

**The Ninth Sunday  
after Pentecost  
August 7, 2022  
*"Treasures in Heaven"***



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

Rev. Rosemary Captain

Organist - Sharon Banjavcic  
Liturgy - Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay  
Communion liturgy - Rev. Thom Shuman

\*Please stand if comfortably able  
and respond with words in **bold** print  
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**\*CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Creator resides in the midst of creation...calling us to this community.

**Our world waits for the Holy One, our help and shield.**

God our Righteousness gazes upon the beloved with delight and concern.

**Our bodies wait for the Holy One, our help and shield.**

The Spirit of the Living God greets us with fresh winds and new mercies.

**Our souls wait for the Holy One, our help and shield.**

**\*INVOCATION:**

Abundant God, we wait for you with longing, hope, and anticipation. May your kingdom be realized in this community. May your people be your ambassadors. May your love be our propeller in the world and our beacon to direct us home. Fill us with the bread of life and nourish our spirits to be your good news in the world. Amen.

**\*CALL TO RECONCILIATION:**

We would like to keep our sins hidden and our

failures a secret. But God would not have us keep silent, but speak our confessions out loud, so we may be blessed with God's mercy and grace. I invite you to pray with me, saying,

**\*UNISON PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS:**

**You have a vision of all people as your beloved children, Imaginative God, but we see folks whose language, dress, and skin make them different. You have a vision of a universe filled with goodness and beauty, and we damage it with litter, with violence, with poor choices. You have a vision of a Table where we can feast on your grace and hope, but we line up at the fast food counters of sin and greed.**

**Forgive us, Visionary of Mercy, as we confess that we are not "insiders" but immigrants searching for our true home. By faith, may we be willing to be as gracious, as compassionate, and as hopeful as you are. You love us enough to want us to be with you forever, so may we take the hand of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who leads us into your kingdom.**

*Silence is kept*

**\*ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

There is nothing to fear. God's hope is more tenacious than our despair; God's joy is more

resilient than our grief; God's love is more compelling than our hate.

**By grace, we are gathered to God. By faith, we rest in God's promises of forgiveness and restoration. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

**\*GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator,  
and the Christ and the Spirit so near.  
As it was from the start so it shall be forever,  
One God always here.**

(Repeat two more times.)

(end) **One God always here. One God always here.**

**FIRST TESTAMENT SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20**

The vision about Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah, Amoz's son, saw in the days of Judah's kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

**Hands filled with bloodshed**

<sup>10</sup> Hear the LORD's word, you leaders of Sodom.

Listen to our God's teaching, people of Gomorrah!

<sup>11</sup> What should I think about all your sacrifices?

says the LORD. I'm fed up with entirely burned offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts.

I don't want the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats.

<sup>12</sup> When you come to appear before me,  
who asked this from you,

this trampling of my temple's courts?

<sup>13</sup> Stop bringing worthless offerings. Your incense repulses me. New moon, sabbath, and the calling of an assembly— I can't stand wickedness with celebration!

<sup>14</sup> I hate your new moons and your festivals.

They've become a burden that I'm tired of bearing.

<sup>15</sup> When you extend your hands, I'll hide my eyes from you. Even when you pray for a long time,

I won't listen. Your hands are stained with blood.

<sup>16</sup> Wash! Be clean! Remove your ugly deeds from my sight. Put an end to such evil; <sup>17</sup> learn to do good. Seek justice: help the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow.

<sup>18</sup> Come now, and let's settle this, says the LORD. Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow. If they are red as crimson, they will become like wool.

<sup>19</sup> If you agree and obey, you will eat the best food of the land. <sup>20</sup> But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. The LORD has said this.

**RESPONSORIAL READING OF PSALM: Psalm 50:1-8  
in back of hymnal, page 656 first 8 verses**

**EPISTLE LESSON: Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16**

**The Words of Paul from an interpreter**

**Description of faith**

**11** Faith is the reality of what we hope for, the proof of what we don't see. <sup>2</sup> The elders in the past were approved because they showed faith.

