



First Congregational United Church of Christ

3465 N. MacArthur Rd.
Decatur, Illinois 62526
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firstchurchdecatur.org

Sunday, July 26, 2026
9:00 a.m.
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
SUNDAY, JULY 26, 2026
9:00 A.M.
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Rev. Ryan D. Travis, Pastor

PRELUDE

"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

John Hughes arr. Dan Forrest & Douglas E. Wagner Copyright © 2015 Lorenz Publishing Company,
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CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist: Come, people of God, and lift your hearts to the Lord. All week long our attention has been pulled in a hundred different directions, but today Christ calls us to fix our eyes on the kingdom of heaven. Here we are reminded that no earthly treasure can compare with the riches of God's grace. Come, let us worship the One who is worthy of our highest love and deepest devotion.

SUNG RESPONSE

"Great Is the Lord"

#50 (Refrain & v. 2)

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***Great is the Lord, he is holy and just;
By his power we trust in his love.
Great is the Lord, he is faithful and true,
by his mercy he proves he is love.
Great are you, Lord, and worthy of glory!
Great are you, Lord, and worthy of praise.
Great are you, Lord; I lift up my voice; I lift up my voice;
Great are you, Lord! Great are you, Lord!***

INVOCATION

Liturgist

All: Holy and gracious God, you have called us together to worship you. Quiet the distractions that fill our minds and calm the worries that burden our hearts. Open our ears to hear your Word, open our minds to understand it, and open our hearts to treasure your kingdom above all else. Through the power of your Holy Spirit, draw us closer to Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

“How Great Thou Art”

#51

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***CONFESSION**

Liturgist: Let us call to mind those ways we have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. *(Silence is kept to reflect on our sins.)*

All: Merciful God, we confess that our hearts are often divided. We love many good things, yet too often we love them more than we love you. We have trusted in our possessions, our accomplishments, and our own strength. We have neglected prayer, worship, and the reading of your Word. Forgive us for allowing lesser things to crowd out the One thing that truly gives life. Renew our hearts, restore our priorities, and teach us again to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Pastor: Hear the good news! Our salvation does not rest upon the strength of our devotion but upon the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. He sought us when we were lost, gave himself for us upon the cross, and rose again that we might have life. Friends, believe the good news: in Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God!

***GLORIA PATRI**

#734

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be
World without end. Amen, Amen.***

MUSIC MINISTRY

"I Must Tell Jesus"
Elisha Ablright Hoffman Public domain

Gospel Choir

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Mindy Bunselmeyer

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"Trust in the Lord with all your heart..."
Proverbs 3:5

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 13:31-33; 44-52

Liturgist

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Liturgist: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, in the 13th chapter.

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

³¹ He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

— — —

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

Liturgist: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

"The Unsurpassable Value of God"

Pastor Ryan

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD’S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, we pray for persistence...

All: Our Father, who art in heaven.

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy 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 lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

Pastor: Please rise and join me in confessing what Christians have believed throughout history in the words of the Apostles' Creed.

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy universal Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

OFFERTORY

"Near to the Heart of God"

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***DOXOLOGY**

Old Hundredth

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below;
Praise God above ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Liturgist

Liturgist: Gracious God, every good and perfect gift comes from you. Receive these offerings as signs of our gratitude and our trust. Use them to proclaim the good news of your kingdom, to care for those in need, and to bear witness to Jesus Christ in this community and throughout the world. May our giving reflect hearts that treasure you above all else. In Christ's name we pray.

All: Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

"Fairest Lord Jesus"

#123

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***BENEDICTION**

Pastor: May the LORD bless you and keep you. May the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious. May the LORD look upon you with favor and grant you peace. Go in peace and serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE**

O God of love, help me to be more loving.

God of forgiveness, help me to forgive.

God of all grace, help me to be more gracious.

God of all gifts, help me more freely give.

O God of truth, help me to work for justice.

O God of mercy, help me to be kind.

*O God of peace and goodness, help me serve you,
with all my heart and strength and mind.*

"Benediction" Composed by Laurie Matheson. Used by permission.

POSTLUDE

"Gigue"

Psalm 149:3 "Let them praise His name in the dance."

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July 26, 2026

From Our Prayer Chain

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Joan Wolfram, Katie Elvidge, Larry Huckile, Martha Crookshank,
Clint Whitrock, Robin Reynolds, Marian Simpson-Rorick,
Helen Johnson, Steve Martin, Kelly Gonzalez, Dean Lorbach,
Robert Bean, Norma Morrison, Tom Irwin, Margaret,
Diana Kitchell, Jennifer K, Brad Johnson, Becky Corbin,
Nancy Leoucis, Marilee Gordon, Letsa, Randy Habbe,
Eric Wolfram, Don S, Mary Stewart, Murray Elliott,
John & Lois Pennock, Preston Wikoff, Richard Laswell,
Ellen Heavner, Tom Cooley, Matt, Olivia Wernecke Dees,
Kerry Waltenbaugh, Glenn Wolfram, Jerrold Fallstrom,
Laura Fankhauser, Pat Woodcock, Erika Kelley, Meg Phillips,
Shelly Long, Michelle, Mathew Clary, Gary Heymen,
Erica Moster, David Marshal, Jason Mumm, Julie Bond,
Norma Lingenfelter, Rick Bein, PJ Patterson, Sheila S,
Malinda Callaway, Ty Ditty, Lexi Boyer, Kim Leon, Ryan Habbe,
Band Family, Anne, Aaron Heartt, Carl Erbsen, Michelle Unruh,
Connie Hall, Jodie Trembe, Kay Penk-Burrus, Heather,
Quinton Lefler, Mike Travis, Jeannie Miseles, August Scherer,
Quincy's friends, Noah Gallion, Barbara Wence,
Megan Coy, Liz Lynch, Sue, Charlie Spurlock, John Kabat,
Madeline Mitchell, Larry Elvidge, Cassie Harper,
Mindy Bunselmeyer and Team.