



WEEKLY WORSHIP

love all ● live spiritually ● rejoice in hope ● show hospitality

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Week of July 26, 2026
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Community Prayer

Seed-planting, fish-netting, bread-baking, pearl-hunting God, you shape us into living parables. Pray with your Spirit in us so that we may understand our experiences as healing metaphors, and become creative and abundant stewards of the environment you entrusted to our love. Amen.

*“Reprinted and Revised Common Lectionary Prayers,
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Call to Worship

One: The decrees of the Lord are wonderful,

Many: The unfolding of God’s word gives light and understanding.

One: Turn to us, O God, and be gracious to us.

Many: Make your face shine upon your servants.

One: We come together to worship the living God.

Sermon

From The Rev. Kara Hillhouse

Romans 8:26-39

Blessed are the Flexible

I've always been somewhat of an Idealist--someone who looked at the world not necessarily as it was, but rather as it *should be*: people should be nice, honest, helpful...basically, they should just do what is right. Of course, "right" is a completely subjective concept, but I expected everyone who was rational was on-board with my understanding of it. Ultimately, I'd end up getting frustrated when people acted like...well, people. But in recent decades, a bit more realism has crept into my idealism. I maintain my belief in "how it should be," but I'm also fully rooted in the messiness of the "now." This requires some flexibility on my part. So it's no wonder that one of my go-to phrases is "blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape." No, it's *not* one of Jesus' Beatitudes, but I think it's worth considering. Life can be rough at times, and knock us around a bit (that's the realism); but if we can accept the present while maintaining our sight on the future hope of what God promises *will be* (there's the idealism), it can go a long way to helping us endure the journey. And not just endure it...even find joy along the way. The Apostle Paul described something similar in his letter to the Romans. Join us Sunday for a time of worship and study of God's Living Word, a chance to connect with each other, and the blessed opportunity to be still and know that God is good. We'll see you at First!

