Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost **September 27, 2026**
Liturgical Color: Green

Matthew 21:23-32

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd, for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not,' but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same, and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even after you saw it you did not change your minds and believe him.

Slackwood Presbyterian Church
2020 Brunswick Avenue
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

Embracing God. Extending Welcome. Celebrating All.

Artist: Samuel Palmer 1805-1881
Art in the Christian Tradition
Vanderbilt University Divinity Library

September 27, 2026 **10:30 a.m.**

--Order of Worship—

As a consideration to all who seek to worship this morning, please turn off or mute cell phones and other electronic devices.

Bell of Invitation
Welcome & Announcements
The Lighting of the Peace Candle and Centering Prayer

OUR APPROACH TO GOD

Call to Worship

Leader: Listen, people of God!
People: Hear the wonders of our Creator!
Leader: God split the sea;
People: walls of water towered above.
Leader: God guided our ancestors in faith:
People: clouds by day, lightning by night.
Leader: God split open the rock;
People: water flowed like rivers.
Leader: God split open the heavens and met earth.
People: God meets us still.

*Hymn #81 AUSTRIAN HYMN
"Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken"

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession *(In unison)*

God of glory, we want to be fountains of hope for others, but people find only hardened hearts. We want to be transformed people, but our stubborn pride keeps us from bending the knee to you. We long to stand with those who are in need, but our selfishness keeps our backs rigid with judgment. Forgive us, God who came down to us. Humble us, that we might be true servants to the broken and lost. Split open our frozen hearts, that compassion might flow freely to those who are hurting. Fill our minds with the presence of your Spirit, that we might learn how to follow Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, into that kingdom of grace and hope. *(Moment of silent prayer).* **Amen.**

*Assurance of Pardon

*Gloria Patri (#581)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, amen.

HEARING OF THE WORD

Prayer for Illumination
First Scripture Reading - Exodus 17:1-7
The Word of the Lord./**Thanks be to God.**
Anthem "O Lord, Please Hear My Prayer" Moses Hogan
Second Scripture Reading - Matthew 21:23-32
The Word of the Lord./**Thanks be to God**.
Sermon "Authority Issues" The Rev. David Bowman

*Affirmation of Faith ("The Brief Statement of Faith")

We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation. In everlasting love, the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people to bless all families of the earth. Hearing their cry, God delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage. Loving us still, God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant. Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home, God is faithful still.

*Hymn #707 "Take Thou Our Minds, Dear Lord" HALL

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer

O**ur Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and**

forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Call for Offering

Offertory

*Doxology (#606)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God, all creatures here below;
praise God above, ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen

*Prayer of Dedication

*Hymn #757 KINGSFOLD

"Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples"

*Charge and Benediction

*Postlude

DEPART TO SERVE

*Those who are able may stand.

Christ's Ministers in the World: All members of the church
Pastor: The Rev. David Bowman
Director of Music: Dr. Shelley Sanders Zuckerman
Seminary Intern: Madalyn Sailors
Liturgist: Debi Moore

The Peace Candle in the Chancel is lit to remind us of the gift of Christ's peace and our call to be peacemakers.

Pastor Bowman's contact information:
Email: dfbsbv@gmail.com or Telephone: 732.547.3480.

Welcome to all who are worshiping this morning. If you are visiting, we hope you feel very welcome, that you will complete a Visitor Card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate, and that you will stay following the service for refreshments and conversation in fellowship hall.

Announcements

The **Adult Forum** meets on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. via Zoom. The link is in the Saturday announcements email.

Choir rehearsal is on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary.

The **Worship Committee** will meet following worship today.

The **Church Growth Team** will meet on Tuesday, September 29 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom.

The **Bible Study Group** will meet on Thursday, October 1 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. The link is in the Saturday announcements email.

The **Arm in Arm** volunteers from Slackwood Church will meet in the church parking lot at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 3 to carpool together to the Hudson Street facility. Another opportunity for members to volunteer will be on the first Saturday of November.

World Communion Sunday is October 4 with a joint worship service of Slackwood and Grace congregations followed by a covered dish luncheon.

<u>Stop by the table in fellowship hall where there are sign-up sheets to:</u>

provide **refreshments after church** each Sunday.

let the worship committee know you will be attending the World Communion Sunday covered dish luncheon.

sign up to receive the book "Unwavering, Developing Unshakeable Trust in God" to be used in the Adult Forum.

participate in this year's **Trunk or Treat** for children of the community to be held on Saturday, October 17 with a rain date of October 24.

join Truth, Justice & Reconciliation's participation in **Vote Forward**. Everything you will need to encourage people to vote will be supplied, as well as easy to follow directions. If you have any questions, see Bill Mansmann.

Coming Events:

Saturday, October 3 – Volunteering at Arm in Arm

Sunday, October 4 – World Communion Sunday
10:30 a.m. Joint service with Grace Taiwanese Church followed by a covered dish luncheon,

Saturday, October 10 – 11:00 a.m.
Pet Blessing on lawn behind the church parking lot.

Saturday, October 17 – 3:00 p.m.
Trunk or Treat in church parking lot. (Rain date Oct. 24)

Saturday, October 24 – 8:30 a.m.
Outdoor clean-up day. (Rain date Oct. 31)

Those people and places remembered in the morning prayer last week are life of Jimmy Adam, knitting/crocheting group, Mavis & family, Kate & JD, Carrie, Mary, Jac & Kimmie, Marisa, Karlie, Steph, unhoused, unemployed and underemployed, marginalized, those impacted by violence, those impacted by climate change, Margie & Dave, Kristen & family, Dorian & family, Walt & Patty, Earl & Nancy, Poco, Mikey, Brit, Mavis, Jack, Jon, Emma, Tina, Sharon, Mason & family, Beth, Jilly, JD, Scott & Dan, Chuck and MaryJane.

Slackwood's Mission Statement

Slackwood Presbyterian Church is a diverse, caring Christian community guided by scripture, committed to loving God, loving our neighbors as we love ourselves, and sharing Christ's love with all people.

Slackwood's Vision Statement

We envision glorifying and serving God by being an example to each other, the community, and the world through:

- Meaningful Worship
- Faithful Prayer
- Relevant Study
- Joyful Fellowship
- Compassionate Service

We strive to build a safe community that embraces:

- All Ages
- People of color
- The LGBTQIA+ community
- People with disabilities
- Other Marginalized people

Values

Grace – We recognize that God's grace is extended to all, regardless of our shortcomings or differences.
Welcoming – We intentionally create an inviting atmosphere where newcomers feel embraced and valued.
Inclusive – We celebrate diversity and actively seek to include all people in our worship, fellowship, and service. We believe that every person has a place at God's table.
Respect – We strive to listen to one another, value differing perspectives, and honor each person's dignity.

www.slackwoodchurch.org

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