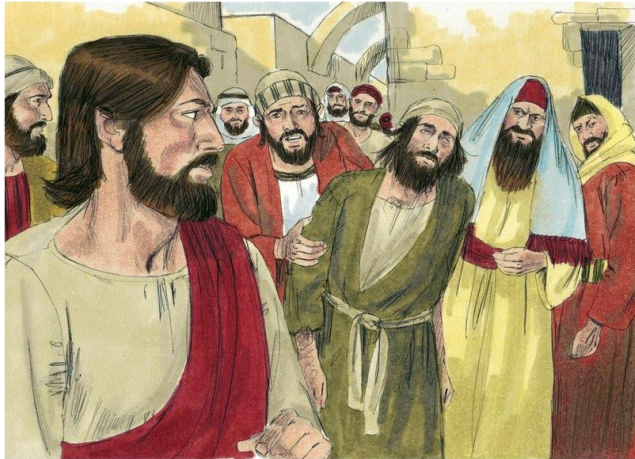


SUNDAY, JULY 27, 2025
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LUKE 11:1-13 “TEACH US”



ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: “Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated”

Mark Hayes

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Hoyelton Ministries

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired by Psalm 85)**

One: Righteousness will go before our God; peace makes its path.

Many: Restore us, O God, and stir anger within for the pain and injustices of the world.

One: Righteousness will go before our God; peace makes its path.

Many: Revive us, O God, and bring joy to our hearts and a song of praise on our lips.

One: Righteousness will go before our God; peace makes its path.

Many: Redeem us, O God, and call your people back to you in spirit and in truth.

***INVOCATION:**

One Who Is Holy, make us like new, show us your way, teach us to pray with our hearts and our hands. Give us the word today that we need to know you. Give us hope today to be a beacon in a world full of lost and confused. Give us joy today to make your name known. Give us peace today to respond with courage, fortitude, and

conviction. Give us love today to love as you have loved us. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 455 "I Am Yours, O Lord"**

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

God Who Reigns in Glory and meets us in need, we seek your forgiveness and restoration. We drown in a system of debt rather than generosity and common good. May our obligations not burden us, and may we not burden others when compassion is abundantly available. We struggle not to encroach on our neighbor's territory when boundaries are arbitrary and limiting rather than purposeful and expansive. Help us turn from sin and temptation as well as guilt and shame when we struggle to live fully in your kingdom.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Offspring of the Living God, live in the grace of the kingdom. Receive the vision of restored creation: abundance, compassion, generosity, and inclusion. Live in your full humanity as image bearers of the Holy.

***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:

Hosea 1:2-10 (From The Message)

This Whole Country Has Become a Whorehouse

² The first time God spoke to Hosea he said:

"Find a whore and marry her.

Make this whore the mother of your children.

And here's why: This whole country

has become a whorehouse, unfaithful to me, God."

³ Hosea did it. He picked Gomer daughter of Diblaim. She got pregnant and gave him a son.

⁴⁻⁵ Then God told him:

"Name him Jezreel. It won't be long now before

I'll make the people of Israel pay for the massacre at Jezreel.

I'm calling it quits on the kingdom of Israel.

Payday is coming! I'm going to chop Israel's bows and arrows

into kindling in the valley of Jezreel."

⁶⁻⁷ Gomer got pregnant again. This time she had a daughter. God told Hosea:

"Name this one No-Mercy. I'm fed up with Israel.

I've run out of mercy. There's no more forgiveness. Judah's another story. I'll continue having mercy on them.

I'll save them. It will be their God who saves them,
Not their armaments and armies,
not their horsepower and manpower."

⁸⁻⁹ After Gomer had weaned No-Mercy, she got pregnant yet again and had a son. God said:

"Name him Nobody. You've become nobodies to me,
and I, God, am a nobody to you.

¹⁰⁻¹¹ "But down the road the population of Israel is going to explode past counting, like sand on the ocean beaches. In the very place where they were once named Nobody, they will be named God's Somebody. Everybody in Judah and everybody in Israel will be assembled as one people. They'll choose a single leader. There'll be no stopping them—a great day in Jezreel!"

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

Psalm 85 Page 676

EPISTLE READING: Colossians 2:6-19 The Words of Paul Error threatening the church

⁶ So live in Christ Jesus the Lord in the same way as you received him. ⁷ Be rooted and built up in him, be established in faith, and overflow with thanksgiving just as you were taught. ⁸ See to it that nobody enslaves you with philosophy and foolish deception, which conform to human traditions and the way the world thinks and acts rather than Christ. ⁹ All the fullness of deity lives in Christ's body. ¹⁰ And you have been filled by him, who is

the head of every ruler and authority. ¹¹ In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not administered by human hands. The circumcision of Christ is realized in the stripping away of the whole self dominated by sin. ¹² You were buried with him through baptism and raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ When you were dead because of the things you had done wrong and because your body wasn't circumcised, God made you alive with Christ and forgave all the things you had done wrong. ¹⁴ He destroyed the record of the debt we owed, with its requirements that worked against us. He canceled it by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ When he disarmed the rulers and authorities, he exposed them to public disgrace by leading them in a triumphal parade. ¹⁶ So don't let anyone judge you about eating or drinking or about a festival, a new moon observance, or sabbaths. ¹⁷ These religious practices are only a shadow of what was coming—the body that cast the shadow is Christ. ¹⁸ Don't let anyone who wants to practice harsh self-denial and worship angels rob you of the prize. They go into detail about what they have seen in visions and have become unjustifiably arrogant by their selfish way of thinking. ¹⁹ They don't stay connected to the head. The head nourishes and supports the whole body through the joints and ligaments, so the body grows with a growth that is from God.

