

June 14, 2026

Gen 18:1-15, (21:1-7)

Sarah Laughed

In a sea of youthful faces, Sarah's wrinkled skin stood out in the lecture hall. The 75-year-old was there to earn her Master of Divinity degree. Her classmates wondered why. Did she think she would serve a church late in life?

Many succeeded in suppressing their laughter. Others did not. Sarah didn't mind. She laughed, too, when the dream of being a minister emerged. Even her denomination didn't support her she confided to me one day before class.

"They laughed, too," she said with a smile that soon melted from her face when she continued. "It's sad that all who laugh are the ones who claim they know God. What God are they learning about here in these hallowed halls?"

There was once another Sarah who laughed at God's startling, unbelievable plans — Abraham's wife. She overheard angels talking to her elderly husband that she, who was barren, would conceive a child. Their son, Isaac, would come into the world when Sarah was 90 and Abraham 100.

When she heard the news, she couldn't help but laugh. Perhaps it was an incredulous laugh. After all, prayers for a child have gone unanswered for years. And let's not forget, the old couple was kept waiting another 25 years after God first made the promise to Abraham that he would be the father of a great nation.

When God asked why she laughed, Sarah tried to deny it. God wasn't mad with her. I think God was probably suppressing a chuckle, getting a kick out of how once again those who follow God still get so surprised at the impossible becoming possible.

"Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" asked seminarian Sarah that day in the lecture hall, repeating God's words spoken to our biblical Sarah so long ago.

I have found myself repeating these words many times to churches that were struggling, even dying. "Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?" Other translations replace "wonderful" with "hard."

I ask because we all forget that the Almighty can bring life to that which is barren — even dead. Nothing is impossible with God. Sarah's story is one all churches this day need to hear, for the laughter of hope is still possible amid empty pews.

Just ask seminarian Sarah. She was ordained at 78 and called to serve a struggling rural congregation, where for five beautiful years they laughed together, cried together and grew together.

Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? No, it is not. Just remember the Sarahs.

God of laughter and beautiful promises, many of us are feeling like life has passed us by and that it is too late to start over, try again — even dare to believe dreams can still come true. But nothing is too wonderful for You. Strengthen our faith to believe that all things are possible and give us the patience to trust Your perfect timing. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



8 1/2" x 11" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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Bismarck-Mandan Area
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



1200 E Highland Acres Rd, Bismarck, ND 58501

701-223-2915 www.uccbismarck.org

June 14, 2026 at 10 AM Worship

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor: Rev. Gretchen Deeg | Guest Preacher: Darla Schafer

Liturgist: Lynn Bryntesen | Video: Jordan VanBerkum

Music: Darcy Avery

*Rise in body or in spirit.



WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

*NO MATTER Sing! 35
No matter who, no matter what
No matter where you are on the journey of life;
You're welcome, welcome in this place.
Accepted and welcomed by God's grace.

*CALL TO WORSHIP¹ & OPENING PRAYER

One: We call on the Holy One as long as we live! What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us?

All: With love and laughter, we praise the Holy One!

One: What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us?

All: Lifting the cup of salvation and offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving, we praise the Holy One!

One: What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us?

All: With the fruit of our worship and the fruit of our lives, we praise the Holy One!

*HYMN Savior, Who Dying Gave NCH 452

SCRIPTURE Romans 5:1-8

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Children are invited to remain in worship Sunday School will resume in the fall.

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, our heavenly host;
Creator, Savior, Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION¹

God of Grace, we give you thanks for love that transcends our shortcomings, that greets us with mercy, and the possibility of transformed life. Plant seeds in us that will stretch our faith in you and in us. Nurture us to live miraculous lives. Let our faith and our work join with your power to make us fruitful despite our limitations, doubts, and fears. May the fruit we produce add sustenance and hope in your kingdom. Amen

*GLORIA

Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7 & Matthew 9:35-10:8

SERMON

HYMN O God, Whose Steadfast Love NCH 426

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

*HYMN Creator God, Creating Still NCH 278

*CARRY GOD'S LOVE

Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from [ONE LICENSE](https://www.onelicense.com/), License #732302-A.
¹Worship Ways



Thank You for Worshiping with Us!

