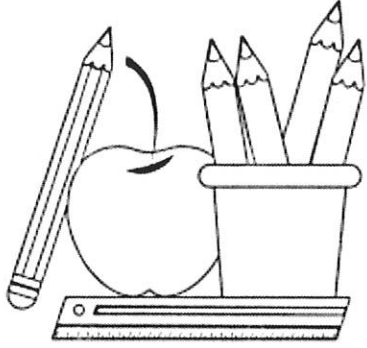


SEPTEMBER



2020

**CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

193 Main Street Brattleboro, Vermont 05301
centrechurch@centrechurchvt.org

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CENTRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

193 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301-2842

Office Hours: M – F / 8:30am–12:30pm

Church Office: 802.254.4730 / admin@centrechurchvt.org

Website: www.centrechurchvt.org

Facebook: [Centre Congregational Church-Brattleboro VT](https://www.facebook.com/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT)

Instagram: @centrechurchvt

Current news/information in the larger UCC Community:

VT Conference: www.vtcucc.org / National: www.ucc.org

The Upper Room daily devotional: <https://www.upperroom.org/standingorderchurches>

CHURCH STAFF AND LEADERSHIP

Minister and Teacher: The Rev. Dr. Scott Couper: 786.622.8473 (cell)
centrepastor@centrechurchvt.org

Music Director: Mary Milkey-May: music@centrechurchvt.org

Administrator: Bruce Landenberger: admin@centrechurchvt.org

Financial Secretary: Christine Yost: finance@centrechurchvt.org

Custodian: Emelio McCalla

Council Chair: William McCarty

Treasurer: Anne Fecto

Clerk: Jenifer Ambler

MINISTER'S COLUMN, Scott Couper

Dear Friends:

Did you know that counting can be a theological practice? Did you know numbers can hold theological meaning? Did you know statistics have theological implications? Sure they can! In fact, the third book on our Bible is entitled 'Numbers'. 'Numbers' derives its name from two censuses taken of the Israelites after their exile from Egypt and before their invasion of Canaan. At least two reasons exist for taking a census. First, people were counted so that preparations could be made for their march. Just like at the Brattleboro Centre of Children, children are counted, and even lashed together, for safe-keeping as they tour the town on foot. Knowing who and how many are in your care is the first step to caring for them! Second, who is counted determines who is important, or valued, in society. And in the Ancient Near East, it was males of military age that mattered the most, so they were counted. Women and other marginalized people were not valued, and thus they were not counted. They are often unnamed. As if they didn't exist.

Therefore, the degree to which we strive for a high voter turnout in the upcoming national election is a theological practice. Therefore, the number of those who complete their national census survey has theological meaning. Therefore, the degree to which accurate and comprehensive statistics on the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people of color has theological implications.

This past Tuesday, I voted in the primary election. To vote, I had to be registered. If I am able to go to the poll and vote, I should. If I am physically unable to vote due to health or employment conditions or if I do not feel safe to vote due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I should vote via absentee ballot. Likewise, I have completed my United States census survey that counts Micah and I in my household.

Congregationalism, as indicated by its very name, has a highly democratized and egalitarian form of ecclesiastical governance. Therefore, for us as Congregationalists, numbers are theological. All of us must be counted (so as to reach a quorum on September 13) and we all have a right to vote on matters related to our church if we are members - no matter our age, sex, race, health status, and sexual orientation.

In *The Commons* this week ("When Racial Disparities Affect Public Health"), Diane Wahle and Wichie Artu wrote to our community about the efforts Community Equity Collaborative is making in our county and state to ensure that we have accurate statistics related to the degree to which COVID-19 is affecting people of color. All lives don't matter – when some are not counted as adversely affected. People of color are negatively impacted by COVID-19 in numbers disproportionate to their percentage of the population. In order to direct resources and energy to the most vulnerable groups in our society, accurate statistics must be recorded and noted. As a representative of our church, I am a member of the Community Equity Collaborative and I support its efforts.

