

October 18, 2020

20TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



Children's Sabbath is a program of the Children's Defense Fund, which advocates for justice for children. 2020 Children's Sabbath is observed October 16-18, 2020. Information, policy papers, opportunities for action are offered on the CDF website, along with interfaith liturgical

resources: <http://www.childrensdefense.org/programs/faithbased/faith-based-action-programs-pages/childrens-sabbaths/National-Observance-of-Children-s-Sabbaths.html>

St. John United Church of Christ

10207 Lincoln Trail
Fairview Heights, IL

Telephone 397-6323
SECRETARY – JUDY HARTMANN
Rev. Rosemary Captain
Organist – Sharon Banjavcic

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Glory of God Prayers for the 20th Sunday after Pentecost Children's Sabbath October 18, 2020

Moses longed to see God's glory. All of us share that longing, especially the most vulnerable among us. Let us look into the faces of children who struggle in school, go hungry at night, are denied comprehensive healthcare or fear the violence within their own homes. Let us listen for God speaking to these children as God spoke to Moses so that we might find the way to offer these children a glimpse of God's glory in action for justice, and find God's glory revealed in their faces.

PRELUDE: **"Where Cross the Crowded Ways"**

Roger C. Wilson

*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:

(inspired by Exodus 33:12-23)

How shall we know that we have found favor in your sight, O God?

How do children know that they are created in your image?

How do we raise up youth to always know your presence goes with them?

How do we find this faith within ourselves, O God?

With Moses, we implore, "Show us your glory."

With the children, we seek your graciousness now.

*UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION: *(adapted from [Christian Resources for Children's Sabbath](#))*

**God of forever and right now,
By your Spirit open our ears to hear your
Word to us
in scripture, in sermon, in song.
Open our eyes to see your Word to us
in children's faces,
in troubling statistics,
in our action together.
Open our hearts to feel your Word to us
in the warmth of love,
in the ache of sadness,
in the energy of commitment.
Strengthen our desire for justice for all children,
And our wills to advocate and organize,
So that all children may grow up safe, and thrive in
community. Amen.**

A TIME FOR THE CHILD IN US ALL:

"Jonah and the Whale"

*SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 22:15-22**

(Common English Bible)

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees met together to find a way to trap Jesus in his words. ¹⁶ They sent their disciples,

along with the supporters of Herod, to him.

"Teacher," they said, "we know that you are genuine and that you teach God's way as it really is. We know that you are not swayed by people's opinions, because you don't show favoritism. ¹⁷ So tell us what you think: Does the Law allow people to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" ¹⁸ Knowing their evil motives, Jesus replied, "Why do you test me, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin used to pay the tax." And they brought him a denarion. ²⁰ "Whose image and inscription is this?" he asked.

²¹ "Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God." ²² When they heard this they were astonished, and they departed."



Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: **"Who Do You Vote For?"**

Maybe it's just me, but are any of you tired of the political ads on T.V. right now? One side wants to trick the other into saying something proving where their opponents' loyalties are. What party are you representing and do you believe everything the rest of the party believes? Some ads cut and paste their opponent saying something they



didn't really say, or taking the statement out of context.

I think that's what we have in this scripture lesson today; a political debate. There are two sides vying for your vote. The Pharisees ask Jesus a question which they think is impossible to answer. I'm sure you've heard these kinds of questions. "Do you still beat your dog?"

This is not exactly a political debate, yet this conversation does involve politics. The Pharisees would like Jesus to make a political statement against the Roman government. That way they would have evidence that Jesus is trying to overturn the government. Jesus could be arrested as a political-terrorist. (Remember, there was no democracy in those days. No free speech. No Second Amendment.)

The Pharisees were hoping that Jesus would then be arrested and executed and be out of their hair. The status quo could be maintained with the Pharisees in control.

Our scripture text says it this way; Jesus saw the evil motives of those leading this inquisition. Jesus did not answer their question in the way the temple "police" wanted. Jesus' answer comes back to a question of loyalty. Which side of this debate are you on?