Your offerings are essential for the ongoing ministry of this congregation. Donations can be made using this QR code, online at www.uccbismarck.org/donate, mailed to the church, or placed in the offering box.



Sponsored in Celebration

We are sponsoring to celebrate our June birthdays with our UCC family!

Sponsored by Monica & Carlee Klein

June 28, July 19, and all of August is available. If you would like to sponsor a future Sunday, contact the church office at 223-2915 or visit uccbismarck.org/donate. Sponsorships are \$500.

Outdoor Worship

Our first outdoor worship of the season is on **June 28 at 10am**. We'll gather beneath the canopy of trees on the Bismarck UCC grounds for a relaxed, spirit-filled time of prayer, music, and community. Bring a **lawn chair or blanket**.



Welcoming New Members

Have you been enjoying this church family? Are you interested in membership? Contact Pastor Gretchen to learn more and to discuss possible dates to officially join Bismarck UCC!



UCC Bags & T-Shirts

Stewardship is selling bags for \$10. For every bag purchased, one will be donated to Ministry on the Margins. A great way to give and receive at the same time! If you would like a bag or T-shirt, please contact the church office.



Mayflower Circle Reorganization

People of all genders are invited to attend the gathering on Sunday, June 14 immediately after worship to reimagine the future of Mayflower Circle. Mayflower Circle is a service and fellowship group of Bismarck UCC dating back to our church's formation. Led by Marcia Patrie.

Prefer a Text?

If you don't regularly check your email but need reminders for activities that you have signed up for, we now have a text option. The office phone number that can receive and send texts is (701)707-9127.



THIS WEEK'S OPPORTUNITIES: June 14 - 21

- Sunday:** 11 AM Fellowship
11:15 AM Mayflower Circle - Reorganization
12 Noon [Online](#) Fellowship
1 PM Pride Interfaith Worship (Kennedy Center)
- Monday:** 7 PM League of Women Readers
- Tuesday:** 1 PM Quilting/Knitting
- Friday:** 9 AM Bible Study (in-person & [online](#))
- Sunday:** 10 AM Sunday Worship
11 AM Fellowship
11:15 AM Council (in-person & [online](#))
12 Noon [Online](#) Fellowship

For pastoral care from June 11-15, please contact Darvy Avery 701-527-6408.

Learn Mahjong!

Please join us for a fun couple of nights learning how to play Mahjong old style. I have several Mahjong sets, so the more the merrier! We will meet on Wednesday, June 24 and Thursday, June 25 at 7pm in the church fellowship hall. We'll see how quickly people learn - very similar to playing rummy - and then maybe schedule another one or two learning sessions in July and then a tournament in August. – *Gayle Klopp*



Activity Interest Survey

Bismarck UCC is expanding the activities and events available for adults and families. Please use the link below to complete the survey to gauge interest in specific activities or suggest new ideas. Thank you for your time. <https://forms.gle/ujDrHbBkS8ac3y729>

OUR PRAYER LIST

Family of Tony Demaree (Bill & Maggie's nephew), Molly Peterson (Autum's sister), Louise Zuern, Ivan Sadlier (Autum's uncle), Lacy Peters (Dawn Archer's cousin), Jody Miller, Kayla Bruning, Bella Bruning, Gellsia (Oliver Gagner's daughter), Matthew Nitschke, Tasha Hausauer (John Sauter's cousin), Hayes & Cooper (Brandon & Tasha Domagala's sons), Amanda Wilson, Frank Picard, Carla Christenson (Monica Klein's mother), Pam Crawford, Fredrick Krause (Kerri Kraft's grandfather), Colby (Janice & Gary Sather's son), Robyn Richter (Kyle Eisenbraun's aunt), Doretta Reule, Howard Etson, Camille Grothier, East Timor, Refugees

*Contact the church office to be added to our weekly prayer list.

