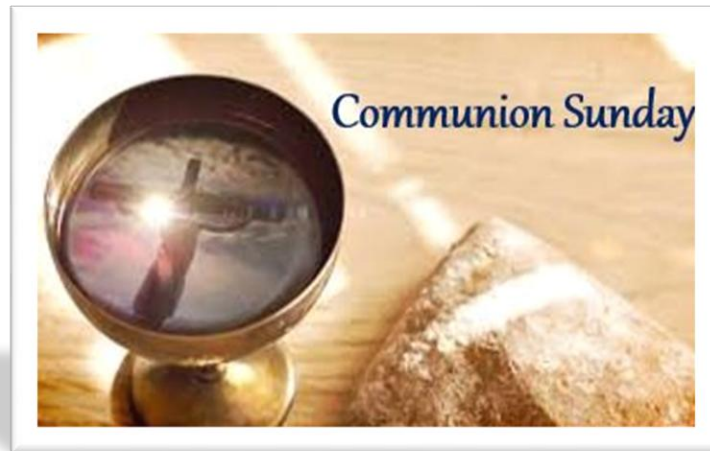




*Central and Algonquin United
Methodist Churches*

Sunday, September 6, 2026

With Pastor Marty Johnston

Mission Statement:

**Connecting all people to God by building bridges
of caring, outreach, and acceptance.**

Central United Methodist
Pastor Marty Johnston
September 6, 2026
Liturgical Colors: Green
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
CCLI License# 3999519

Ushers/Greeters: Kelley Bunker, John Proulx
Liturgist: Kathy Bankson
Communion – Mary Beth Atkins, Colleen Arbic

PRELUDE “Lay Your Burdens Down” Moore

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

Connecting all people to God by building bridges of
caring, outreach, and acceptance

***Call to Worship:** (Inspired by Psalm 149)

Leader: Sing to the Lord a new song! Let our praise rise among God's people.

People: We come with grateful hearts, rejoicing in the One who made us.

Leader: God delights in the people of God and lifts up those who are weary and humble.

People: We will praise God with our voices, our lives, and our joyful worship.

Leader: Come, let us celebrate God's goodness and declare God's faithfulness together.

All: Let everything within us praise the Lord! Amen.

*OPENING HYMN “All Creatures of Our God and King”(v1-3,7) UMH 62
LASST UNS ERFREUEN

*PASTOR’S OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and joyful God, you have given us a new day, a new song, and another reason to praise you.

Open our eyes to the goodness around us, our ears to the music of creation, and our hearts to the joy of being together in your presence.

Whatever we carried through the doors—gratitude, worry, weariness, or hope—help us place it in your hands. Lift our spirits, renew our faith, and remind us that we belong to you and to one another.

May our prayers be honest, our singing wholehearted, and our worship pleasing to you. In Jesus ’name, we pray. Amen.

TIME FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE READING:

Some passages of Scripture comfort us. Some challenge us. And some sound so clear and straightforward that we may be tempted to use them before we have listened carefully to what they are saying.

Today’s passage includes practical words about conflict, striking words about binding and loosing, and wonderful promises about prayer and the presence of Christ.

These words have offered wisdom and reassurance to generations of Christians. But when pulled from their context or turned into rigid formulas, they can also cause harm.

So let us listen with open hearts, but also with humility—remembering that whenever we interpret the words of Jesus, our interpretation ought to look like Jesus.

Listen now for the Word of God.

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 18:15-20

15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

18 “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God

All: Thanks be to God

HYMN

“Open My Eyes, That I May See”

UMH 454
OPEN MY EYEYS

SERMON

A Dangerous Passage

Big Idea: *Jesus isn't giving us a formula for controlling people, guaranteeing answers, or claiming God is on our side. He is teaching us to handle conflict, authority, and prayer with humility—because anything done in his name ought to look like him.*

COMMUNION:

Invitation to the Table

Pastor: Christ invites to this table all who seek grace, who desire to turn from sin, and who long to live in peace with God and one another.

You do not need to have every question answered or every relationship repaired. Come willing to receive mercy—and willing to let that mercy shape how you live.

Confession and Pardon

Pastor: Let us pray.

All: Merciful God, we confess that we have not always handled your Word with humility. We have used Scripture to win arguments, used your name to defend our decisions, and treated prayer as a way to get what we want.

Forgive us when we have spoken without listening, judged without understanding, or valued being right more than being loving.

Teach us to tell the truth with grace, to protect those who are vulnerable, and to use whatever influence we have with the humility and compassion of Jesus. Amen.

Pastor: Hear the good news: Christ came not to condemn us, but to forgive, heal, and make us new.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

All: Glory to God. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: Gracious God, you created us for life with you and with one another. When we wandered, you called us home. When we misused power, you sent prophets to speak the truth.

In Jesus Christ, you showed us what love looks like: power used to serve, truth spoken with grace, and a table with room for sinners, doubters, and outsiders.

On the night before he gave himself for us, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it with them, saying:

"This is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

And so we proclaim the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and upon this bread and cup. Through these gifts, unite us with Christ and with one another.

Make us people who listen humbly, speak truthfully, pray faithfully, and love courageously—until all your children gather at your heavenly table.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

Amen.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Pastor:

Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body.

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

The cup over which we give thanks is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

Come—the table is ready, and Christ is here.

The elements are served

Prayer After Communion

All: Gracious God, thank you for meeting us at this table. Nourished by your grace, send us to speak truth with love, use authority with humility, and treat every person as precious in your sight. May all we do in Jesus 'name look like Jesus. Amen.

