

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

July 4, 2021



Working Together for the greater good

St. John United Church of Christ
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Fairview Heights, IL 62208
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Secretary – Judy Hartman
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Prayers and Liturgy by Rev. T. Shuman
Organist – Sharon Banjavcic

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48;
2 Corinthians 12:2-10; Mark 6:1-13

IT IS COMMUNION SUNDAY.

HAVE YOUR ELEMENTS READY TO BE
BLESSED.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRELUDE: “Hymn for Our Country” John M. Rasley

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

You awaken the sun, O God,
to guide us into the new day:

**Your name, O God, like your praise,
sings in every person.**

You speak your Word, O God,
to guide us into your kingdom:

**Your hope, O God, like your joy,
echoes in every soul.**

You guide us to those who are
looking for you:

**Your love, O God, like your name,
fills the emptiness of every heart.**

***OPENING HYMN: NCH 459**

“Come Thou Font of Every Blessing”

CALL TO RECONCILIATION:

When we look at the relationships we hope to have with one another, and with God, we must admit how broken we are. But, as we gather in the presence of God, we are promised forgiveness and healing, if we will confess our sins. Please join me, as we pray to the One who never ceases to love us,

and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

GOSPEL: Mark 6:1-13

Jesus left that place and came to his hometown. His disciples followed him. ² On the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were surprised. “Where did this man get all this? What’s this wisdom he’s been given? What about the powerful acts accomplished through him? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t he Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” They were repulsed by him and fell into sin.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “Prophets are honored everywhere except in their own hometowns, among their relatives, and in their own households.” ⁵ He was unable to do any miracles there, except that he placed his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ He was appalled by their disbelief.

Then Jesus traveled through the surrounding villages teaching.

⁷ He called for the Twelve and sent them out in pairs. He gave them authority over unclean spirits. ⁸ He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a walking stick—no bread, no bags, and no money in their belts. ⁹ He told them to wear sandals but not to put on two shirts. ¹⁰ He said, “Whatever house you enter, remain there until you leave that place. ¹¹ If a place doesn’t

UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS:

You know how stubborn we can be, Holy God. You call us to serve others, and we stay in the coolness of our own homes. You would send us to where the hopeless live, but we are reluctant to leave the comfort of our complacency. You would feed us on the peace and joy of your word, but we pull our chairs up to the tables of those who serve false promises.

Forgive us, Guiding God. Transform our defiance into discipleship, and our rejection of others into the resurrection of welcoming all people as sisters and brothers in Christ. Help us to love as faithfully as you have always loved us, and send us forth to take the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone we meet.

Silence is kept

ASSURANCE OF PARDON:

We open our lips and confess our hearts. God hears our words and make us new, sending us out to bring hope and joy to all the world.

We hear the good news, we believe the good news, we will live out the good news. Thanks be to God. Amen!

GLORIA PATRI:

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now,

welcome you or listen to you, as you leave, shake the dust off your feet as a witness against them.”¹² So they went out and proclaimed that people should change their hearts and lives.¹³ They cast out many demons, and they anointed many sick people with olive oil and healed them.

These are the Ancient Words given to us so that we may hear them anew.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: “Trusting God When We Don’t Know Where We’re Going”

If you were going on a journey and could take only one person with you, who would you chose and why? I suppose it might depend on where you are going and what you will do when you get there? Jesus didn’t exactly tell the disciples any details of the trip he is sending them on.

If we were going on a journey, what would we take along? You and I would probably prepare for every emergency that might happen. We might get the car checked out, be sure our GPS is working, take a first aid kit, be sure we had our medical insurance cards, have phone numbers for our doctors, dentists, relatives, etc. We would take a suitcase with plenty of clean clothes to wear on any occasion. We would have a bag with our personal hygiene products such as tooth paste and a tooth brush. And don’t forget plenty of money and credit

cards. We might take a cooler of water and plenty of snacks, and the list goes on and on.