No Matter

$\text{♩} = 120$

F Dm Gm⁷ C F F⁷

No mat-ter who, no mat-ter what no mat-ter where you are on the

B^b G⁷ F Dm G⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷

jour-ney of life; you're wel-come, wel-come in this place. No mat-ter

F Dm Gm⁷ C F F⁷

who, no mat-ter what, no mat-ter where you are on the

B^b G⁷ F Dm Gm⁷ C⁷ C F F

To verses Last time, Fine

jour-ney of life: ac-cept-ed, wel-come-d by God's grace. grace.

Verses

F B^badd⁹ B^bm^{add}⁹

1. For we are fam - i - ly, meant to be

2. And in di - ver - si - ty, u - ni - ty,

3. To - geth - er we will sing, wor - ship bring,

4. The God who spoke through Christ, speaks to us;

F F⁹ F⁷ B^badd⁹

pur - posed for e - ter - ni - ty. Born in love,

har - mo - ny for all to see: Just - ice and

hands and hearts out - stretched to all. Je - sus praise,

lis - ten to our Sav - ior's call. Wel - come home,

B^bm^{add}⁹ G⁹ G⁷ Gm⁷/C C⁷ D.C.

from a - bove, God's com - mu - ni - ty.

e - qui - ty, God's com - mu - ni - ty.

hearts a - blaze, lis - ten to God's call.

wel - come in, wel - come one and all.

Savior, Who Dying Gave

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Sylvanus Dryden Phelps, 1862
Adapt. Thomas H. Troeger, 1992

Rom. 5:6-11; Gal. 5:22-24

1 Sav - ior, who dy - ing gave your love to me,
 2 Give me a faith - ful heart guid - ed by you,
 3 All that I am and have is yours a - lone,

that all God made me for might come to be—
 that ev - ery day may bring your love to view
 my love for you the fruit your love has sown.

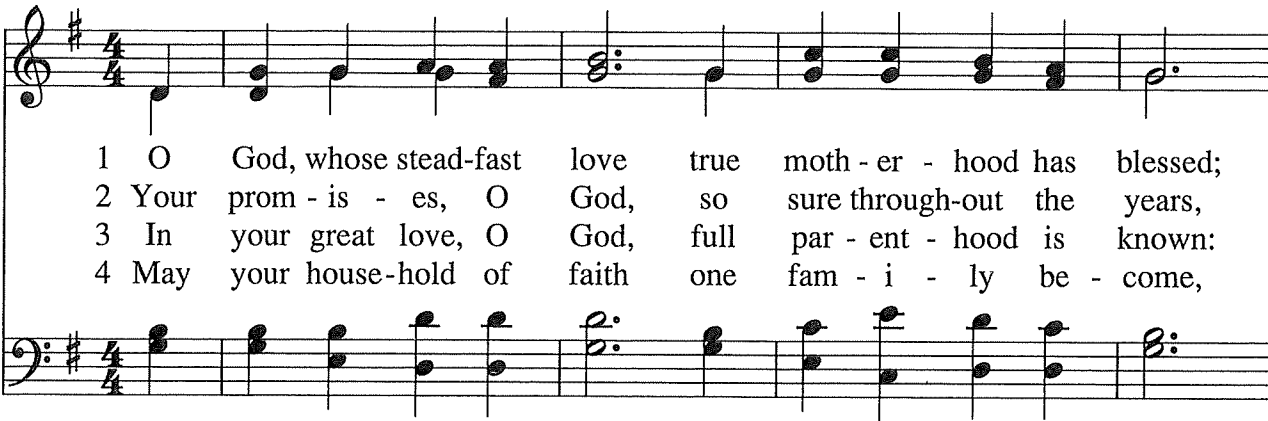
I make this sol - emn vow: my heart will al - ways bow
 through some small kind - ness done, some work of love be - gun,
 Not doubt, nor fear, nor wrong, nor death can still this song:

when I re - mem - ber how you died for me.
 some thread of jus - tice spun, some life made new.
 my gifts of love be - long to you a - lone.