**Acts of faith by God's people**

<sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the universe has been created by a word from God so that the visible came into existence from the invisible.

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out without knowing where he was going.

<sup>9</sup> By faith he lived in the land he had been promised as a stranger. He lived in tents along with Isaac and Jacob, who were coheirs of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> He was looking forward to a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

<sup>11</sup> By faith even Sarah received the ability to have a child, though she herself was barren and past the age for having children, because she believed that the one who promised was faithful. <sup>12</sup> So descendants were born from one man (and he was as good as dead). They were as many as the number of the stars in the sky and as countless as the grains of sand on the seashore. <sup>13</sup> All these people died in faith without receiving the promises, but they saw the promises from a distance and welcomed them. They confessed that they were strangers and immigrants on

earth. <sup>14</sup> People who say this kind of thing make it clear that they are looking for a homeland. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking about the country that they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return to it. <sup>16</sup> But at this point in time, they are longing for a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God isn't ashamed to be called their God—he has prepared a city for them.

**\*GOSPEL LESSON: Luke 12:32-40**

<sup>32</sup> “Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights in giving you the kingdom. <sup>33</sup> Sell your possessions and give to those in need. Make for yourselves wallets that don't wear out—a treasure in heaven that never runs out. No thief comes near there, and no moth destroys. <sup>34</sup> Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.

**Warning about being prepared**

<sup>35</sup> “Be dressed for service and keep your lamps lit. <sup>36</sup> Be like people waiting for their master to come home from a wedding celebration, who can immediately open the door for him when he arrives and knocks on the door. <sup>37</sup> Happy are those servants whom the master finds waiting up when he arrives. I assure you that, when he arrives, he will dress himself to serve, seat them at the table as honored guests, and wait on them. <sup>38</sup> Happy are those whom

he finds alert, even if he comes at midnight or just before dawn.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>39</sup> But know this, if the homeowner had known what time the thief was coming, he wouldn't have allowed his home to be broken into. <sup>40</sup> You also must be ready, because the Human One is coming at a time when you don't expect him.”

**MESSAGE: “Priorities”**

In my opinion, one of the hardest things to do as a Christian is to set priorities. It all comes down to what we think is important as opposed to what God thinks is important.

Let's just look at our Gospel lesson again. “Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights in giving you the kingdom.” Nice very nice, God, but there may be something else that I would like better; such as money, a big house with many servants to help, a swimming pool, a personal chef. Of course, that would lead to a very lazy me. My mother always said that laziness is a sin, as she forced me to clean my room. Somehow receiving the kingdom sounded better than cleaning my room. My priorities did not include receiving the kingdom.

“Sell your possessions and give to those in need.” But I really like my car.

“Make for yourselves wallets that don't wear out ”  
*(I guess that's because we supposed to keep them*

*empty.*) But I think God is comparing our wallets to “a treasure in heaven that never runs out.”

“No thief comes near there, and no moth destroys.” It would be futile for a thief to go into a house that has nothing of value.

And then comes the kicker, “Where your treasure is, there your hearts will be too.” It takes a lot of time to polish my car, clean the pool, pay the taxes on the big house set up a security system. . . Time that is lost instead of taking food to the food pantry, calling a friend who is lonely, going to church, spending time with God in prayer.

Priorities. That’s a very difficult thing to do. We all were born into a world that is full of priorities calling us. Which priorities should come first?

God wants to give us the kingdom. A place where no anxieties about priorities exists. No thieves exist. No moths to eat our clothes exists.

Where on your list of priorities does the kingdom exist?

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

O God, you have taught us how good it is to follow the promptings of your Spirit and how bitter is the grief of failing to know and do what is good. Forgive our failures and renew our resolve to be obedient to

you call to serve you in all the activities of our life. Help us make priorities in an order that pleases you.

Bless all who confer in the cause of peace, that bogus smiles and posturing may give way to genuine dialogue and agreements be reached that will bring an end to conflict and bloodshed.