All people are made in the image of God, so all people ought to count. The Bible mandates us as people of faith to care for the most vulnerable and marginalized, those who society often doesn't count. As people of faith, it is a theological imperative to vote and to advocate that all be able to safely vote, to complete our census forms, and to ensure accurate statistics in relationship to how this pandemic affects different communities. Counting is theological!

Be well.

Love always in Christ, Scott

CENTRE BELLS **September 2020**

The newsletter of
Centre Congregational Church,
United Church of Christ



Council Chair, BILL McCARTY

I believe we may be weathering the worst of the pandemic storm! We aren't there completely, but we should be returning to some 'normalcy' soon. A positive sign of 'normalcy' is that the Council approved returning to the Sanctuary and Sunday services on **Sunday, September 13** at 10:00am!! It is anticipated that if all goes well, we will return to the Sanctuary with modified services. No choir will be present, but we will return. If there are any issues or changes, all will be notified. For those who cannot return, a Facebook alternative is being planned for live viewing. Further information will be forthcoming as matters develop.

Also, on **Sunday, September 13**, immediately following the Sunday service, the postponed Annual Program Meeting of CCC will be held. New officers, board, and committee members will be selected for the upcoming year. It has been a difficult time, but the delayed Annual Program Meeting is now scheduled!

With this edition of *Centre Bells*, I am writing my last article. It is time for new people to lead the Centre Church Council. My six extended terms are too much. Centre Church needs a younger and varied leadership. Vice-Chair Margo Neale and I, as Chair, are retiring. Of course, Margo will continue to work in her other varied capacities for Centre Church and I will continue on Council for twelve more months as the non-voting Immediate Past Chair. This is a bittersweet time for Margo and me, but we look forward to new leadership and younger thinking.

It is my hope that the pandemic is lessening and we will be returning to a more normal time and life. I am looking forward to seeing you all at Centre Church's re-opening and the Program Meeting on September 13, 2020!

-Bill McCarty, *Council Chair*



From Music Director, MARY MILKEY-MAY

Here it is, already time for the September newsletter when I would typically be putting out announcements about choir rehearsals beginning again while concurrently thanking summer music soloists. But this year, neither will happen. 2020 will go down in the history books as the year when nothing was normal.

Though I still do not have any sense of when the choir will be able to sing again, I do know that the Choir Room will be ready for folks to return. During the month of August, I have spent time decorating the bulletin board, walls, and file cabinets. It will be clear to anyone who enters the space that it is indeed a Choir Room. Yes, there are many file cabinets, AND, they are filled with good things - senior choir music, children's choir music, hand bell music, accompaniments to various anthems, Christmas music, Easter music...well, you get the idea. It is all organized and specific pieces can now be easily found! I am eagerly awaiting the time when singers, young and old, can gather again in that space.

I would like to again acknowledge and thank Jenifer Ambler and Matt Kennedy for all of the recording they have done this summer on some very hot evenings! They have also been so helpful in making the ZOOM services run smoothly. We couldn't have done it without their expertise. Thanks so much, Jenifer and Matt!

DEACONS

The Deacons' duties continue to be light as we are well into our sixth month of non-corporate worship. We enjoy our monthly ZOOM meetings where we can at least see each other electronically (and admire one another's bookcases). As most know by now, we have said farewell to Carlene, our fearless leader of many years, as she takes well-earned retirement from the Diaconate. We welcomed Holly Kennedy (a seasoned veteran) and Wayne Randall into our ranks and are grateful for their willingness to serve.

April Harkness continues to serve admirably as secretary and note-taker *extraordinaire*. Joy Everett and Lynn Herzog faithfully and reliably soldier along, and gracious off-stage support and experience is lent by Deacon Emeritus Mary Bristol.

Recent discussions have focused on the ongoing painting, restoration, and cleaning of the Sanctuary, the funding thereof, and the when and wherefore of resuming corporate worship.

As with all, we are most eager to be once again in our beloved Sanctuary, welcoming guests and cherished friends at the door, assisting with Communion, and truly fulfilling our roles as Deacons, which, after all, means 'servant'.