***GOSPEL: Luke 11:1-13**

Teaching the disciples to pray

11 Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.”

² Jesus told them, “When you pray, say:
‘Father, uphold the holiness of your name.
Bring in your kingdom.

³ Give us the bread we need for today.

⁴ Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who has wronged us.
And don’t lead us into temptation.’”

⁵ He also said to them, “Imagine that one of you has a friend and you go to that friend in the middle of the night. Imagine saying, ‘Friend, loan me three loaves of bread ⁶because a friend of mine on a journey has arrived and I have nothing to set before him.’ ⁷ Imagine further that he answers from within the house, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can’t get up to give you anything.’ ⁸ I assure you, even if he wouldn’t get up and help because of his friendship, he will get up and give his friend whatever he needs because of his friend’s brashness. ⁹ And I tell you: Ask and you will receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. ¹⁰ Everyone who asks, receives. Whoever seeks, finds. To everyone who knocks, the door is opened.

¹¹ “Which father among you would give a snake to your child if the child asked for a fish? ¹² If a child asked for an egg, what father would give the child a scorpion? ¹³ If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

MESSAGE: “Prayer”

(With thoughts by N.T. Wright)

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. I was surprised by that request. Didn’t they Jesus praying frequently? Then I started thinking about it. Many times in the Gospels we hear that Jesus when away to pray. He would go up a mountain or get up extra early to go pray, or walk ahead or “slip away” to have some quiet and private time to talk to God. So maybe the disciples never actually heard him pray.

To put it briefly, we pray to God our parent and most of the time we pray for our friends and family. Friendship and parenthood, together teach us something about God and prayer. Actually, the learning is a two-way street. It isn’t just a matter of thinking about our earthy friends and parents and then learning that God is like that. There are times when a father and mother need to take a long hard look at what God’s parenthood is all about, and start changing our own behavior to be more like God. And most of our

friendships could do with the improvement that some reflection about God as a friend might provide.

It is that picture – of God as a friend, in bed and asleep, with a man’s children around him – which probably strikes us as the peculiar. (this is the parable Jesus is telling in our scripture lesson today.) We are used to saying that God is our Father or Mother, though we may not always ask what exactly that means; but God as our Friend is less obvious. In the sort of house Jesus has in mind, the family would all sleep side by side on the floor, so that if the father got up at midnight the whole family would be woken up. It’s obvious what a nuisance it is when a knock comes on the door late at night.

Yet the friend outside has a real problem, and the sleeping friend can and will help him. The laws of hospitality in the ancient Middle East were strict, and if a traveler arrived needing food and shelter one was under an obligation to provide it. The friend in the street knows that the friend in bed will understand; he would do the same if the roles were reversed.

What counts is *persistence*. There are all sorts of ways in which God isn’t like a sleepy friend, but Jesus is focusing on one point of comparison only; he is encouraging a kind of holy boldness, a sharp knocking on the door, an insistent asking, a search that refuses to give up. That’s what our prayer should be like. This isn’t just a routine

or formal praying, going through the motions as a daily or weekly task. There is a battle on, a fight with the powers of darkness, and those who have glimpsed the light are called to struggle in prayer – for peace, for reconciliation, for wisdom, for a thousand things for the world and the church, perhaps a hundred or two for one’s own family, friends and neighbors and perhaps a dozen or two for oneself.

There are of course, too many things to pray about. That’s why it’s important to be disciplined and regular. If you leave it to the whim of the moment, you’ll never be a true intercessor, somebody through whose prayers God’s love is poured out into the world. But because these things are urgent, important and complex there has to be more to prayer than simply discipline and regularity. Formal prayers, including official liturgies for services in church, are vital for most people for their spiritual health, but they are like the metal shell of a car. To be effective it needs fuel for the engine, and to be effective, prayers need energy, too; in this case, the kind of dogged and even funny determination that you’d use with a sleepy friend who you hoped would help you out of a tight spot.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: “The Lord’s Prayer” Video

PASTORAL PRAYER: God our Father and God our Mother, we praise you for all you have done for us, teaching us how to be better Mothers and Fathers. Teaching us how to love not only our families and our friends, but teaching us how to love and care for those people we have never met. We are all your children, blessed God, so we should treat others as our family, too.

Today we remember all the people affected by the extreme heat which is affecting so many places in the world. We are invited to check on our neighbors to be sure they have water and at least fans to keep the air moving in their homes.

We pray for those who lost friends and family, especially children, in the horrible flash floods in Texas. Dear God, send helpers to help those who grieve and feel helpless. Remind them that you are there with them throughout this disaster and they may know that those lost children are within your loving arms.

We pray all these things and the worries in our hearts, as your Son taught us . .

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 773 "Remember Me"

Remember me, remember me, O Jesus remember me.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

The Holy One invites us to participate in meeting the needs of the day. Let us give generosity to the ministry of this faith community as we share good gifts through acts of compassion and mutual aid.

OFFERTORY: "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"

Charles Wesley

***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

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

Our God in Glory, may the good gifts we bring of time, talent, and treasure be used and magnified for the benefit of your beloved. Thank you, Holy One, for enabling us to join in your kingdom come on earth. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 506 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"**

***BENEDICTION:**

Go, into the world

Proclaiming the many names of the Sovereign God
Living the lessons of Good News
Sharing in support and solidarity
Opening doors and giving good gifts

BENEDICTION REPONSE: “Let There Be Peace in Earth”

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: “Psalm of Glory” Dorothy Wells