

JUNE 23, 2024 10 AM
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



**ST. JOHN UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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*Please stand if comfortably able.
Respond with words in bold print.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

PRELUDE: “Eternal Father, Strong to Save” Mark Hayes

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Emmaus Homes and Ministries

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(adapted from Psalm 133)

Leader: How very good and pleasant it is when the beloved community live together in unity!

People: It is like the precious oil on our heads which anoints our worship and praise.

It is like a soft mist, which falls on the mountains of the earth.

For there God has ordained the blessing, life forevermore.

***INVOCATION:**

Dear precious God, be upon us this day in our worship and praise. Strengthen our faith in the teachings of Christ and may the Holy Spirit be our guide as we pray and discern our gathering as your church to be the disciples of God’s realm in the world today. We pray this in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 475 “God’s Eye is on the Sparrow”**

***PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

As we gather in worship, let us take this moment to

consider our needs for transformation and forgiveness. I invite you to quietly reflect on our need for grace.

People: Dear God, the creator of all things based on love. You created us in your image of love and there have been times we have fallen short of that love, not only to you but to each other and all of creation. I ask for your forgiveness and from you, present today, my siblings, sisters and brothers in Christ. I thank you for the comforting strength and compassion of the Holy Spirit to do better in bringing love and grace and all I do. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

“Just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture— “I believed, and so I spoke”— we also believe, and therefore we also speak” in the affirming knowledge that when we turn to God with our shortcomings, we are renewed in God’s Love by the grace of Christ. 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 twice) (end) One God always here. One God always here.**

**SCRIPTURE LESSON:1 Samuel 17:1a, 4-11, 19-23, 32-49
David defeats Goliath**

17 The Philistines assembled their troops for war at Socoh of Judah. They camped near by.

⁴A champion named Goliath from Gath came out from the Philistine camp. He was more than nine feet tall. ⁵He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore bronze scale-armor weighing one hundred twenty-five pounds. ⁶He had bronze plates on his shins, and a bronze scimitar hung on his back. ⁷His spear shaft was as strong as the bar on a weaver’s loom, and its iron head weighed fifteen pounds. His shield-bearer walked in front of him.

⁸He stopped and shouted to the Israelite troops, “Why have you come and taken up battle formations? I am the Philistine champion, and you are Saul’s servants. Isn’t that right? Select one of your men, and let him come down against me. ⁹If he is able to fight me and kill me, then we will become your slaves, but if I overcome him and kill him, then you will become our slaves and you will serve us. ¹⁰I insult Israel’s troops today!” The Philistine continued, “Give me an opponent, and we’ll fight!” ¹¹When Saul and all Israel heard what the Philistine said, they were distressed and terrified.

¹⁹They are with Saul and all the Israelite troops fighting the Philistines in the Elah Valley.”

²⁰So David got up early in the morning, left someone in charge of the flock, and loaded up and left, just as his father Jesse had instructed him. He reached the camp

right when the army was taking up their battle formations and shouting the war cry. ²¹ Israel and the Philistines took up their battle formations opposite each other. ²² David left his things with an attendant and ran to the front line. When he arrived, he asked how his brothers were doing. ²³ Right when David was speaking with them, Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, came forward from the Philistine ranks and said the same things he had said before. David listened.

³² “Don’t let anyone lose courage because of this Philistine!” David told Saul. “I, your servant, will go out and fight him!”

³³ “You can’t go out and fight this Philistine,” Saul answered David. “You are still a boy. But he’s been a warrior since he was a boy!”

³⁴ “Your servant has kept his father’s sheep,” David replied to Saul, “and if ever a lion or a bear came and carried off one of the flock, ³⁵ I would go after it, strike it, and rescue the animal from its mouth. If it turned on me, I would grab it at its jaw, strike it, and kill it. ³⁶ Your servant has fought both lions and bears. This uncircumcised Philistine will be just like one of them because he has insulted the army of the living God.

³⁷ “The LORD,” David added, “who rescued me from the power of both lions and bears, will rescue me from the power of this Philistine.” “Go!” Saul replied to David. “And may the LORD be with you!”

