



CENTRAL ST MATTHEW
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Bringing New Orleans Together

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

July 12th | 10 am

**“The Good
Ground of Justice
and Hope!”**

Rev. Peter Scie



Central St. Matthew United Church of Christ

Order of Service

Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

July 5, 2026

(At the asterisk*, all who are able, please stand. Congregation responses are in **bold**)

Ringling of the Bells

Prelude

“I Need Thee Every Hour”

arr. Linda Hartman

Lighting of Candles

Acolyte

Welcome and Announcements

***Call to Worship**

Curry Miller

Leader: Beloved, we gather before God, the Sower of love, justice, mercy, and hope.

People: We come seeking to be good ground for the Word of God.

Leader: The Word calls us not only to listen, but to respond.

People: We come ready to hear, ready to grow, and ready to act.

Leader: In a world where injustice often depends on silence, Christ calls us to speak truth with courage.

People: We will not be silent when our neighbors are harmed, excluded, erased, or oppressed.

Leader: In a world where faith can become comfortable, Christ calls us to fruitful discipleship.

People: May our worship become witness, our prayers become action, and our love become justice.

Leader: Let us worship the God who plants hope in hard places.

People: Let us worship with open hearts, rooted faith, and courageous love.

***Opening Hymn**

“We’ve Come to Worship You”

AAHH #107

***Invocation**

God of justice, mercy, and radical love, meet us in this sacred moment. Break open the hardened places within us. Deepen the shallow places within us. Uproot the thorns that choke compassion, courage, and truth. Make us good ground for your Word, so that our lives may bear fruit for healing, liberation, and hope. Teach us to follow Christ not only with our words, but with our actions. Give us holy boldness to speak up, stand up, and show up wherever your people are wounded by injustice. Amen.

Scripture Reading

The Psalter

Psalms 119:105–112

The Gospel

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Children's Sermon

"What Kind of Ground Are You?"

Rev. Peter Scie

(All the children are invited to come forward as all sing)

**This, this is where children belong, welcomed as part of the worshipping throng.
Water, God's Word, bread & cup, prayer & song: This is where children belong.**

Call to Reconciliation

Beloved, the good news of the Gospel calls us into both grace and accountability. We confess not to be shamed, but to be transformed. We confess because silence can become sin, comfort can become complicity, and faith without action can become empty. Let us come before God honestly, trusting that mercy meets us where we are and calls us toward who we are created to become.

Unison Prayer of Confession

God of truth and tenderness, forgive us for the times we have heard your Word but failed to let it take root. Forgive us for the times we chose silence when justice required our voice. Forgive us for the times we offered prayers but withheld action. Forgive us for the times we protected comfort more than community, tradition more than transformation, and privilege more than people. Cultivate in us a deeper faith. Give us courage to repair what has been harmed, confront what is unjust, and embody the love of Christ in public and private ways. Make us accountable to you and to one another. Amen.

Silence is Kept

Assurance of Pardon

Beloved, hear the good news: God's mercy is still being sown. God's grace still reaches hard ground, rocky ground, thorny ground, and tired ground. In Christ, we are forgiven, restored, and called again. We are not released from responsibility; we are empowered for it. So rise in grace, rooted in love, and go forward as good ground where justice and hope can grow. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

***Passing of Peace**

Please turn to your neighbor and say "The Peace of Christ be with you," and respond by saying, "And also with you."

***Pulpit Hymn**

"Lord, I Want to Be a Christian"

AAHH #463

Sermon

"The Good Ground of Justice and Hope!"

Rev. Peter Scie

The Prayer of the The People and the Lord's Prayer

The Offering

Offertory Sentence

Acts 20:35

"You need to recall the words of Jesus, who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Offertory

"God Has Smiled on Me"

AAHH #152

*Doxology

NCH #781

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low;
Praise Holy Spirit evermore; One God, Triune, whom we adore.**

***The Closing Hymn**

“The Solid Rock”

AAHH #385

Carrying of the Light into the World

Acolyte

***Parting Hymn**

“Bind Us Together”

TFWS #2226

(Please join the Circle of Friendship)

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken.

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord, bind us together in love.

There is only one God, there is only one king. There is only one body.

That is why we sing. Bind us together...

***Benediction**

Organ Postlude

“Ach Herr, mich armen Sünder” Setting 1

by Johann Pachelbel

Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God

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