Be with all who till the soil and reap the harvest for the rest of us. Protect miners, mariners, flyers, and all who work in hazardous occupations to meet our common needs.

Compassionate Christ heal those who are sick in body or mind, especially those on our prayer list and those known and dear to us who look to you for healing and help.

We pray all these things in the name of the one who taught us to pray . . .

#### **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.**

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:**

Luke 12:34 informs us, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Let our hearts direct the use of our resources, our time, and our talents. May our generosity meet God's abundance in attending to the needs and hopes of our community.

**\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING:**

**Generous One, receive the gifts we bring as we return a portion of your treasure to the use of your kingdom. May your will be manifested and your creation restored through sharing these offerings. Amen.**

**\*HOLY COMMUNION:**

**Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

May God be with you.

**And also with you.**

Open your hearts to God, followers of Jesus.

**We open them, so the Light of Love shines through us.**

People of God, give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is our greatest joy and honor to offer thanksgiving to God.**

You called the heavens and the earth out of the deep emptiness of chaos: soft breezes caressing our

cheeks, songbirds caroling your glory, children tap dancing through mud puddles - all that we see, hear, and feel have sprung from your imagination, Creating God.

All that you thought, dreamed, and wondered was shaped for us that we might live with you in peace and hope. But we wondered what we would do with your glory and power; we dreamed of being divine and thought we were your equal.

So we reached out for wealth and power, those false idols who enticed us even as they ensnared us with their lies.

You sent the prophets to remind us of your vision for us, and to assure us of your hope for us. But we took no delight in their words.

Then, your Word took on flesh and came to us as Jesus the Christ, to summon us out of the empty lives we had created for ourselves.

Therefore, we gather with your faithful ones, in this time and in this place, joining our voices with the heavenly choirs who speak of your justice and grace:

**Holy, holy, holy are you, God the Creator!**

**The mountains sing your praises,  
the valleys echo your glory.**

**We welcome the One who comes in your name,  
who comes to call us to life.**

Holy are you, God of infinite imagination, and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son, our Hope, our Lord and Savior.

He should have been clothed in royal robes of purple and gold, but put on the uniform of a condemned prisoner, so we could be clothed in your grace.

He should have been given every honor the world has, but was cursed so we might receive your blessings.

He should have had a long and healthy life, but was put to death at an early age, so we might live forever with you.

Remembering that is not our words which save us, but your imaginative Word of beauty and love; remembering that it is not our achievements, but our hope in Jesus Christ which assures us of your love, we celebrate that mystery we call faith:

**Lord Jesus, you call us: open our eyes that we may see you, open our souls that we may long for your presence, open our hearts so we may follow you.**

God of Gentleness: pour out your Spirit of grace and peace upon these, your simple gifts, which become the Bread of Heaven and the Cup of Salvation for us.

As we taste the goodness of Christ, and let his brokenness heal us, may our eyes be opened

to the oppression and injustices the world would keep us from seeing.

As the rich wine of hope and joy refreshes our hearts and souls, may we be ready

to share all we have been given,

to speak up for the voiceless,

to gather the lost into our family.

And when all time has stopped moving and all the faithful have been gathered, when we sit down at the feast prepared for all, we will join hands to sing the eternal anthem of your vision of hope and peace for all creation, proclaiming forever and ever your glory. Amen.

#### **SHARING THE ELEMENTS:**

##### **\*UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:**

**We give thanks almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus 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; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

##### **\*BENEDICTION:**

Live in the abundance of God's treasure, spreading

the love and peace of Christ in the world to the glory of God. Amen.

**\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE:** word in the bulletin  
**“Let There Be Peace on Earth”**

**\*POSTLUDE: “Postlude in C”** George Blake

**PRAYER LIST:** Urban Baum, David Seneczyn, Warren Neff, Carol White, Cheri Schutzenhofer, Theo Mally, Jane Riess, Betty Massey, Gary Whitkas, Sandy Fort, Ingrid Alexiou, Becky Ballard, Peggy and her family (friends of Judy Schmitt)