³⁸ Then Saul dressed David in his own gear, putting a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. ³⁹ David strapped his sword on over the armor, but he couldn’t walk around well because he’d never tried it before. “I can’t walk in this,” David told Saul, “because I’ve never tried it before.” So he took them off. ⁴⁰ He then grabbed his staff and chose five smooth stones from the streambed. He put them in the pocket of his shepherd’s bag and with sling in hand went out to the Philistine.

⁴¹ The Philistine got closer and closer to David, and his shield-bearer was in front of him. ⁴² When the Philistine looked David over, he sneered at David because he was just a boy; reddish brown and good-looking.

⁴³ The Philistine asked David, “Am I some sort of dog that you come at me with sticks?” And he cursed David by his gods. ⁴⁴ “Come here,” he said to David, “and I’ll feed your flesh to the wild birds and the wild animals!”

⁴⁵ But David told the Philistine, “You are coming against me with sword, spear, and scimitar, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of heavenly forces, the God of Israel’s army, the one you’ve insulted. ⁴⁶ Today the LORD will hand you over to me. I will strike you down and cut off your head! Today I will feed your dead body and the dead bodies of the entire Philistine camp to the wild birds and the wild animals. Then the whole world will know that there is a God on Israel’s side. ⁴⁷ And all those gathered here will know that the LORD doesn’t save by means of sword and spear. The LORD owns this war, and

he will hand all of you over to us.”⁴⁸ The Philistine got up and moved closer to attack David, and David ran quickly to the front line to face him.⁴⁹ David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone. He slung it, and it hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone penetrated his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 9:9-20 Page 625

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Corinthians: 6:1-13

¹ Since we work together with him, we are also begging you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² He says, *I listened to you at the right time, and I helped you on the day of salvation.* Look, now is the right time! Look, now is the day of salvation!

³ We don't give anyone any reason to be offended about anything so that our ministry won't be criticized. ⁴ Instead, we commend ourselves as ministers of God in every way. We did this with our great endurance through problems, disasters, and stressful situations. ⁵ We went through beatings, imprisonments, and riots. We experienced hard work, sleepless nights, and hunger. ⁶ We displayed purity, knowledge, patience, and generosity. We served with the Holy Spirit, genuine love, ⁷ telling the truth, and God's power. We carried the weapons of righteousness in our right hand and our left hand. ⁸ We were treated with honor and dishonor and with verbal abuse and good evaluation. We were seen as both fake and real, ⁹ as unknown and well known, as dying—and look, we are

alive! We were seen as punished but not killed,¹⁰ as going through pain but always happy, as poor but making many rich, and as having nothing but owning everything.

Call to relationship and holiness

¹¹ Corinthians, we have spoken openly to you, and our hearts are wide open. ¹² There are no limits to the affection that we feel for you. You are the ones who placed boundaries on your affection for us. ¹³ But as a fair trade—I'm talking to you like you are children—open your hearts wide too.

***MARK 4:35-41 Jesus stops a storm**

³⁵ Later that day, when evening came, Jesus said to them, “Let's cross over to the other side of the lake.” ³⁶ They left the crowd and took him in the boat just as he was. Other boats followed along.

³⁷ Gale-force winds arose, and waves crashed against the boat so that the boat was swamped. ³⁸ But Jesus was in the rear of the boat, sleeping on a pillow. They woke him up and said, “Teacher, don't you care that we're drowning?”

³⁹ He got up and gave orders to the wind, and he said to the lake, “Silence! Be still!” The wind settled down and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ Jesus asked them, “Why are you frightened? Don't you have faith yet?”

⁴¹ Overcome with awe, they said to each other, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: “Who is this? Can we trust him?”

The other day a friend told me about something that happened to her. A young man came to her door and said, “My crew and I just finished putting a roof on house down the street. We have left over materials and wondered if you would be interested in getting a new roof on your house. We wouldn’t charge you for the materials we already have today plus I’d give you a discount so my crew can get a full day of work. It would just be \$1000 today and you could pay the rest when the job is finished.” Would we trust this guy? NOOOOOOOO!