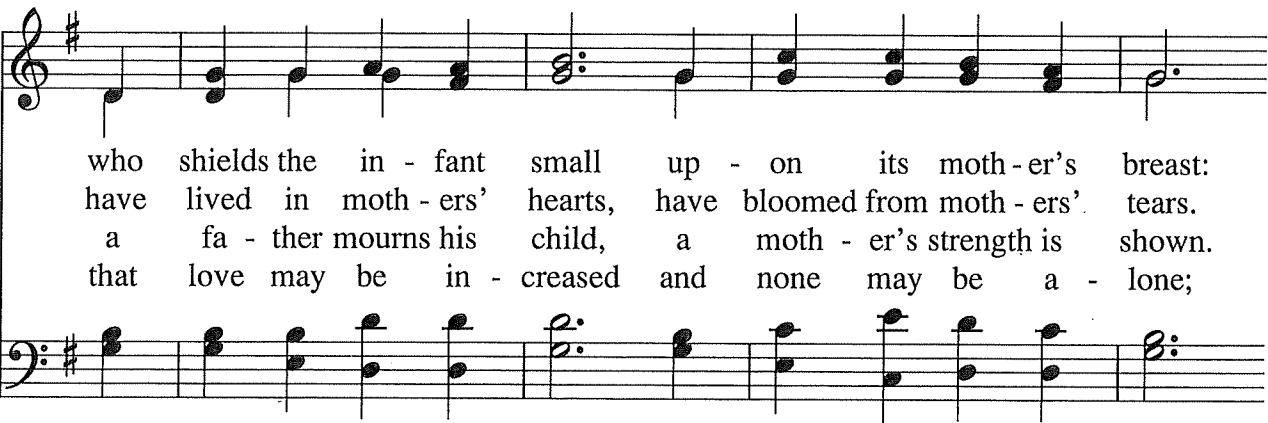
O God, Whose Steadfast Love

Gen. 18:9-15; 1 Sam. 1:1-20; Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-7