Jesus was not that careful. He told them no bread, no bags, no money. A walking stick, sandals, and one shirt was it. (A walking stick?? You mean we can’t take the car or an RV with air conditioning and a shower? I would not last 3 days!!) How did those disciples survive?

It might help us understand this text a little better if we have in our minds a picture of what a Jew in Palestine in the time of Jesus ordinarily wore. There were five articles of dress. First of all an innermost garment was the tunic. It was simply a long piece of cloth folded over and sewn down one side. It was long enough to reach almost to the feet. Holes were cut in the top corners for the arms, and a hole for the head.

The outer garment was called a himation. It was used as a cloak by day and as a blanket by night. There was also the girdle. It was worn over the two garments we mentioned. The skirts of the tunic could be hitched up under the girdle for work or for running.

The head-dress was a piece of cotton or linen about a yard square. It could be white, or blue, or black. It was folded diagonally and then placed on the head so that it protected the back of the neck, the cheekbones and the eyes from the heat and glare of the sun. It was held in place by a circlet of easily stretched, semi-elastic wool around the head.

The sandals were merely flat soles of leather, wood or matted grass. The soles had thongs at the edges through

which a strap passed to hold the sandal on to the foot. (What? No arch supports?)

The disciples were also instructed to not take a wallet or any copper coins. They must not be like the grasping priests. They must go about giving and not receiving.

Jesus meant that his disciples must take no supplies for the road, but trust God for everything. The disciples should share the message of Jesus and not be paid for their message.

The disciples assumed that whoever they visited would provide hospitality for them. Hospitality was a sacred duty in the middle east. When a stranger entered a village, it was NOT his duty to search for hospitality. It was the duty of the village to offer it. Jesus told his disciples that if hospitality was refused, and if doors and ears were shut, they must shake off the dust off from their feet when they left. The Rabbinic law said that the dust of a Gentile country was defiled, and that when a man entered Palestine from another country he must shake off every particle of dust of the unclean land. It was a picture of formal denial that a Jew could have any fellowship even with the dust of a heathen land.

From our list of what we would take, it doesn't look like we trusted anybody to help us our if an emergency happened, let alone trust God.

This journey the disciples were taking was what we might call "a mystery destination." It certainly wasn't a cruise to Bermuda. Would you ever go on a mystery journey? You might wonder if you would survive?

Sometimes I think we today are too practical. We don't want any surprises. We want to trust in our own judgment and our own wits to make it through life.

This scripture text is telling us something else, indeed. TRUST GOD!! TRUST GOD!! AMEN.

MUSIC: "God Bless America" Collinsville Chorale

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Beginning with a time for silent personal prayer

The rumbling of thunder in the distance,
the shade of an oak tree in the back yard,
the laughter of children splashing in the pool,
the stars glittering on a moonless night:
all the gifts of the universe fill us with delight in every moment. Great is your imagination, Creation's Joy!

Broken, you touch us to make us whole;
tear-stained, you share our pain and struggles;
giver of peace, you replace our bitterness with hope;
teacher of gentle words, you transform our unbelief into service. Great is your love, Christ, Companion of all people!

Making hardened hearts as soft as a baby's breath;
turning stiffened necks so we can see the poor;
placing wandering feet back on the path of discipleship. Great is your compassion, Spirit of grace.

Holy One, we recognize all these gifts you have given us and we are grateful. We are also grateful for your

presence in the lives of those on our prayer list, including those affected by the building collapse in Florida; the anxiety and grief of the families whose loved ones are lost is palpable. Holy Spirit, bring calm and peace to them in this chaotic time.

You send us out to care for each other, whether we know them or not. Our hands and feet are yours to do your work in this world. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to be of service. Let us prayer together as one people . . .

THE LORD’S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed it be your 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.

THREE-FOLD AMEN: Amen, Amen, Amen.

