



## *Welcome!*

Centenary United Methodist Church is a Reconciling Congregation, extending hospitality and encouraging full participation of all, regardless of age, race, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, education, economic background, and physical or mental ability.

**We are glad that you have joined us today!**

Welcome to worship! In this shared space, we trust that God meets us just as we are - drawing us together in grace, hope, and love. Whether this is your first time with us or you return often, you are welcome here.

May this time of worship open our hearts to God and to one another.

## **September 20, 2026**

### **The Benediction Project: Covenant Series**

#### **Prelude** 🎵

*Fanfare on Nicea*

Nancy Hill Cobb

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#### **Choral Introit** 🎵

*The Law of the Lord*

#### **Call to Worship** 📖

Leader: We come to worship the God we can trust to keep promises.

**Motion:** Place a finger on your lips, then smack that hand, open palm down, on top of your other fist  
(ASL: promise)

Leader: We come as we are, with our fears, doubts, and concerns about the present and the future.

**Motion:** thumbs pointing toward each other, up and down like scales  
(ASL: doubt)

Leader: God gently reminds us that we are never forgotten

and are always given what we need for worship and community.

**Motion:** Place thumb on forehead, then move that thumb to your other thumb  
(ASL: remember)

Leader: Come, let us worship the God who knows our needs and promises to hold us close.

#### **Hymn No. 2234** 🎵

*Lead On, O Cloud of Presence*

LANCASHIRE

1. Lead on, O cloud of Presence, the exodus is come,  
in wilderness and desert our tribe shall make its home.  
Our slavery left behind us, new hopes within us grow.  
We seek the land of promise where milk and honey flow.
2. Lead on, O fiery Pillar, we follow yet with fears,  
but we shall come rejoicing though joy be born of tears.  
We are not lost, though wandering, for by your light we come  
and we are still God's people. The journey is our home.
3. Lead on, O God of freedom, and guide us on our way,  
and help us trust the promise through struggle and delay.  
We pray our sons and daughters may journey to that land  
where justice dwells with mercy, and love is law's demand.

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## Welcome and Greeting 🗣️

### Prayer of Gathering 🙌

Leader: God is with you.

**People: And also with you.**

Leader: Let us pray.

**All: God who writes covenant on hearts instead of stone tablets alone,  
we bring you our full selves this morning;  
the parts steady in faith and the parts still doubting,  
the parts that remember your promises  
and the parts that forget by Tuesday.  
You do not wait for us to arrive whole.  
You gather us as we are and call it enough.  
So gather us now:  
the tired, the searching, the sure and the unsure alike.  
Write yourself into us again. Amen.**

### Passing the Peace 🎵

*Into My Heart*

INTO MY HEART

*During this time we invite you to turn and greet those around you. You may introduce yourself with name and pronouns and/or simply say: The Peace of Christ be with you. Children may come forward during the sung response for the Children's Time.*

**Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus.  
come in today, come in to stay; come into my heart Lord Jesus.**

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### Children of God Moment 🗣️

*We welcome children to come down front for this time and afterwards they may return to their adults or stay up front in the Kid's Covenant Zone. The Parlor, just to the left out the back of the sanctuary, is open if your child needs a place to be for a moment; there is also a bathroom in that space.*

### Prayer of Illumination 🙌

**These stories may feel familiar to us,  
a mountain, a covenant, commands we've heard since childhood.  
Familiar enough that we stop listening for what's new.  
Open our ears past what we think we already know.  
Remind us: this story is not a rule to memorize.  
It is you, calling us back into relationship,  
with you, and with each other.  
Let what we hear this morning feel new,  
as if spoken to us for the very first time. Amen.**

### Creative Word 📖

From *Essentialism*

by Greg McKeown

Boundaries are a source of liberation. This truth is demonstrated elegantly by the story of a school located next to a busy road. At first the children played only on a small swath of the playground, close to the building where the grown-ups could keep their eyes on them. But then someone constructed a fence around the playground. Now the children were able to play anywhere and everywhere on the playground. Their freedom, in effect, more than doubled. Similarly, when we don't set clear boundaries in our lives we can end up imprisoned by the limits others have set for us. When we have clear boundaries, on the other hand, we are free to select from the whole area—or the whole range of options—that we have deliberately chosen to explore.

*-Greg McKeown, Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less (Crown Business, 2014)*

*After the reading you are invited to pause for a moment of silent reflection.*

## Scripture Reading

[Hebrews 10:15-17](#)  
[Deuteronomy 5:1-22](#)

## Hymn No. 586

*Let My People Seek Their Freedom*

EBENEZER

1. "Let me people seek their freedom in the wilderness awhile,  
from the slave pens of the Delta, from the ghettos of the Nile":  
so God spoke from out of Sinai, so God spoke and it was done,  
and a people crossed the waters toward the rising of the sun.
2. "Let my people seek their freedom in the wilderness awhile,  
from the aging shrines and structures, from the cloister and the aisle":  
so the Son of God has spoken, and the storm clouds are unfurled,  
for God's people must be scattered to be servants in the world.
3. When we murmur on the mountains for the old Egyptian plains,  
when we miss our ancient bondage, and the hope, the promise, wanes;  
then the rock shall yield its water and the manna fall by night,  
and with visions of a future shall we march toward the light.
4. In the maelstrom of the nations, in the journeying into space,  
in the clash of generations, in the hungering for grace,  
in our agony and glory, we are called to newer ways  
by the Lord of our tomorrows and the God of earth's todays.