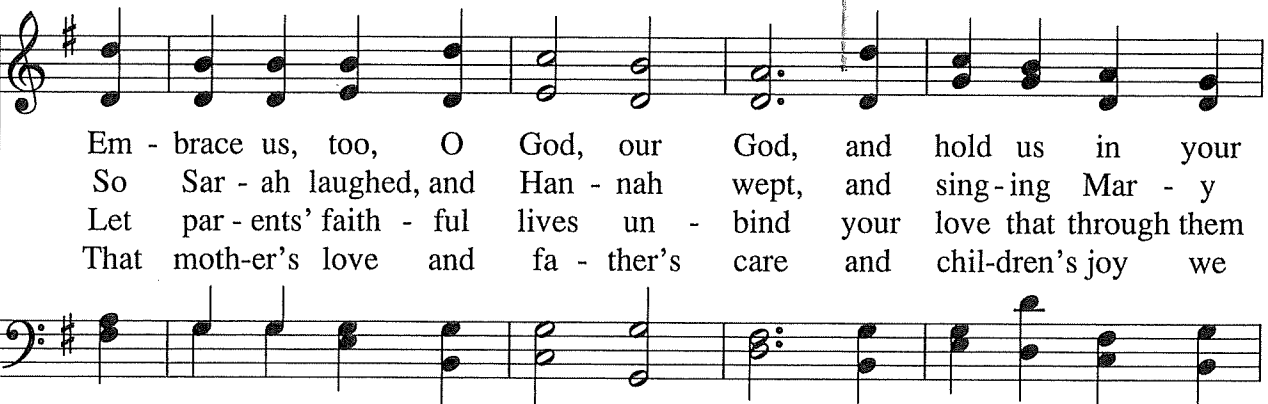
James L. Haddix, 1986; rev. 1994



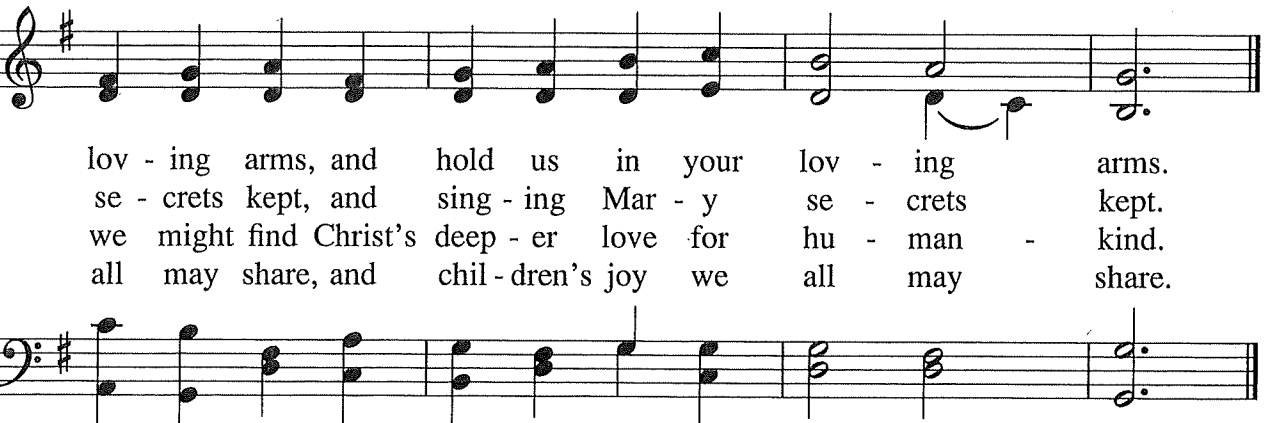
1 O God, whose stead-fast love true moth - er - hood has blessed;
 2 Your prom - is - es, O God, so sure through-out the years,
 3 In your great love, O God, full par - ent - hood is known:
 4 May your house-hold of faith one fam - i - ly be - come,



who shields the in - fant small up - on its moth - er's breast:
 have lived in moth - ers' hearts, have bloomed from moth - ers' tears.
 a fa - ther mourns his child, a moth - er's strength is shown.
 that love may be in - creased and none may be a - lone;



Em - brace us, too, O God, our God, and hold us in your
 So Sar - ah laughed, and Han - nah wept, and sing - ing Mar - y
 Let par - ents' faith - ful lives un - bind your love that through them
 That moth - er's love and fa - ther's care and chil - dren's joy we



