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Sep

Conflict

Lessons in Leadership

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, YEAR A

This worship service addresses the uncomfortable but unavoidable reality of conflict, looking to Jesus' clear roadmap in Matthew 18 for faithful reconciliation. Rather than airing grievances, we will use this time to practice empathy, praying for those we experience friction with and recognizing them as fellow image-bearers of God. Ultimately, we will be reminded that we do not navigate these difficult challenges alone, finding our refuge and strength together in God's protective presence.

REFERENCES

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalm 149

Romans 13:8-14

Matthew 18:15-20

COLORS

Green

Liturgical Resources

CALL TO WORSHIP

Family of God, we live in a world full of conflict and division.

God calls us to be a people of reconciliation.

We live in a world full of misinformation and confusion.

God calls us to be a people of truth and clarity.

We live in a world that wants to settle disputes with harmful words and actions.
God calls us to be a people who make peace through compassion and honesty.

We live in a world that does not understand the ways of Jesus.
Yet Jesus teaches us to be a people of reconciliation and peace for the good of the whole world.
Thanks be to God! Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2026.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of the church,
you call a broken people
around your table:
in times of disagreement,
teach us to listen,
loose us from prejudice
and bind us to your way
of forgiving grace;
through Jesus Christ, who stands at the heart of our gathering. Amen.

*Written by Stephen Shakespear in Prayers for an Inclusive Church. Posted on the Church of Scotland's **Starters for Sunday** website. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/08/collect-for-september-4-2011.html>.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

When we offer God our confession, we join the beautiful work of reconciliation, which begins with our reconciling with God. Trusting in our Partner in grace, let us make our confession, first in silent prayer.

Silent confession.

Gracious and loving God, open our hearts so that we are able to admit to you the fullness of our lives – that which is beautiful and good, and that which is hurtful and hateful.
We confess that we do not follow Jesus in all that we do.
We love with condition.
We judge and condemn.

We cast the first stone and keep the logs in our own eyes.
We do not turn to You as the source of our healing.

Forgive us, we pray. Forgive our sin and empower us to be imitators of Christ in love and service.
Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends in Christ, know this: the mercy of God is from everlasting to everlasting, and I remind you of this surpassing grace – in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
Alleluia! Amen.

Adapted from Beth Merrill Neel on her blog, “Hold Fast to What Is Good,”
<https://holdfasttowhatisgood.com/liturgy/prayer-of-confession>. Used with permission.

BENEDICTION

Family of God, the lessons of reconciliation and peace-making are not easy. As you move into the week ahead, may God bless you with the desire to restore community when it is broken, to hold boundaries with firmness and grace, to listen with curiosity, and to speak with gentleness, that all may know we are disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2026.

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