

JUNE 9, 2024
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FOCUS SCRIPTURE: MARK 3:20-35
THEME: *KINGDOM OR KIN-DOM*



St. John United Church of Christ

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Liturgy – Rev. Roberto Ochoa
Ushers –

(NCH) New Century Hymnal CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

PRELUDE: Solo by Aaron Eisenhauer

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Emmaus Homes and Ministries

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(adapted from Psalm 138: 1-3, 7-8)

Leader: We give you thanks, O God, with our whole hearts; before all creation we sing your praises

People: We bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness,

For you have exalted your name and your word above everything.

On the day we called, you answered us; you increased our strength of soul.

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us against our adversaries.

ALL: Your steadfast love, O Holy One, endures forever.

***INVOCATION:**

Oh, Holy One your love indeed endures forever. We pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit this day as we worship together in beloved community, the realm of your Love. Be with us in our singing and

praising as we share the Word together in Jesus' Name. Amen

***OPENING HYMN:**

#6 "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above"

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:

Pastoral Leader: 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. (Allow a short moment of silence.)

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: (2 Corinthians 4:13)**

"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 8:4-20 11:14-15

⁴So all the Israelite elders got together and went to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵They said to him, "Listen. You are old now, and your sons don't follow in your footsteps. So appoint us a king to judge us like all the other nations have." ⁶It seemed very bad to Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us," so he prayed to the LORD.

⁷The LORD answered Samuel, "Comply with the people's request—everything they ask of you—because they haven't rejected you. No, they've rejected me as king over them. ⁸They are doing to you only what they've been doing to me^[a] from the day I brought them out of Egypt to this very minute, abandoning me and worshipping other gods. ⁹So comply with their request, but give them a clear warning, telling them how the king will rule over them." ¹⁰Then Samuel explained everything the LORD had said to the people who were asking for a king. ¹¹"This is how the king will rule over you," Samuel said:

“He will take your sons, and will use them for his chariots and his cavalry and as runners for his chariot. ¹² He will use them as his commanders of troops of one thousand and troops of fifty, or to do his plowing and his harvesting, or to make his weapons or parts for his chariots. ¹³ He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, or bakers. ¹⁴ He will take your best fields, vineyards, and olive groves and give them to his servants. ¹⁵ He will give one-tenth of your grain and your vineyards to his officials and servants. ¹⁶ He will take your male and female servants, along with the best of your cattle^[c] and donkeys, and make them do his work. ¹⁷ He will take one-tenth of your flocks, and then you yourselves will become his slaves! ¹⁸ When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you chose for yourselves, but on that day the LORD won’t answer you.”

¹⁹ But the people refused to listen to Samuel and said, “No! There must be a king over us ²⁰ so we can be like all the other nations. Our king will judge us and lead us and fight our battles.”

¹⁴ “Let’s go to Gilgal,” Samuel told the people, “ and renew the monarchy there.” ¹⁵ So everyone went to Gilgal, and there at Gilgal they made Saul king in the LORD’s presence. They offered well-being

sacrifices in the LORD’s presence, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration there.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 138 Page 714

EPISTLE LESSON: 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

¹³ We have the same faithful spirit as what is written in scripture: *I had faith, and so I spoke*. We also have faith, and so we also speak. ¹⁴ We do this because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus, and he will bring us into his presence along with you. ¹⁵ All these things are for your benefit. As grace increases to benefit more and more people, it will cause gratitude to increase, which results in God’s glory.

¹⁶ So we aren’t depressed. But even if our bodies are breaking down on the outside, the person that we are on the inside is being renewed every day. ¹⁷ Our temporary minor problems are producing an eternal stockpile of glory for us that is beyond all comparison. ¹⁸ We don’t focus on the things that can be seen but on the things that can’t be seen. The things that can be seen don’t last, but the things that can’t be seen are eternal.

5 We know that if the tent that we live in on earth is torn down, we have a building from God. It’s a house that isn’t handmade, which is eternal and located in heaven.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 3:20-35**
Misunderstandings about Jesus

²⁰ Jesus entered a house. A crowd gathered again so that it was impossible for him and his followers even to eat. ²¹ When his family heard what was happening, they came to take control of him. They were saying, “He’s out of his mind!”

²² The legal experts came down from Jerusalem. Over and over they charged, “He’s possessed by Beelzebul. He throws out demons with the authority of the ruler of demons.”

²³ When Jesus called them together he spoke to them in a parable: “How can Satan throw Satan out? ²⁴ A kingdom involved in civil war will collapse. ²⁵ And a house torn apart by divisions will collapse. ²⁶ If Satan rebels against himself and is divided, then he can’t endure. He’s done for. ²⁷ No one gets into the house of a strong person and steals anything without first tying up the strong person. Only then can the house be burglarized. ²⁸ I assure you that human beings will be forgiven for everything, for all sins and insults of every kind. ²⁹ But whoever insults the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. That person is guilty of a sin with consequences that last forever.” ³⁰ He said this because the legal experts were saying, “He’s possessed by an evil spirit.”

³¹ His mother and brothers arrived. They stood outside and sent word to him, calling for him. ³² A crowd was seated around him, and those sent to him said, “Look, your mother, brothers, and sisters are outside looking for you.”

³³ He replied, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” ³⁴ Looking around at those seated around him in a circle, he said, “Look, here are my mother and my brothers. ³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother, sister, and mother.”

These are the ancient words revealed to us anew.

