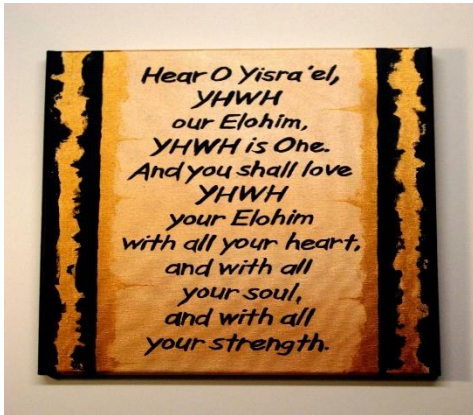


**October 31, 2021 -  
10:00 am  
23st Sunday after  
Pentecost**



**Pray the Shema**

**St. John United Church of Christ  
10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights, IL  
397-6323  
Rev. Rosemary Captain**

\*Please stand if comfortably able  
and respond with words in **bold** print  
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**\*RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP: Psalm 146 1-10**  
Praise the Lord! Let my whole being praise the Lord!  
I will praise the Lord with all my life;  
I will sing praises to my God as long as I live.  
Don't trust leaders; don't trust any human beings –  
There's no saving help with them!  
Their breath leaves them,  
then they go back to the ground.  
On that very same day, their plans die too.  
The person whose help is the God of Jacob –  
The person whose hope rests on the Lord their God–  
is truly happy!  
God the maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and all  
that is in them.  
God: who is faithful forever, who gives justice to  
people who are oppressed,  
who gives bread to people who are starving!  
The Lord: who frees prisoners.  
The Lord: who makes the blind to see.  
The Lord: who straightens up those who are bent  
low.

The Lord: who loves righteous.  
The Lord: who protects immigrants, who helps  
orphans and widows,  
but who makes the way of the wicked twist and turn!  
The Lord will rule forever! Zion, your God will rule  
from one generation to the next!  
Praise the Lord!

**\*PRAYER OF INVOCATION:**

Reigning God, we have viewed the work of your  
hands. We worship a God who is living and active.  
We give thanks that you call us to join the action, to  
love you and one another more than the rituals of our  
religion or the satisfaction of our successes. Focus us  
now on all that is worthy of our praise. Amen

**EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 9:11-14**

*(The description of Jesus as better than a high priest  
continues.)*

<sup>11</sup> But Christ has appeared as the high priest of the  
good things that have happened. He passed through  
the greater and more perfect meeting tent, which  
isn't made by human hands (that is, it's not a part of  
this world). <sup>12</sup> He entered the holy of holies once for  
all by his own blood, not by the blood of goats or  
calves, securing our deliverance for all time. <sup>13</sup> If the  
blood of goats and bulls and the sprinkled ashes of

cows made spiritually contaminated people holy and  
clean, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Jesus wash  
our consciences clean from dead works in order to  
serve the living God? He offered himself to God  
through the eternal Spirit as a sacrifice without any  
flaw.

**\*READING OF THE GOSPEL LESSON:**

**Mark 12:28-34**

<sup>28</sup> One of the legal experts heard their dispute and  
saw how well Jesus answered them. He came over  
and asked him, "Which commandment is the most  
important of all?"

<sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, "The most important one is Israel,  
listen! Our God is the one Lord, <sup>30</sup> and you must love  
the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your  
being, with all your mind, and with all your  
strength. <sup>31</sup> The second is this, You will love your  
neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is  
greater than these."

<sup>32</sup> The legal expert said to him, "Well said, Teacher.  
You have truthfully said that God is one and there is  
no other besides him. <sup>33</sup> And to love God with all of  
the heart, a full understanding, and all of one's  
strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself is

much more important than all kinds of entirely burned offerings and sacrifices.”

<sup>34</sup> When Jesus saw that he had answered with wisdom, he said to him, “You aren’t far from God’s kingdom.” After that, no one dared to ask him any more question.

These are God’s words revealed to us today.

**Thanks be to God. Amen**

**MESSAGE: “Practices of Faith”**

No love was lost between the expert in the law and the Sadducees. The profession of the scribes was to interpret the law in all its many rules and regulations. Their trade was to know and to apply the oral law, while the Sadducees did not accept the oral law at all.

This scribe came to Jesus with a question which was often a matter of debate in the Rabbinic schools. In Judaism there was a kind of double tendency. There was the tendency to expand the law limitlessly into hundreds and thousands of rules and regulations, none of which anyone could obey. But there was also the tendency to try to gather up the law into one sentence, one general statement which would be a compilation of its whole message; easier to

understand and easier to obey. Sort of like a 2-minute elevator speech.

The expert who asked Jesus this question was asking about something which was a living issue in Jewish thought and discussion. For an answer Jesus took two great commandments and put them together.

- (1) “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.” That single sentence is the real creed of Judaism (Deuteronomy 6:4). It had three uses. It is called *the Shema*.
- (2) It was the sentence with which the service of the synagogue always began and still begins. The full Shema is Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Numbers 15:37-41. It is the declaration that God is the only God, the foundation of Jewish monotheism.
- (3) The three passages of the Shema were contained in the *phylacteries*, little boxes which devote Jews wore on their foreheads and on their wrists when they were at prayer. As they prayed they reminded themselves of their creed.
- (4) The Shema was contained in a little cylindrical box call the *Mezuzah*, which was and still is affixed to the door of every Jewish house to

remind Jewish families of God as they went out and as they came in.

When Jesus quoted this sentence as the first commandment, every devout Jew would agree with him. Jesus added “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” from Leviticus 19:18. This sentence originally meant your Jewish neighbors. But Jesus quoted it without qualifications and without limiting boundaries. He took an old law and filled it with new meaning. The scribe willingly accepted this, and went on to say that such a love was better than all sacrifices.

*I mentioning all of this information to give you a better understanding of Jewish customs and a better understanding of Jesus. Jesus adds that it is always easy to let ritual take the place of love.*

*Declaring that they worship only one God was a way to show their religion to the world who worshipped many Gods. Others could tell who the Jews were and weren't.*

*We have often song “they will know we are Christians by our love.” Are there any other ways others can tell we are Christians?*

Amen.

**PASTORAL PRAYER:** Beginning with a time for silent personal prayer.

Our one and only God, we worship you because of your power and your compassion. Your love is mighty and you want us to never forget this love. As we follow that love and show it to our neighbors, help us when we stumble. Help us when we judge others. Help us when we decide who is worthy of our love. Help us love all your people unconditionally.

One way we can demonstrate this love is by praying for those on our prayer list and helping them in anyway we can. We can send a card, make a phone call, often to shop for them, take over a casserole. Being a Christian is not just about going to church, it's about love for God and for others.

We pray all these things in the name of your Son . .

**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.

**INVITATION TO SHARE:** Thank you for continuing your gifts to our church.

**\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION:**

Receive from us, O God, the best we have to give. All we have comes from you. We return a portion with joy to accomplish the work we intend to do together in your name. We bring ourselves as well, to be blessed by you, so that while we are apart our words and deeds will continue to be a significant offering. May our lives praise you! Amen.

**BENEDICTION:** Go forth in love to serve your God and others. Amen.

Don't forget the time change November 7.

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**Shema Israel - Escucha Israel**

Intro: //Gm Cm D Cm D Gm//

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm Cm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm Bb D Gm B  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

//Gm Cm D Cm D Gm//

Gm F Cm D  
Shema Israel, Shema Israel, Shema Israel-el

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

F Bb F Gm D Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu Ha—Shem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

Gm Bb Dm Gm F Cm Gm  
Shema Israel HaShem Eloheinu HaShem Ejad

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