were proud and feel - ing blessed. "God has
 3. Once a wom - an, quite the sin - ner, strug - gled deep in pain and doubt. As she
 4. God of love, you call your chil - dren; some say, "No!" and some say, "Yes!" Lord, for -

A D G D A⁷ D

work out in my vine - yard; all that's mine will soon be yours." One re - spond - ed, "I won't
 called us and we've an - swered! We have tru - ly an - swered, "Yes!" On a chill - y Sun - day
 passed that church in win - ter, there she saw that man walk out. He was home - less, worn and
 give us for our judg - ing who will be a - mong the blessed. For your king - dom is sur -

G D A⁷ D

do it!" Then he changed his mind and went. One said,
 morn - ing, when a home - less man came by, they said,
 wear - y, so she stopped her car and said, "I'm no
 pris - ing; some you call will not o - bey; those we

A D G D A⁷ D

"Yes! Just send me to it!" But he went back home a - gain.
 "Go! It's not yet storm - ing! God is love, he will sup - ply."
 saint but you look hun - gry, let's go buy some soup and bread."
 find our - selves de - spis - ing may be those who seek your way.