What is it going to take for the disciples to trust this man, Jesus? Here they are, following this guy all over Palestine. For some reason they were mesmerized into following him. They don’t even know each other. The fishermen know each other but they really don’t the other guys in this bunch. Can they trust them? Maybe, but not the guy that was the tax collector. If it’s one thing in this world they knew was true, don’t trust tax-collectors. They will cheat you every time. And now this unusual bunch of men are considered disciples of this guy, Jesus, who they really don’t know either.

Our text today is a portion of that large portrait of Jesus found in Mark chapters 1 – 8. Jesus is portrayed as the powerful Son of God, able to overcome disease, sin,

demons, and death. Our text offers us one of those rare stories of Jesus’ power being exercised in the presence of and for the benefit of his disciples alone. The boat scene.

For a minute I want you to put yourself in the position of one of the disciples. In this, as in many stories to follow, the disciples do not understand. That’s not an insult; that’s just the truth. Their ignorance is not of the kind that results in poor grades in class; they just don’t know who Jesus is! I would say their lack of knowledge is more about the fact that they have never been in this situation before. They’ve never met a man like Jesus before.

This story is not, as some sermons would have us believe, a simple one with the sequence of storm, fear, and then calm. The fear of the disciples is described as following Jesus’ stilling the storm, following Jesus’ reproach, “Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”. It is then that the author of the Gospel of Mark says, quite literally, “They feared a great fear”.

The storm is frightening, to be sure, but they are in the presence of a power greater than the storm. They an only turn to one another and ask, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

Friends, if Jesus can calm real storms in the sea and storms in our lives, does that help us trust Jesus with our lives? Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: Video – “How Can I Keep from Singing”

PASTORAL PRAYER:

Almighty God, Responding Savior, Inspiring Spirit, we offer our prayers as a sign of our faith in you. May we and all the members of the church of Christ cling to your words revealed in the holy Scriptures, seeking also to do what you direct us to do through the commandments and examples of faith that we discover in its pages. May we be faithful in our witness to your love, so that those who suffer doubt may believe and reach out to touch you for whatever they need.

Grant that those who are undergoing trials of sickness and suffering may know your presence and a measure of resignation or healing.

Creator God, you made all things in your wisdom, and in your love, you save us. We pray for the whole creation. Confront both godless and believing world leaders with your call to justice and peace. Teach us effective ways to challenge injustice and evil in the power of your Spirit, and with humility, acknowledging our own faults and failings.

God of patriarchs and matriarchs, you are the God of the living, not of the dead. Through your glorified Son, whom you raised from death, you have offered us repentance and forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We rejoice in the promise that because he lives, we too shall live. Holy Spirit, keep us in your communion that we may serve God

every day and every hour as we pray the prayer your Son taught us . . .

THE LORD’S PRAYER: Our Creator God 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE: 772

**Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
Those who seek God shall never go wanting.
Nothing can trouble, nothing can frighten.
God alone fills us.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

We are grateful for the gifts that we receive in our lives. We invite you to participate in this opportunity of generosity to continue the mission of God’s Love to the world. We are grateful and thankful.

OFFERTORY: “It is Well With My Soul” Mark Hayes

***DOXOLOGY:**

**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.**

***PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

O Holy One, with gratefulness we offer and dedicate these gifts for the continuation of our work in Christ's Name.
Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 'Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"**

'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
just to take him at his word.
Just to rest upon his promise,
Just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

(Refrain)

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
How I've proved him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust him more!

(Verse 2) Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just from sin and self to cease,
Just from Jesus simply taking
Life and rest, and joy and peace.

(Refrain)

(Verse 3) I'm so glad I learned to trust you,
Precious Jesus, Savior, Friend,
And I know that you are with me,
Will be with me to the end.

(Refrain)

***BENEDICTION:**

Dear Friends as we go out into the world and when a storm brews in life, remember to be in "Peace and be still" knowing that God's presence never leaves us. Be the light of peace to a world which seeks it in the Name of God who created, redeems, and sustains us. Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: "Let There BE Peace on Earth"

POSTLUDE: "Chorus of Praise" Randolph Johnston

PRAYER LIST: