



DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

13

Sep

Grace

Lessons in Leadership

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, YEAR A

Concluding our series on leadership, this worship focuses on the transformative power of leading with grace and the ongoing work of reconciliation. We will explore how true grace isn't about avoiding conflict or being overly permissive, but rather acting as a conduit for God's abundant forgiveness while maintaining healthy boundaries. Through communal reflection, confession, and specific rituals of reconciliation, the service will provide a safe space to lament our hurts, extend forgiveness, and discern our next right steps together.

REFERENCES

Exodus 14:19-31

Psalm 114

Romans 14:1-12

Matthew 18:21-35

COLORS

Green

Liturgical Resources

CALL TO WORSHIP

Followers of Christ, we live in a world where we hurt one another, where sin divides us one from another and makes us enemies instead of neighbors.

Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

The divisions in our world seem like too much to overcome, and we wonder if this forgiveness thing really works anymore. Maybe it worked for Jesus, but not for us.

Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

We find ourselves tempted by easy answers and quick solutions, reticent to do the slow and difficult work of reconciliation.

Yet we are a people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us.

In this place, may we encounter Christ who meets us in the places where we want to give up, where we despair that life-giving change is even possible, with abundant grace to sustain us on the journey.

God, form us today as people of grace, called by Christ to forgive and repair the rifts between us. Amen.

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

OPENING PRAYER

Liberating God, we worship you.

We praise you for delivering your people of old from enslavement in Egypt by opening up a new and unexpected future before them.

They experienced your grace and mercy in awesome and life-sustaining ways, which must have been like an impossible dream coming true.

Through these acts, you showed your compassion for the weak and powerless of this world.

We praise and adore you for opening up a new future for us when your love and compassion, your mercy and grace became enfleshed in Jesus Christ.

He delivered us from the bondage of evil and sin through his death on the cross.

The impossible once more became reality when love defeated evil once and for all.

We pray that this time of worship will be a true offering of our wonder and praise

that you should care for us so deeply and so faithfully.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Written by Moira Laidlaw on **Liturgies Online**. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/09/opening-prayer-exodus-14-19-31.html>.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, we seek your mercy...
yet we ourselves look for payback when we are wronged.

We think it “only fair” and “what is right” when we retaliate
and use harsh words
and withdraw from relationship.

The forgiveness you offer on our account
is larger than we can comprehend;
still, we withhold forgiveness
and carry the grudge over petty items.

We are eager to do your judging.
And the worst: we conspire our inner thoughts
to secure your forgiveness
while avoiding honest repentance.

Forgive us, Lord, for the sins we know in our hearts.
Save us, Lord, from the sins we hide.

Silent prayer of confession

God’s gift of forgiveness makes us able,
with the power of Holy Spirit,
to choose to forgive, renew, and live again
in right relationship with each other and with our God.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
Glory to God! Amen.

Adapted from Bill Wessner and posted on **Confession RCL blog**. Re-posted on the re:Worship blog at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/09/confession-matthew-18-21-35.html>.

BENEDICTION

Followers of Christ, go now in the blessing and assurance that you are a forgiven people
empowered by grace to forgive and heal the divisions that keep us from truly loving God, self,

neighbor, and all creation with the fullness of our beings. Amen.

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

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