

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 2025
NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LUKE 12:32-40

"DRESSED FOR ACTION"



**ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

10207 Lincoln Trail
Fairview Heights, IL
Telephone 618-397-6323
e-mail– stjohnuccfairview@gmail.com
Website: www.stjohnfairview.org

Rev. Rosemary Captain
Organist – Sharon Banjavcic
Liturgy – Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay
Ushers –

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able
and respond with words in **bold** print

A SUMMARY OF OUR SCRIPTURE LESSONS:

First Lesson – the prophet Isaiah decries the hypocrisy of ritual worship without moral reform and responsibility for the poor.

Epistle Lesson – A definition of faith precedes an honor roll of the faithful.

Gospel Lesson – Jesus admonishes the faithful to be ready for the unexpected return of their Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: “Look to the Savior” Bertha R. Frick

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Our Church’s Wider Mission

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(Inspired by Psalm 50)

One: The mighty one, God the Holy One, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.

Many: Out of the kingdom, the perfection of beauty, the splendor of creation, the wonder of ages, God shines forth.

One: The mighty one, God the Holy One, speaks and calls to the heavens above and to the earth in order to judge the people.

Many: Out of justice and righteousness, God shines forth.

One: The mighty one, God the Holy One, speaks and receives our thanksgiving, honor, and praise.

Many: Out of our witness, worship, and testimony, God shines forth.

***INVOCATION:**

Wonderful God, set your kingdom before us anew. Dwell with us as we bring our songs and prayers, our hopes and hesitations, our faith and our disbelief before you. Demonstrate your kingdom to us and through our time of gathering so that we may be firm and steadfast in love and action to make your way known. Reveal the path you trail before us so that we may follow you clearly with distraction or detour. May your Spirit enliven, challenge, and guide us in all things and for all days. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 475 "God's Eye Is On the Sparrow"**

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

O God, our hands are full and stained with the fruit of devastation and despair. We lament a world filled with genocide and war even as we acknowledge our complicity and inaction with rampant evil in the world. Too often, we benefit from our neighbor's suffering and

remain complacent and compliant when the cost of loving our neighbor seems to address illusions of safety and security. **Move us to action. Arm us with hearts bursting with love. Equip us as agents of the kingdom's peace. Assure us that when we seek forgiveness through our actions as well as our words, your grace will meet us. Amen.**

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, in Isaiah 50:23, the Voice declares, "Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me; to those who go the right way, I will show the salvation of God." Though the cost of discipleship may be exacting and sacrificial, the grace of God strengthens, sustains, and encourages. Receive the power of the Sovereign One to act according to God's will and to advance the kingdom on earth, in community, and in life.

***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 LESSONS: First Testament Isaiah 1:1, 10-20
FROM THE MESSAGE**

QUIT YOUR WORSHIP CHARADES

1 The vision that Isaiah son of Amoz saw regarding Judah and Jerusalem during the times of the kings of Judah: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

¹⁰ “Listen to my Message, you Sodom-schooled leaders. Receive God’s revelation, you Gomorrah-schooled people.

¹¹⁻¹² “Why this frenzy of sacrifices?” God’s asking.

“Don’t you think I’ve had my fill of burnt sacrifices, rams and plump grain-fed calves?

Don’t you think I’ve had my fill of blood from bulls, lambs, and goats?

When you come before me, whoever gave you the idea of acting like this, Running here and there, doing this and that— all this sheer *commotion* in the place provided for worship?

¹³⁻¹⁷ “Quit your worship charades.

I can’t stand your trivial religious games: Monthly conferences, weekly Sabbaths, special meetings— meetings, meetings, meetings—I can’t stand one more! Meetings for this, meetings for that. I hate them! You’ve worn me out!

I’m sick of your religion, religion, religion, while you go right on sinning.

When you put on your next prayer-performance, I’ll be looking the other way.

No matter how long or loud or often you pray, I’ll not be listening.

And do you know why? Because you’ve been tearing people to pieces, and your hands are bloody.

Go home and wash up.

Clean up your act.

Sweep your lives clean of your evildoings

so I don’t have to look at them any longer.

Say no to wrong. Learn to do good. Work for justice.

Help the down-and-out.

Stand up for the homeless. Go to bat for the defenseless.

LET’S ARGUE THIS OUT

¹⁸⁻²⁰ “Come. Sit down. Let’s argue this out.”

This is God’s Message: “If your sins are blood-red, they’ll be snow-white.

If they’re red like crimson, they’ll be like wool.

If you’ll willingly obey, you’ll feast like kings.

But if you’re willful and stubborn, you’ll die like dogs.”

That’s right. God says so.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 50:1-8, 22-23 Page 656

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

The Words of Paul

DESCRIPTION OF FAITH

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

Acts of faith by God's people

³ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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. ¹⁰ He was looking forward to a city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

¹¹ 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. ¹² 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. ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ People who say this kind of thing make it clear that they are looking for a

homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking about the country that they had left, they would have had the opportunity to return to it. ¹⁶ 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**

³² "Don't be afraid, little flock, because your Father delights in giving you the kingdom. ³³ 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. ³⁴ Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.

WARNING ABOUT BEING PREPARED

³⁵ "Be dressed for service and keep your lamps lit. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ 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. ³⁸ Happy are those whom he finds alert, even if he comes at midnight or just before dawn. ³⁹ 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. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, because the Human One is coming at a time when you don't expect him."

MESSAGE: Many Lessons from Few Words

Our Gospel lesson this week continues the message from last week. The rich fool built bigger barns to hold his large harvest. He felt very sure that he would have enough to last himself years of bread. Jesus said, "you fool. You will die tonight. Then who will benefit from your hoarding." The moral of this story is that we should seek first the kingdom of God and not worry about buying more stuff just to fill up our houses.

In part of our scripture today, Jesus asks us to be prepared for the unexpected such as a thief, or a call to meet God. My message on those words of Jesus comes from a preacher who lived from 1907 until 1978. I found his ideas on this scripture very quaint but oh so true. Rev. William Barclay asks us "How would we like God to find us when we are called to meet our God?"

#1 "We would like God to find us with our work completed. Life for so many of us is filled with loose ends. There are things undone and things half done; things put off and things not even attempted. Great men and women have always the sense of a task that must be finished. In John 17:4 Jesus said, 'I glorified you Father on earth by finishing the work that you gave me

to do.' No one should ever lightly leave undone a task that ought to have been finished before night falls.

2. "We would like God to find us at peace with one another. It would be a haunting thing to pass from this world in bitterness with a neighbor. We should never let the sun go down on our anger (Ephesians 4:26), least of all the last sun of all and we never know which sun that will be.

3. "We would like God to find us at peace with God. It will make all the difference at the last whether we feel that we are going out to a stranger or an enemy or going to fall asleep in the arms of God.

"In the second section of this passage Jesus draws a picture of the wise and the unwise steward. In the middle east the steward had almost unlimited power. He was himself a slave, yet he had control of all the other slaves. A trusted steward ran his master's house for him and administered his estate. The unwise steward made two mistakes. He said I will do what I like while my master is away; he forgot that the day of reckoning must come. We can be like that. We have a habit of dividing life into compartments. There is a part in which we remember that God is present; and there is a part in which we never think of him at all. We tend to draw a line between sacred and secular; but if we really

know what Christianity means we will know that there is no part of life when the master is away. We are working and living forever in our great taskmaster's eye.

The second mistake the unwise steward made was saying 'I have plenty of time to put things right before the master comes'; This is another mistake we sometimes make. There is nothing so fatal as to feel that we have plenty of time. Jesus said, "We must work the works of the God who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work' (John 9:4).

"The passage finishes with the warning that knowledge and privilege always bring responsibility. Sin is doubly sinful to those who knew better; failure is doubly blameworthy in those who had every chance to do well."

The moral of these words from Rev. Barclay is that the only plans we should make about the future are to be prepared when we are called to sit next to our Creator in heaven. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Somebody's Knockin' At Your Door" **Video**

PASTORAL PRAYER:

God of the universe, hear us as we pray for all humanity, and especially for your church universal, that the goodwill you have toward all may be heard as really

Good News. May your Spirit flourish in every branch of the vine which is the living Christ in the world bringing forth fruit in good living and the good wine of sacrificial giving.

Gracious Savior, may your love work an end to divisiveness throughout our world. Show us how to help rather than hinder, to be constructive rather than destructive, open rather than shut, inclusive rather than exclusive. Let each of us be an example of love overcoming hate.

God of our ancestors, bless this land, its leaders, legislators, and judges. Grant that without fear or favor they may maintain the rights of all, tempering justice with mercy and defending those who cannot plead their own cause. Creator and Re-Creator, cleanse the bloodstream of nations that are poisoned by corruption in high and low places.

We ask the Great Physician to comfort the bereaved and lonely. Heal the sick and suffering especially those we name before you in the silence of our hearts. According to your will, give renewed health in body and spirit, that your purposes may be fulfilled in the community of your people.

We thank you God, for your Son who taught us to pray . .

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

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 honor Creator by offering our gifts of service, action, compassion, financial and material resources, and energy to the continuing ministry of the Body of Christ. Let us give with divinely-inspired and empowered generosity trusting God to provide for all needs, individually and collectively.

OFFERTORY: "Seek Ye First" Karen Lafferty

***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 THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION:**

Generous God, as we bring our gifts, we ask for you to receive them and endow us with wisdom and discernment to be good stewards of your abundant blessings. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 563**

"We Can Not Own the Sunlit Sky"

***BENEDICTION:**

Go, clothed for compassion
Attired with joy
Covered by peace
And dressed for action
Knowing that the God who knit you together
Goes with you
In strength, gentleness, and power

BENEDICTION RESPONSE:

"Let There Be Peace on Earth"

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: "Jubilate Deo" Edward H. Wetherill