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Let us offer our gifts, trusting God to use them to share the grace, compassion, and love of Jesus.

OFFERTORY

“The Way Of Faith”

Riggs

DOXOLOGY

UMH 95
OLD HUNDREDTH

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**

Gracious God, receive these gifts and guide us to use them with wisdom, humility, and love. May they protect the vulnerable, strengthen our community, and bear witness to your grace. Amen.

HYMN

“Spirit of the Living God” (2x)

UMH 393
LIVING GOD

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE,

Leader: Lord, in your Mercy

All: Hear our prayer.

As we come to prayer, let us bring before God the needs of our world, our community, those we love, and the concerns we carry quietly within us.

For the Church

Gracious God, teach your church to handle your Word and its authority with humility. Help us speak truth with love, protect those who are vulnerable, and become a community of grace, courage, and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the World

We pray for people living amid war, violence, hunger, displacement, and fear. Protect those in danger, comfort those who grieve, and turn the hearts of leaders toward justice and peace.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Our Nation

We pray for our nation and its leaders. May power be used to serve rather than control, and give us the wisdom to listen before deciding that we alone are right.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Creation

We give thanks for the beauty and abundance of your creation. Help us care for the earth faithfully, and be near to those facing fire, flood, drought, storms, and other disasters.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Our Community and Congregation

Bless our families, neighbors, schools, workplaces, churches, and local leaders. Where relationships are strained, give us courage for honest conversation, wisdom to seek help, and grace to respect necessary boundaries.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For Those in Need

We pray for those who are ill, grieving, lonely, anxious, exhausted, or facing difficult decisions. Bring healing, strength, comfort, and caring companions.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Pastor:

We now lift before you the prayers that have been shared among us, along with those known only to you.

Silence may be kept.

Merciful God, teach us to pray not as a way of controlling you, but as a way of trusting you. Meet us in our uncertainty, shape our desires, and help us live with truth, humility, courage, and love. We pray in Jesus' name, sharing together in the prayer he taught us, saying:

LORD'S PRAYER

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

NEXT WEEK'S MESSAGE

The Grace that Carries Us

Join us next week as we study Matthew 18:21-35 and discover that we are blessed by God's grace—come and learn how we can share that grace and love with others.

ANNOUNCEMENTS – September 6, 2026

****Today** - our youth will be at the entrances after the service to collect a *Mission Love Offering*. All proceeds will go toward helping elementary school children with their needs.

School Is Back!

Missions is now collecting shelf-stable foods for our local elementary school. Needed items include oatmeal packets, Pop-Tarts, granola bars, crackers, canned soup and vegetables, Chef Boyardee, Easy Mac & Cheese, and ramen noodles. *Please nothing in glass containers.* Please place donations in the tub outside the upstairs elevator. Thank you to everyone who has already donated!

Central's Missions: is still collecting misc. items for the homeless bags being put together by the **Mission/Outreach** program. You may drop off your items inside the basket outside office door (*list of items needed is located on table in foyer*) or if you wish to purchase a gift card, please pass that to either Kathy (in office), or Diane Bell....thank you.

Sunday Morning Bible Study is resume - on *September 13th* @ 9:30am in the lounge, Ray Bell will be conducting his Bible studies, come and join us.

Explore Romans Through Time-Starting the first Thursday in October, Pastor Marty will be leading an 8-week Bible study on the book of Romans at CUMC in the library. There will be 2 classes (*on the same day*); 1pm and 6pm. If you are interested in joining us, please complete the Registration card (which can be found on the table in foyer or ask Kathy in office) place it in the offering plate, or turn into the office.

JOIN THE CHOIR – as Fall is arriving soon, so is your opportunity to join our faithful choir. All voice ranges are needed. Rehearsals are Weds. @7pm in the choir room. Questions see Cathy Wilkinson, director.

Adult Choir will begin Wednesday, September 9 at 7:00 PM – All voices, male and female, are welcome! No experience needed—just a love for music and fellowship.

Bell Choir begins Wednesday, September 9 at 6:00 PM – Come be part of this beautiful and unique music ministry! Bring your voice, your joy, and your spirit—let's make a joyful noise together!

Get ready for Family Night at CUMC—Starting Sept. 16th and every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30–7:00 PM! Come enjoy a tasty dinner, fun activities, and a meaningful lesson for all ages. Bring the whole family—everyone is welcome!

Saved this Date

Mon. Sept. 7th – Labor Day office will be closed

Sun. Sept. 13th – Rally Day – Wear your favorite team colors and join us downstairs for some fun, fellowship and Hot Dogs!

Wed. Sept. 16th – Family Night Begins - 5:30-7pm in Fellowship Hall

Thurs. Sept. 17th thru Sun., 27st – Pastor Marty will be on vacation and out of the office. He will return to the office on Tuesday, Sept. 29th.

Sat. Sept. 19th – This year's UMC Church Conference will be held in St. Ignace at the United Methodists Church at 10am

Central Birthday/Anniversary

Sept. 3rd – Debbie Smart Sept. 4th – Diana Morgan

Sept. 6th – Terry Myers Sept. 8th – Kay Miller

Sept. 10th – Evelyn Bush

Sept. 1st – *Happy 41st Anniversary to Brenda & Jamie Coullard*

Sept. 12th – *Happy 38th Anniversary to Diane & Ray Bell*



Nursery is available for infants through age 3 during worship with Mallory Baier. The nursery is located downstairs, and ushers will be happy to assist you.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”

**UMH 664
THE ASH GROVE**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

“The Ash Grove”

arr. Cassler