Jesus answers them with an option they had not thought about. Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and give to God what is God's. If you are loyal to Caesar and the Roman government, give your coins

back to Caesar. If you are loyal to God, give back to God some of the blessings God gives you.

With this one simple statement, Jesus speaks volumes! "Whose are you? Who created you? Who created the earth and all the beauty and benefits it contains and doesn't charge you taxes to enjoy it? Who loves you? Who is there when you are in trouble? Who wipes away your tears when you are sad?" Does the Roman government do that or does God?

All of us should review these questions frequently to remind ourselves of where our loyalties lie. The choices might be different; who do you chose, your money or God? Your fancy car and big house or God? Your bank account or God? Your Sunday morning at soccer practices or with God? Your Sunday morning "day off" in bed with coffee and the newspaper or in worship with other followers of God? Do you spend your time at the Country Club or with your children?

We have lots of choices in our lives today, and lots of candidates fighting for our attention and money. Yet one choice will be the most satisfactory in your life today and every day? Notice my original question. "Who do you vote for?" It's a constant decision, not just once every 4 years.

Choose well and vote every day for God. Don't worry. That's always perfectly legal. Amen.



SPECIAL MUSIC:

“O How I Love Jesus”



BLESS THE CHILDREN:

(inspired by 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10)

Even as we experience the assurance of God’s love and mercy, we must still struggle with the justice issues facing our children. In some of our churches in the United Church of Christ, children living in poverty and in violence are unknown to the church family. While these children remain in our prayers, we cannot see their faces in our regular gatherings for worship. Most of our congregations in the United Church of Christ do have children – whom we love and adore. On this particular Sunday, bless the children that you can see, and invite, imaginatively, children whom you cannot see, but who still need the blessing of our commitment to justice for them.

Please join me in prayer.

Grace and peace to you, our children.

We will always give thanks for you.

We pray for you constantly because we love you.

We love you just as God loves you.

**We know, children of God,
that God loves you so much.**

There are no words to express it.

There are no wonders we can perform.

But we know that the power of God is in you.

We can see it upon your faces.

You remind us of God’s love.

Teach us to see the world as you do.

Surprise us with the wonders you see.

Show us what gifts God has given you.

And we will bless you, and protect you, and

We will always give thanks for you.

We will bless you in the name of our God.

We will bless you again and again.

Grace and peace to you, our children.

**Grace and peace to you who show us God’s glory
shining through your faces.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER:

Our 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.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR GIFTS:

God looks upon your face.

God assures you when nothing else can.

“My presence will go with you”, God says.

“I will give you rest”, God prays.

Let us carry this spirit into our giving.

Let us praise God with our gifts of tithes and offerings.

DOXOLOGY: (music only)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

(adapted from [Christian Resources for Children's Sabbath](#))

O God, help us to recover our hope for our children's sake. Help us to recover our courage for our children's sake. Help us to recover our discipline for our children's sake. Help us to recover our ability to work together for our children's sake. Help us to recover our values for our children's sake. Help us to recover our faith in you for our children's sake. Amen.

BENEDICTION (*inspired by Exodus 33:12-23*)

Growing God, we have known your presence.
We have lived in your love. Show us your glory.
Reveal your glory in us.
We will carry your glory from here.
We will show it to all your children. Amen.

POSTUDE: **"God Be With You Till We Meet Again"**

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Liturgy Designed by the Rev. Elsa A. Cook

PRAYER LIST: Rich Schmitt, Nelson Libell, Dave Seneczyn, Eric White, Lori Riess, Charles Chamberlin, Donna Isselhard, Mitch Nallie, Candy Peace, Greg Talley, Carol Meyer, Leah Williams, Pat Holtgrave, Jane Riess, Shari Hamilton, Charlotte Watson, Becky Ballard, Robert Iverson Sr.

(If you know of someone's name which can be removed from this list, please let the secretary know.)