-Heidi Mario, *Chair*

MISSION & SERVICE

September marks the beginning of so much... USUALLY. This year it marks more challenges with these beginnings at Centre Church. Mission & Service (M&S) has felt the challenges of our new norm with ZOOM meetings and services. We have continued to get information to you, our congregation, and continued to serve the missions of our church through our financial gifts, but this has become increasingly hard. We miss our 'in church' services and our congregational support of the Second Sunday offerings. We miss celebrating our connections with these important groups and of our missions. We hope that you feel connected through *eNews*, *Centre Bells*, and hopefully in person with masks on and socially distanced in our sanctuary when we are able.

We thank those who have donated to *Brattleboro Centre for Children* (June-\$90), *PINS/DCF* (July-\$137), in August to *Brattleboro Senior Meals*, and the Union Service offering for *Luz del Mundo* and *Inanda Seminary*. Though this may become more difficult, at this point in the year we will continue to donate the remainder of the donation up to \$500 from our budget. Your donations make a difference to keep this budget down.

This month's special offering is *Loaves & Fishes (L&F)* and will be collected on September 13. If you would like to serve *L&F* through a food or time donation, email Ruth Tilghman: ruthtilghman@gmail.com Or perhaps you and your family or group of friends would like to help do some special cleaning in the kitchen in September as a donation? Let Ruth know or contact Dennis Newman or Priscilla Svec and we'll help connect you. We'd like to thank *L&F* for their donation of \$2000 this year to Centre Church which helps defray the cost of heat, gas, electric and general wear and tear of Memorial Hall and rooms in the basement. We thank *L&F* for applying and receiving grants that have helped fund this donation.

Other projects that M&S is working towards:

- an outdoor benefit concert for *Luz del Mundo Scholarship Fund* (Usually \$1500/ year),
- Moment for Peace resumed outside in the fall
- Sewing masks for children at the start of this school year.

We hope that these come to fruition. Connect with us if you'd like to know more!

- M&S Committee: Jenifer Ambler, Dennis Newman, Priscilla Svec, Roger Brown, Bonnie Girvan, Amy Balin, Scott Couper



BRATTLEBORO CENTRE for CHILDREN

On August 24, the Brattleboro Centre for Children (BCC) graduated eight preschoolers who are going off to public school kindergarten. The families gathered in the sanctuary, safely distancing, to hear the teachers speak about each child's special gifts and how much we will miss each one. This happens every year and each year is special, but this is the second year in a row that some of our graduates have been at BCC since they were infants. Knowing children and their families their whole life makes this graduation a truly momentous occasion and the relationships that we have built over the years are meaningful and important. We are looking forward to hearing from all these families in the future and wish these children all the best in their growth and futures.

Coming back after a brief in service period, the BCC re-opened with four classrooms in a slightly different configuration. We have space for up to forty-two children, doubling our infant capacity from where it had been for the last year and a half. We have operated safely for the summer and look forward to continued compliance with the governor, Health Department, and Agency of Education's orders in order to continue to do so for the duration of the coming year. As always, we are grateful to the church and its membership for continued support and generosity.

- Nan Mann, *Director*

MEMBER CARE

Gisela Robeck emailed to me her intention to resign from her long service on Member Care. Declining health was the reason she told me. I was saddened to read her message.

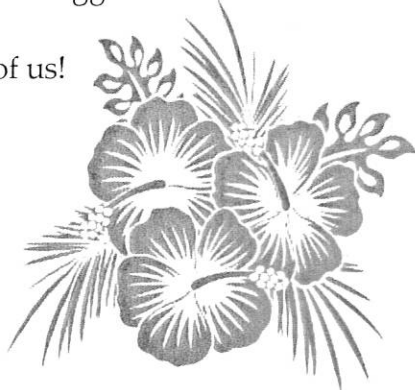
She came to us at Centre Church, right from the Big Island of Hawaii. That's not where she started out in life. A quick conversation with this gal and you hear a German accent. I'm not sure of her whole biography, but I loved hearing the story of how she wound up living 15 years on the Big Island of Hawaii. As I remember the tale, one of Gisela's daughters invited her to come and visit while the daughter was on a job there. When Gisela got off the plane and smelled the air, she declared, "this is it!" and later made a permanent move. She lived in the paradise Hana area for about 15 years and entertained many visitors from the states. She was active in the church in Hana.