Thanks be to God, Amen

MESSAGE: “Kingdom or Kin-dom”

When I was a youngster and first heard these passages, I was very upset. I couldn’t understand why Jesus was forsaking his mother. I was still of the age that I needed my mother and I couldn’t imagine a day without her by my side. Of course, I was young and didn’t understand how the world “works”. I didn’t realize that there would be a time when I would move 1,000 miles away from my parents. In today’s world we have cell phones, face time, zoom time, facebook, Instagram, and other ways of keeping in touch with our family. Although I still wish my youngest daughter and her boys would move back to the Midwest from California. That’s

just too far away. She's my baby. Many mothers, fathers, and grandparents, probably feel the same way.

But in Jesus' world it was scandalous – as it still is today in some places. In Jesus' world the family bond was tight and long-lasting. As with many non-Western cultures today, it is normal for children to live close to their parents, maybe even in the same house. The family unit might also be a business unit as well, sharing everything in common.

For Jews then the close family bond was part of the God-given fabric of thinking and living. Loyalty to the family was the local and specific outworking of loyalty to Israel as the people of God. Break the link, and you've undermined a major pillar in the way Jews in the first century (and in the twenty-first century, also) think and feel about the world and themselves.

But as we have learned reading through our Gospel lessons about Jesus, he was quite capable of challenging the symbols that lay at the heart of the Jewish sense of identity. Family solidarity was up there with sabbath observance that we talked about last Sunday. And along with keeping the Sabbath, there were food laws, and other signs of Jewish identity. It meant one was being loyal to the ancestral heritage, and thereby to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So what about Mary the mother of Jesus. At this stage at the beginning of his ministry, She clearly didn't have any idea what he was up to. She had brought the rest of the family down to Capernaum from Nazareth to find him and take him away, to stop him behaving in such an outrageous fashion, bringing dishonor to the family name. They thought he was mad, as we read in verse 21.

Jesus makes matters worse. He slices through the whole traditional structure in one clean cut. He has a different vocation, a different mission, and it involves breaking hallowed family ties. God is doing the unthinkable: he is starting a new family, a new holy people, and is doing so without regard for ordinary human family bonds. Unless we read verses 34 and 35 as deeply shocking, we haven't got the message. As a reminder verses 34-35 are thus. ³⁴Looking around at those seated around him in a circle, he said, 'Look, here are my mother and my brothers. ³⁵Whoever does God's will is my brother, sister, and mother.'"

What about us today? It's easy to slide back into a sense of belonging, of group identity, that comes from something other than loyalty to Jesus. We substitute longstanding friendship, membership in the same group, tribe, family, club, party, social class or whatever it may be. But the call to be "around" Jesus, to listen to him, even if "those outside" think

us crazy, is what matters. Has it happened to you? You are invited out to a brunch or some occasion that happens on Sunday morning. What do you do? Your children have soccer practice on Sunday morning. What do you tell them?

The author of Mark's Gospel that we read today is setting up a picture of "those inside" and "those outside" which is going to be very important in the next chapter we read. The gospel, and allegiance to Jesus, produce a division, often an unexpected and unwelcome one, in every group or society where they make their way. Mark's call to his readers then and now is to stick with Jesus whatever the cost. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "This Little Light of Mine"

Aaron Eisenhauer

MISSION MOMENT: Judy Schmitt

PASTORAL PRAYER:

God of nature, God in history, God in the church, we give thanks to you for all that you have created for us to share in our world. We celebrate any victory accomplished in justice over oppression. Help us continue to make a just world for all.

Bless and extend the church of your Son, our Savior. Inspire all members of your church that they may continue to care for each other in our

difficult world. Sustain all members of our faith family including those who cannot be with us in person.

Loving Christ, send your healing spirit to the sick in body, mind, or spirit, renew them in strength and in the trust that your power will keep them in your care, that, in life and in death, underneath are your everlasting arms.

Gracious God, please send your servants to help all the people and communities affected by natural disasters, be it fires, floods, tornadoes, volcanoes, storms or earthquakes. In hopeless situations send your help and comfort.

Be with us as we use these summer days to help others in any way we can. As we pray in his name. . .

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: 769

Hear our prayer, O God, Hear our prayer, O God. Incline your ear to us, and grant us your peace.

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: Solo by Aaron Eisenhauer

***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: "This is My Father's World"**

**This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears
All nature sings and round me rings
the music of the spheres.
This is my Father's world: I rest me in the thought
Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas –
his hand the wonders wrought.**

**This is our Father's world: O let us not forget
That though the wrong is great and strong,**

God is the ruler yet.

**He trusts us with his world,
To keep it clean and fair –
All earth and trees, all skies and seas,
All creatures everywhere.**

**This is my Father's world: he shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear him pass,
He speaks to be everywhere.
This is my Father's world:
why should my heart be sad?
The Lord is King, let heaven ring!
God reigns; let earth be glad!**

***BENEDICTION:** Dear friends, we have been nourished and renewed this day, go out and share the kingdom of God to all you encounter in the love of God who created us, God who redeemed us, and God who sustains us. Go in peace, sharing the Good News. Amen.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE:

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"

POSTLUDE: "Amazing Grace" Jack Schraeder

PRAYER LIST: Becky Ballard, Urban Baum, Ronald Bopp, Stan Kampwerth, Marilyn Paul, Syd Safriet, David Senieczyn, Yvonne Weber