Pastor Kara

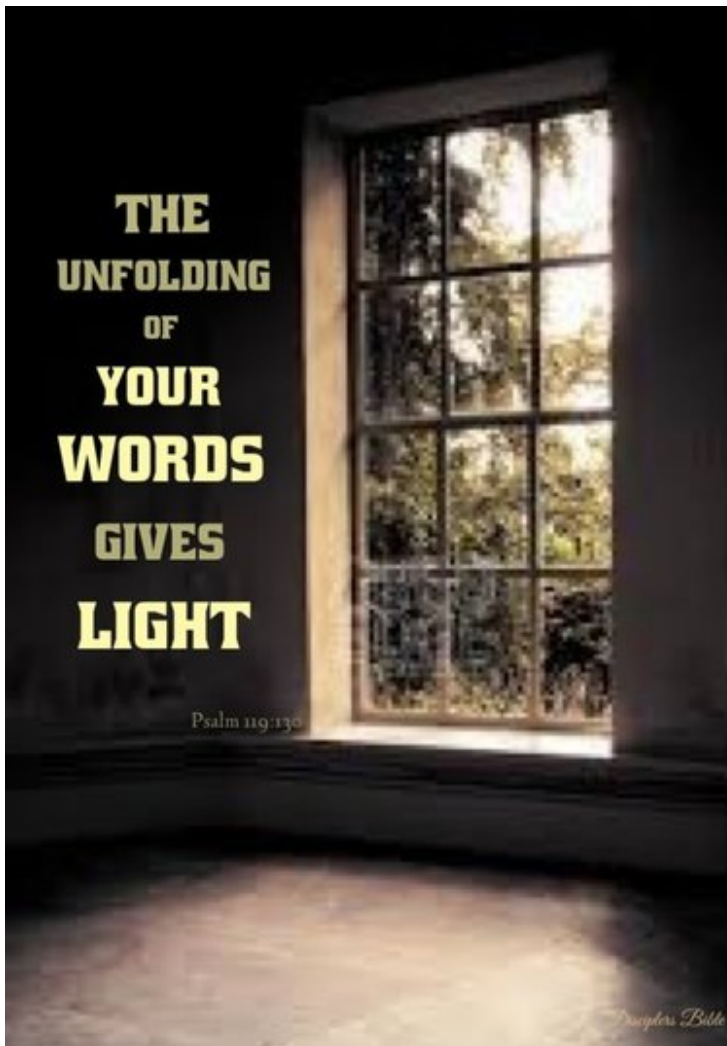


Scripture Reading

Psalms 119:129-136

Romans 8:26-39

“Your decrees are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments. Turn to me and be gracious to me, as is your custom toward those who love your name. Keep my steps steady according to your promise, and never let iniquity have dominion over me. Redeem me from human oppression, that I may keep your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant, and teach me your statutes. My eyes shed streams of tears because your law is not kept.”



“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, ‘For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Prayers & Praises

July 26, 2026

In Our Church

Family:

- Donna Baker
- Cec Burkhardt
- Joan Dietrich
- Monte Dietrick
- Polly Putney
- Bob Throop
- Marvin Thurber
- Phyllis Thurber
- Jessica Vocasek
- Roger Vocasek

Prayers for Jim Christ's nephew, Dennis Christ, in Oregon. His lymph nodes near the colon section removed showed no signs of cancer. Continued prayers for healing and comfort as he goes through chemotherapy.

Prayers for healing for Vince Ortega's sister, Linda De Los Santos, who has been diagnosed with liver cancer.

Prayers for Marvin and Phyllis Thurber, who are at Harbor House where she is doing rehab and he is receiving respite care.

Prayers for healing for Kristie Christianson's mom, Lucy Reuter-Masek, after a mild stroke.

Prayers for Monte Dietrick, for continued healing.

Prayers for Cec Burkhardt for continued healing.

Prayers for Bob Throop for continued healing and strength.

Prayers for Roger Vocasek as he looks for a job.

Prayers for Jessica Stehlik-Vocasek for her health issues.

Prayers for Katelynn Long for continued healing and strength.

Friends:

- Ron Collamore, *prayers for his health.*

Our Timothy

- Rev. Bruce Frogge, *Cypress Creek CC in Spring, TX*

In the Nebraska Region: Omaha First Christian Church - Joshua Sawyer

Our Global Ministries in: South Africa

"We remember the many lives shed in the Soweto uprising. We remember the many young people who face unemployment, drug abuse, gender-based violence, and human trafficking. We pray that you comfort those who live in fear and uncertainty. We pray that you protect the vulnerable, the elderly, women, children, and all who suffer injustice. Strengthen struggling families and restore relationships damaged by hardship and division. Amen."

For more information and stories about our Global Ministry partners visit www.globalministries.org



Song of the Week

O God, in a Mysterious Way

O God, in a mysterious way great wonders you perform. You plant your footsteps in the sea and ride upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill, you treasure up your bright designs and work your sovereign will.

O fearful saints, fresh courage take. The clouds you so much dread are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.

Our unbelief is sure to err and scan your work in vain. You are your own interpreter, and you will make it plain.

God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps
in the sea, And rides
upon the storm.

William Cowper



JULY

Call to Confession

One:

We spend so much time accusing ourselves, judging ourselves, punishing ourselves for what we have done, or not done. But God would draw us closer to the Heart of forgiveness, that we might be filled with healing and grace. Join me, as we confess where we have missed the mark, praying together:

Prayer of Confession

Many:

What then are we to say about our lives, Searcher of our hearts? We know how often we have duped others with our deceit. We remember how often we promise one thing, only to do the opposite. We struggle to trust you, while we so easily listen to the promises of those who would pull us away from you. Forgive us, Merciful God. Your grace is more powerful than any of our sins, your hope is more durable than our silly choices, your love will traverse anything, and everything, which separates us from you.

Good News of God's Grace

One:

Hear the good news: the One who could accuse us, saves us from sin and death. The One who could condemn us, cradles us in grace. The One who could punish us, prays for us.

Many:

Now we know, there is nothing, not a thing, that can separate us from God. Thanks be to the One who forgives us. Amen.



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