It was sad to receive that note from her that told me it was time for her to retire from Member Care. She has worked faithfully and with enthusiasm helping with lemonade, coffee hours, and our receptions after memorial services. She contributed gourmet baking to many events. Once I attended the quilting group at her house and was treated to such delicious refreshments I almost vowed to learn to quilt! When I was at Pine Heights lovely hand-made cards that Gisela had created would arrive.

She is the one who created and continues to send letters showing church activities to friends living far away and to those here in the Brattleboro area that cannot come to church. She uses photographs of the Easter egg hunts, gatherings in the parlor, or Silver Bells Sunday for these letters.

Gisela was a faithful member in attendance at our meetings, always participating with ideas and positive suggestions. We will miss you, Gisela.

Aloha from all of us!



CHURCH RE-OPENING UPDATE

Friends, at the August 18 Council meeting, it was decided to strive to re-open the church sanctuary for worship on **Sunday, September 13** at 10:00am and thereafter hold a long postponed Annual Congregational Program Meeting at 11:30am.

The church seeks to end the suffering due to isolation caused by many of our members not having computers and/or internet capability. The church seeks to prevent the suffering of any worshipers or the community caused by contracting the COVID-19 virus when gathering for worship in the sanctuary.

Therefore, for almost a month, we will be working, all hands on deck, to prepare our sanctuary and to implement policies that allow us to worship safely. Heidi Mario with the deacons and Scott Couper with the Safety sub-Committee (Michael Mario, Priscilla Svec, Nan Mann, Matt Kennedy, Jenifer Ambler, and Mary Milkey-May) will ensure that the check-list is followed so that worship can happen in the sanctuary.

Members and friends are encouraged to diligently review the check-list found in this *Centre Bells* newsletter and attached on *eNews*. Key take-aways of the check-list are:

1. Worshipers will be limited to 75.
2. Worshipers are expected to arrive at about 9:30am to be processed through a health and safety gauntlet.
3. Movement in the sanctuary will be one way, every other pew will be taped-off.
4. All worshipers must wear face masks and keep social distance (except in family units in the pews).
5. There will be no congregational singing.
6. The service will be live-streamed for those who do not feel safe to come or who live outside the area.

Please note that if COVID-19 statistics for Vermont and/or Windham County change for the worse, the leadership of the church will discontinue plans to open on September 13 and we will continue with our ZOOM service.

We pray that you will volunteer to help the deacons accomplish many duties. We pray that you will attend worship. We pray that you will attend the Annual Congregational Spring Meeting thus ensuring that we have a quorum. We pray that our fellowship will be healthy and loving.

Thank you. Be well.