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## Scripture Reading

[Psalm 19:7-11](#)

## Sermon

*God's Covenant with Moses*

Rev. Katie Gooch

## Offertory Invitation and Prayer

*Your presence is a gift. Your time, talents, and resources are all ways we offer ourselves to God and to one another. To give a financial offering, you may do so [online here](#).*

## Offertory

*The Law of the Lord is Perfect*

Faure/Trapp

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## Doxology No. 94

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

**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!**

## Prayers of the People

## Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kin-dom 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 that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kin-dom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

*Jesus gives us this prayer as a model for connection with God. Please feel free to address God in a way that connects with your soul.*

**Hymn No. 64** 🎵

*Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty*

NICAEA

1. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity!
2. Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,  
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.
3. Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,  
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,  
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.
4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth and sky and sea.  
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

**Benediction** 🙌

**Choral Response** 🎵

*The Law of the Lord*

**Postlude** 🎵

*Go Down, Moses*

Mark Hayes

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**Today we welcome Rev. Katie Gooch to the pulpit.  
She is the Director of the Pace Center at VCU.**

**Assisting in worship this morning are:**

Liturgist – Nancy Grand    A/V tech – Dan Corcoran    Centenary Kids Serving - Bruno, Elliott, Kaya  
Ushers – Ryland Bailey, Kim Golden, Troy & Jan Nelson, Jane Newell,  
Doug Wilson, Chris Wimbush

Large print bulletins and hearing assistive devices are available at the back of the sanctuary. Please let an usher know if either of those would better suit your needs.

## ***Announcements***

**MEMBERSHIP - Is Centenary starting to feel like home to you?** Join us for a **Membership Inquiry Class today**, after worship — a chance for us to get to know you, and for you to learn more about Centenary and the United Methodist Church. We'll then celebrate **Membership Sunday on October 11** during worship. Questions? Reach out to Emily at [srpastor@centumc.org](mailto:srpastor@centumc.org).

**JOHNNY CASH SUNDAY SCHOOL SERIES** -Join us for the last week! Johnny Cash sang a lot about trains, Jesus, gratitude, regret, and murder. Join Tim Bagwell at 9:15 in the Adult Sunday School classroom as we dig into the music of Johnny Cash. We'll listen to at least two songs and ask what Cash was trying to convey — what theological and biblical currents run underneath the lyrics, and whether his words still ring true for us today. All are welcome!

**WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY IS BACK! Wednesdays on Zoom at 10am!** Join Pastor Emily for a lively, open conversation around scripture — digging into the passages we'll hear in worship in the weeks ahead. Come wrestle, question, and discover together as we explore what God is doing in the world (and in us!). Want the link? Email Laura at [admin@centumc.org](mailto:admin@centumc.org) to be added to the list.

**CENTENARY KIDS MINISTRY THROUGH THE ARTS** - Every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday 9:15am-10:00am in Room 206. Join us next week as we welcome all children to express and explore their creativity through different mediums, such as painting and drawing, in a faith-based environment, for fellowship and fun, striving to bless others through our card ministry program. It teaches them that their creativity is a gift from the Creator. For more information contact Melissa - [children@centumc.org](mailto:children@centumc.org).

**PRIDE BUILD — UPDATE** - The two upcoming Pride Builds are filling up! There are only 3 spots left for the build on October 24. The build on November 7 has 8 spots left. Sign up today by emailing: [serving@centumc.org](mailto:serving@centumc.org)

**WE ARE ON INSTAGRAM!** Centenary has its very own Instagram now! Be sure to give it a follow. We'll have community resources, educational opportunities, and a calendar of events coming soon to the church posted there weekly. [@centenarydowntown](https://www.instagram.com/centenarydowntown)

**CARE PACKAGES** - Centenary welcomes all our community members to join us in worship. If you're in need of an extra snack or resources, we have care packages located on our welcome table. Please ask an usher for assistance.

**FRIDAY WALK IN LUNCH PROGRAM** - Our Friday lunch program has been feeding the hungry for *over 45 years*. On September 11 we served 119 guests as volunteers from Bon Air UMC and Centenary prepared, served, and cleaned up. Please keep this ministry in your prayers.

## ***This Week at Centenary***

|                     |                                 |                                                                              |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Today</b>        | <b>11:30am</b>                  | New Member Inquiry Class<br>- Hodges/Rm 106                                  |
| <b>September 21</b> | <b>5:00pm</b>                   | Change the World/RVA                                                         |
| <b>September 22</b> | <b>Noon</b>                     | AA                                                                           |
| <b>September 23</b> | <b>10:00am</b><br><b>7:00pm</b> | Bible Study - Zoom<br>Choir Rehearsal                                        |
| <b>September 25</b> | <b>10:30am</b><br><b>Noon</b>   | Walk In Lunch<br>AA                                                          |
| <b>September 27</b> | <b>9:15am</b>                   | Adult Sunday School -<br>Hodges/Rm. 106<br>Children's Sunday School - Rm 206 |
|                     | <b>10:30am</b>                  | Worship - In person and online                                               |