

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
September 20, 2026 **Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

To forgive is divine...it makes us look like our heavenly Father.

RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL

PRELUDE

GATHERING Welcome, Announcements,
Celebrations

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)**

Followers of Christ, we live in a world where we hurt one another, where sin divides us one from another and makes us enemies instead of neighbors.

Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

The divisions in our world seem like too much to overcome, and we wonder if forgiveness really works anymore. It worked for Jesus, but maybe not for us.

Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

We find ourselves tempted by easy answers and quick solutions, reticent to do the slow and difficult work of reconciliation.

Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

In this place, may we encounter Christ who meets us in the places where we want to give up, where we despair that life-giving change is even possible, with abundant grace to sustain us on the journey.

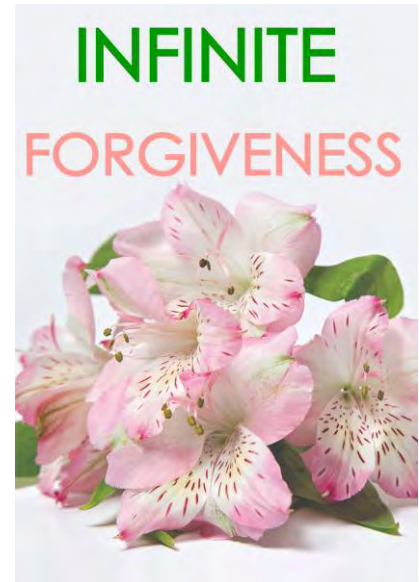
God, form us today as people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us. Amen.

HYMN

“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

(UMH # 89)

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love; hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away. Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!



2. All thy works with joy surround thee, Earth and heaven reflect thy rays, stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.
3. Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest, well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest! Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.
4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus, which the morning stars began; love divine is reigning o'er us, binding all within its span. Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife; joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, You have seen every point in our lives where we have fallen short, yet You have forgiven us, asking only in return for us to forgive others. Help us to truly love others, Lord. In Christ we pray. Amen.

COMMUNITY PRAYERS (pastor)

SILENT PRAYER (pastor)

THE LORD'S PRAYER (all)

SCRIPTURE READING

The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

⁹ He will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.

¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his steadfast love toward those who
fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does
he remove our transgressions from us.

Psalm 103: 8-12



SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 18: 21-35

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who



owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their

master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

MESSAGE

“Infinite Forgiveness”

Keith Baker, Lay Speaker

HYMN

“There's a Wideness in God's Mercy”

(UMH # 121)

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.
2. There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good!
There is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.
3. For the love of God is broader than the measure of our mind;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

4. If our love were but more simple, we should rest upon God's word;
and our lives would be illumined by the presence of our Lord.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

(UMH # 95)

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)**

God of Grace, You continually forgive and renew us. Teach us to extend that same mercy to others. Transform these offerings into ministries of compassion that reflect Your love to the world. We give with grateful hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Jack Howland

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, You have shown us a mercy far greater than we could ever earn or repay. As we leave this place, teach our hearts to forgive others just as completely as You've forgiven us. Remove any hidden pride, bitterness, or holding grudges from our spirits. Fill us instead with Your deep compassion and grace. Help us to truly let go of past hurts and walk forward in the freedom of Your love. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“Freely, Freely”

(UMH # 389)

**1. God forgave my sin in Jesus' name, I've been born again in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you to share his love as he told me to.**

He said: 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.

Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live.'

**2. All power is given in Jesus' name, in earth and heaven in Jesus' name,
and in Jesus' name I come to you to share his power as he told me to.**

He said: 'Freely, freely you have received; freely, freely give.

Go in my name and because you believe, others will know that I live.'

BENEDICTION

May the Lord of boundless mercy bless you and keep you. May He heal your old wounds and give you the strength to cancel every bit of bitterness against others. Go in peace, forgiven and set free to extend kindness and grace to everyone you meet in the days ahead. Amen.

POSTLUDE

Beverly J, Matthews, PsyD
Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
217 825 9010

Be certain to check the church website, <https://maconilumc.net/> for updated information about the church, events and news. Please use webmaster.maconumc@gmail.com to submit updates or additions to the church website.

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK: 31

ATTENDANCE GOAL: 70

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENCE AND SERVICE

Sun. Sept 27 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Sept 27 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. Oct 04 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Oct 04 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. Oct 11 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Oct 11 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. Oct 18 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. Oct 18 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. Nov 01 8:30 am Grief Group; Pastor's Office

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Sept 20	Lori Huggins	Sept 22	Dione Osman
Sept 24	Judi Green	Sept 26	Dan Moyer

MISSIONS



Items requested by the food pantry are: Any kind of cereal, or cereal bars; canned soup; canned pasta; mac and cheese; shampoo; and antiperspirant. Cash donations are always welcome.

SPEAKER SCHEDULE

Sept 20 Keith Baker, Lay Speaker
Sept 27 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
Oct 04 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor
Oct 11 Kirk Yenerall, Certified Lay Minister
Oct 18 Keith Baker, Lay Speaker
Oct 25 Beverly Matthews Certified Lay Minister, Supply Pastor

FOOD PANTRY

September is Macon UMC's volunteer time at the pantry. Volunteers should be present at 7:30am.

FOOD PANTRY WORKERS for September

Sept. 26 Ross and Susannah Moyer
Grace and Henry Moyer

WOMEN OF FAITH

The Macon UMC United Women of Faith are holding a toy drive for ages 1 to 17. A collection box will be in the back of the sanctuary. The toy pickup is October 10.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast is October 18, 2026 at 8 am in Fellowship Hall.

FOCUS GROUP

November 1 at 8:30 am will be the first meeting of the Focus Group which will focus on grief, loss, and mental health. We will meet every first Sunday at 8:30 for one hour prior to worship. Feel free to bring your own coffee. Questions can be directed to Pastor Bev at 217 825 9010 call or text.