In Christ, Scott

Check List for Re-Opening on Sunday, September 13, 2020

1. "Organizations may allow 50 percent of fire safety occupancy or 1 person per 100 square feet, with a maximum of 75 people indoors and 150 outdoors" (from June 26, 2020, by Governor Phil Scott)
2. Social distancing, 6 feet (*except for same household families in pews*) the entire time.
3. Large taped indicators and adequate signage will be placed in the entrance and exit to prevent gathering at the door to enter and exit (social distancing, one at a time, while passing through doorways).
4. Those with physical disabilities will be welcomed and accommodated at the handicapped entrance by the church offices and led to the sanctuary.
5. All congregants will wear facemasks, cloths, or shields.
6. Congregants shall not touch, hug, nor kiss one another.
7. Ushers will take each person's temperature upon entrance to verify that the congregant does not have a fever. The church will need to acquire two temperature gauges. Temperatures will be recorded by deacons on the below sign-in sheet.
8. Worshipers will complete a sign-in sheet asking basic health questions to ensure no one is exhibiting symptoms. To facilitate and speed-up processing, worshippers are asked to fill out a completed form at home immediately prior to departing for church so that only the temperature need be recorded.
9. The church will have face masks and hand sanitizer available for use at two stations (exit and entrance) that will be distributed by ushers.
10. Worship celebrants, deacons, and ushers are to arrive no later than 9:00a.m. for preparation.
11. Members will be requested to ARRIVE no later than at 9:30am for the 10:00am service. Light music will be played for worshippers' quiet meditation until the service begins.
12. Ushers will record names and telephone numbers of congregants for contact tracing purposes. This information can be placed on the sign-in sheets that folks fill-out at home.
13. The service will still be live-streamed on our Facebook (public) page and recorded to be viewed on Facebook (public) and our church website.
14. There will be a coffee hour but only outside under the church tent, with strict social distancing observed.
15. No singing (except for soloists or dual singers on opposite sides of the chancel area with masks or face shields). Recorded music can be played or hymns and anthems can be sung by only soloists.
16. Ushers at front and back doors and at front and back of sanctuary doors.
17. Congregants should enter through the narthex only and exit into the church and out the front office door only (one-way traffic).
18. Every other pew should be taped-off.
19. The pews closest to the railing of the balconies should be robed off (no spittle raining down on those below).
20. All members must hand sanitize before entering the sanctuary and upon exiting.
21. No Bibles, no hymnals, no pencils, or paper in the pews.
22. No passing of the offertory plate, congregants will come forward during a musical item to give their offering.
23. The Sexton will ensure that bathrooms will be cleaned before and after service. People are encouraged to go to the bathroom at home before coming to worship and to use the bathrooms at church sparingly so as to facilitate physical distancing.
24. The Sexton and deacons will ensure that all hand fixtures, door knobs, handles, etc... will be sanitized before, during, and after service.
25. Each celebrant will use his or her own microphone.
26. All microphones shall be sanitized before and after use.
27. All windows in the sanctuary should be opened weather permitting for maximum ventilation.
28. Horned instruments should be played behind a Plexiglas shield or recorded and lip-synched.
29. Deacons will establish a schedule and health and safety protocols (TBD) for the tithe and offering 'counters'.

PEOPLE



A word of good cheer would be warmly received by members and friends of our church who are in nursing homes, assisted living centers, or are housebound as of August 26.

Fran Burrows—Langdon Place
136A Arch St. #150, Keene, NH 03431

Wanda Godfrey—Vernon Hall
13 Greenway Dr., Vernon, VT 05354
802.254.2444

Phyllis Hickok
1520 Little Blue Stem Ct., Ames, IA 50014
515.337.1956

Jane Reed—Pine Heights
187 Oak Grove Ave., Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.257.0307

Karen Getty Peter—Pine Rock Manor
3 Denny Hill Rd., Warner, NH 03278

The Rev. Allen Vander Meulen
1 Harvest Circle #301, Lincoln, MA 01773
781.214.3773

Sylvia Eaton
86 Brets Road, Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.254.6853

Alta Barber
13223 N 3937 Dr., Bartlesville, OK 74003

Pat Neer—Thompson House
80 Maple St., Brattleboro, VT 05301

Bob & Dee Keller
153 Spruce St., Brattleboro, VT 05301
802.257.4588

*Please let the Administrator know
if we've missed someone.*

NEW CONTACT INFORMATION

Dot Vander Meulen: 781.214.3773

NEW FRIENDS OF CENTRE CHURCH

Kaitlin Haskins & Sidharth Menon
kaitlinhaskins@gmail.com / sid05.menon@gmail.com

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Alex and Emma Day
- 4 Gary Carrier
- 6 Mary Robertson
- 10 Jim Bedard
- 17 Elizabeth Fecto
- 18 Gisela Robeck
- 23 Joy Everett
- 29 Rebecca Day



*To all of the members of
Centre Congregational Church,
Thank you so much for your
generous and timely Special
Offering collection to support
our important work serving our
neighbors in need. With your
help, our staff and volunteers
have stretched and flexed to
meet the dramatically increas-
ing need for emergency food
and shelter in our region.*

*Thank you so much for all
that your generosity makes
possible. Be well and stay safe!*