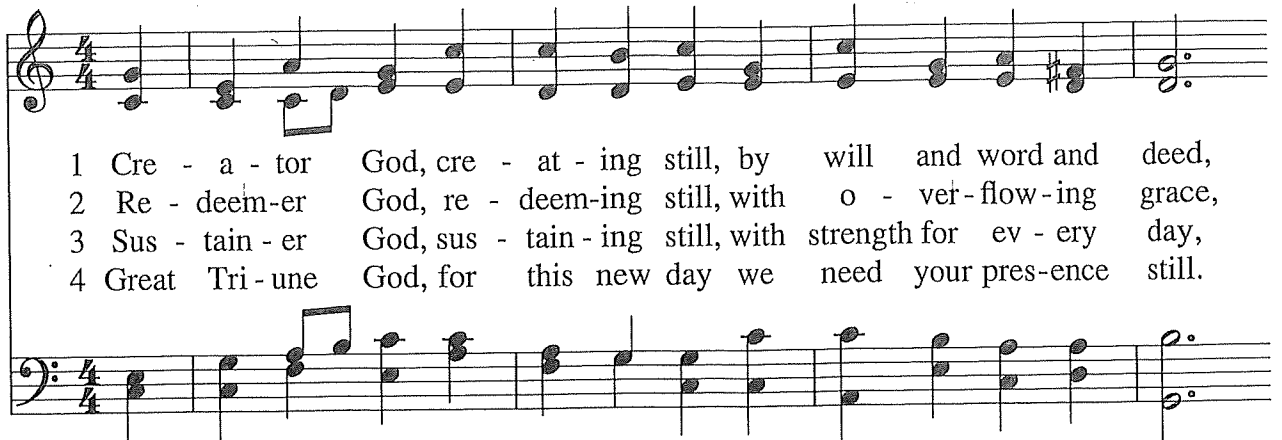
lov - ing arms, and hold us in your lov - ing arms.
 se - crets kept, and sing - ing Mar - y se - crets kept.
 we might find Christ's deep - er love for hu - man - kind.
 all may share, and chil - dren's joy we all may share.

Creator God, Creating Still

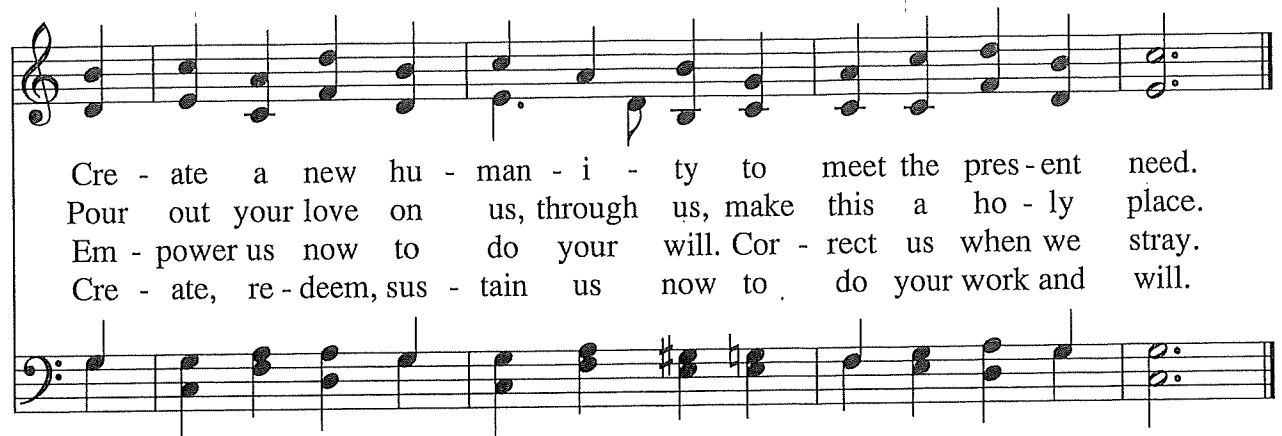
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Jane Parker Huber, 1977; rev. 1993

Rom. 5:1-5



1 Cre - a - tor God, cre - at - ing still, by will and word and deed,
2 Re - deem-er God, re - deem-ing still, with o - ver-flow-ing grace,
3 Sus - tain - er God, sus - tain - ing still, with strength for ev - ery day,
4 Great Tri - une God, for this new day we need your pres-ence still.



Cre - ate a new hu - man - i - ty to meet the pres - ent need.
Pour out your love on us, through us, make this a ho - ly place.
Em - power us now to do your will. Cor - rect us when we stray.
Cre - ate, re - deem, sus - tain us now to do your work and will.

Jane Parker Huber's second hymn was written during a time of particular focus on language. By describing the Triune God in

Tune: ST. ANNE C.M.
William Croft, 1708