INVITATION TO GIVE:

Our forefathers who signed the Declaration of Independence were also on a mystery destination. They had no idea what would happen when the King of England read this document. Many patriots lost their homes, their families, and their lives for something they believed in – to make this country free for all of us. Are there still some Americans who are not free?

God calls us to compassion and generosity, let us listen and respond with open hearts.

OFFERTORY: “Song of Peace” Jean Sibelius

***DOXOLOGY:**

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

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

As we have heard, so we have seen God's compassion in our lives. As we have seen, so we will live, offering our gifts to God, so others might know God's steadfast love is present with them in every moment. Amen.

**GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:
HOLY COMMUNION:**

*May the God of steadfast love be with you.

And also with you.

People of God, offer your hearts to God.

**We open our hearts to the One
who fills them with grace.**

Children of God, sing your praises to the One who has gathered us here.

Our songs of joy travel to the very ends of creation.

It was you, Imaginative God, who whispered and the rumble of creation shook the rafters of chaos.

Mighty trees graced valleys with shade,
stars glittered in moonless nights,
children splashed in the pools of hope.
Every delight was crafted so we might know
of that love which would last forever.
When we could not have our way,
we took offense at your hopes for us,
throwing tantrums as we took flight
to follow sin and death through the world.
Amazed at our crafty rebellion,
you continued to love us,
longing to shelter us in your heart.
When we continued to dishonor your prophets,
when we would not welcome their words,
you sent Jesus to become that weakness
strong enough to destroy sin and death.

So, we join our voices with all
who have wondered at your steadfast love,
proclaiming your name to the edges of the universe:

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of enduring love.
All the gifts of creation delight in you.
Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is the One whose weakness is our hope.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Holy are you, God of all goodness and truth,

and blessed is Jesus, your Child, our Savior.
It was he who came,
bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh,
with words which could transform our foolishness,
with weakness which could strengthen
our fatigued faithfulness,
with wisdom which could teach us
the way of life in all its fullness.
Yet, we were offended by
his life, his ways, his humility.
He continued to listen to you,
going wherever you sent him -
no glory, no wealth, no honor -
even to that place called Calvary
where sin's thorns crowned him.
Your grace was enough for him,
even in the cold shadows of the tomb,
and he walked forth into your steadfast love,
leaving death behind in the dust.

As we remember his calling us to follow,
as we seek to be sent forth to serve,
we proclaim that mystery we call faith:

**Christ came, to shape our lives like his;
Christ came, to be our Guide forever;
Christ will come again, to gather us in glory.**

So now, in this place

where we have heard your promises,
among these people
in whom we have seen the Christ,
pour your Spirit upon the gifts of your Table.
The broken Bread of life
is all we need of hope for
filled, we can go forth
to anoint the lost and hopeless
with the oil of your compassion.
Your Cup of grace overflows,
more than we will ever need,
and more than enough to bring healing
to those who have known only
hardship, rejection, and loneliness.

And when at the end of all time,
we discover that it was you who
had led us all along the way
and brought us to the Table in glory,
we will join our voices as one,
singing our praise to you,

SHARING THE ELEMENTS:

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have
refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of
Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one

another, and send us forth into the world in courage and
peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies"**

NCH 594

***RESPONSIVE BLESSING AND SENDING:**

We will go to let the Joy of creation lead us into this new
day.

We will sing glad choruses of hope to a world in despair.

We go to walk with our Heart's Love beside those whose
hearts are broken.

**We will touch boastful tongues with peace,
we will offer compassion to those frozen with fear.**

We will go with your gentle wisdom, Spirit of grace,
to walk the streets of the kingdom.

**We will bring healing to grudges held far too long,
filling those who grieve with the laughter of hope.**

PRAYER LIST: Urban Baum, Donna Isselhard, Nelson
Libell, Joe Knapp, Jim Garrett, Agnes Doctolero, Julie
Walker, David Seneczyn, Cathy Ganschinietz, Rosemary
Williams, Warren Neff, Baby Hannah Mosco, Jack Harris.