*Libby [Bennett]
Groundworks*



SEPTEMBER 2020

*ZOOM events

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	2 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	3 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	4 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	5
6 10 ⁰⁰ Worship/ Communion* 12 ⁰⁰ Deacons 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	7 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED	8 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	9 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting 6 ⁰⁰ Mission & Service*	10 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	11 CB DEADLINE 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	12
13 10 ⁰⁰ Worship 11 ³⁰ Annual Program Meeting 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	14 4 ⁰⁰ BCC Board	15 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes 6 ⁰⁰ Church Council*	16 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	17 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	18 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	19
20 10 ⁰⁰ Worship 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	21 1 ⁰⁰ Compassionate Brattleboro	22 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	23 MAIL CB 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting	24 10 ⁰⁰ UCC Devotional* 4 ⁰⁰ Sermon discussion* 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	25 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	26
27 10 ⁰⁰ Worship 7 ⁰⁰ Worship Team	28	29 11 ³⁰ Loaves & Fishes	30 8 ⁴⁵ Staff Meeting			

SCOTT'S SERMONS can be accessed at the church website: www.centrechurhvermont.org -or-
facebook page: <http://www.centrechurhvermont.org/audio--video.html> -or-
https://www.facebook.com/pg/Centre-Congregational-Church-Brattleboro-VT-632678343519640/notes/?ref=page_internal -or-
From the website *Welcome* page, click *Audio & Video* in the top list (or click *More* or *Other* on the top right).

The ANNUAL
CONGREGATIONAL PROGRAM MEETING
has been scheduled for
Sunday, September 13, 2020
at 11:30am after worship

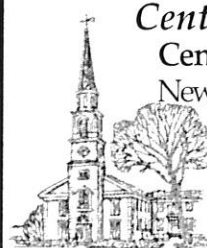
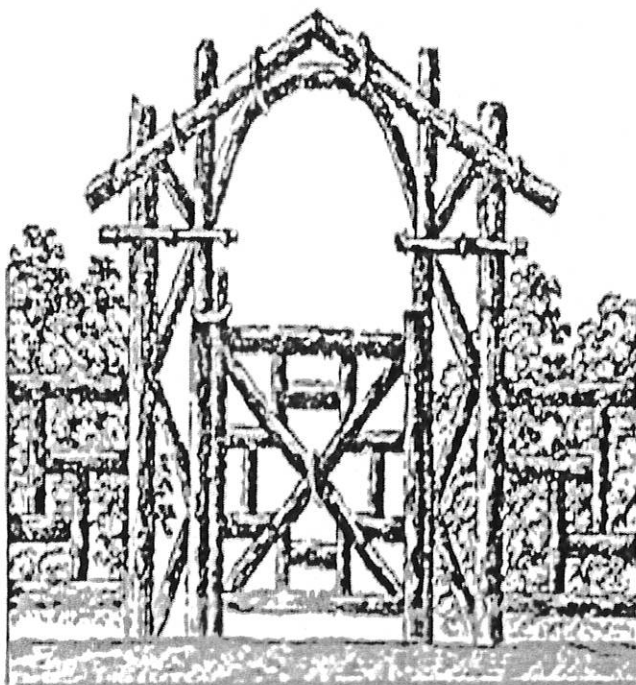
SEPTEMBER LECTIONARY TEXTS

Sunday, September 6, 14th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 12:1-14 and Ps 149; Ezek 33:7-11 and
Ps 119:33-40; Rom 13:8-14; Matt 18:15-20

Sunday, September 13, 15th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 14:19-31 and Ps 114 or Ex 15:1b-11, 20-21;
Gen 50:15-21 and Ps 103:(1-7), 8-13; Rom 14:1-12;
Matt 18:21-35

Sunday, September 20, 16th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 16:2-15 and Ps 105:1-6, 37-45; Jon 3:10-4:11 and
Ps 145:1-8; Phil 1:21-30; Matt 20:1-16

Sunday, September 27, 17th Sunday after Pentecost
Ex 17:1-7 and Ps 78:1-4, 12-16; Ezek 18:1-4, 25-32
and Ps 25:1-9; Phil 2:1-13; Matt 21:23-32



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