

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2026
THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
GENESIS 18:1-15



St. John United Church of Christ

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NCH) New Century Hymnal CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

SUMMARY OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS
From “Preaching Through the Christian Year”
Fred Craddock

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7 The *Common Lectionary* Old Testament reading, the promise and birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, follows as a natural sequel to last week’s lesson. Today’s lesson shows how God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled.

Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 Although this is a prayer of thanksgiving offered for physical healing, the omission of verses 3-11 gives it broader applicability. Consequently, the congregation will hear it as a more general prayer thanking God for being responsive to human requests for help. Read next to Genesis 18 and 21, the psalm virtually echoes the gracious statements of Abraham and Sarah, but also those of every fruitful person whose prayers have been answered by God.

Romans 5:1-8 Today’s epistolary lection exudes confidence and trust in the God who has justified us through Jesus Christ, enabling us to be at peace with God and to have access to God’s sustaining grace.

Matthew 9:35-10:8, 9-23 This lection reports how Jesus taught and preached the good news of the kingdom and how he began to commission the Twelve. The additional verses highlight the cost of discipleship.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: "The Great Commission" Hugh S. Livingston

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Penitentiary Chaplains

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(inspired by Psalm 116)

One: We call on the Holy One as long as we live! What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us?

Many: With love and laughter, we praise the Holy One!

One: What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us?

Many: Lifting the cup of salvation and offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving, we praise the Holy One!

One: What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us?

Many: With the fruit of our worship and the fruit of our lives, we praise the Holy One!

***INVOCATION:**

God who calls us, we are here, here to serve, and here to worship. We are here to sing and to pray, to let the word resound in us and the community to envelop us. We are here, O God, to know you and be known by you. We enter with thanksgiving and praise. We enter in safety of love and hope of peace. Holy One, we respond to your call. We are here. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 42**

"O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

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

God of Grace, we give you thanks for love that transcends our shortcomings, that greets us with mercy, and that offers the possibility of transformed life. Plant seeds in us that will stretch our faith in you and in us. Nurture us to live miraculous lives. Let our faith and our work join with your power to make us fruitful despite our limitations, doubts, and fears. May the fruit we produce add sustenance and hope in your kingdom. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Gracious ones, you may receive the nourishment and encouragement of God to be fruitful even when the Holy One amazes us beyond expectation and dream. God is with us in season and out of season. Expect an abundant and bountiful harvest to witness to God's grace at work in and through us.

***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: Genesis 18:1-15 (21:1-7)

Isaac's birth announced

18 The Lord appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre while he sat at the entrance of his tent in the day's heat. ² He looked up and suddenly saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from his tent entrance to greet them and bowed deeply. ³ He said, "Sirs, if you would be so kind, don't just pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought so you may wash your feet and refresh yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me offer you a little bread so you will feel stronger, and after that you may leave your servant and go on your way—since you have visited your servant." They responded, "Fine. Do just as you have said."

⁶ So Abraham hurried to Sarah at his tent and said, "Hurry! Knead three quarts of the finest flour and make some baked goods!" ⁷ Abraham ran to the cattle, took a healthy young calf, and gave it to a young servant, who prepared it quickly. ⁸ Then Abraham took butter, milk, and the calf that had been prepared, put the food in front of them, and stood under the tree near them as they ate.

⁹ They said to him, "Where's your wife Sarah?" And he said, "Right here in the tent."

¹⁰ Then one of the men said, "I will definitely return to you about this time next year. Then your wife Sarah will have a son!"

Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were both very old. Sarah was no longer menstruating. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, thinking, I'm no longer able to have children and my husband's old.

¹³ The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Me give birth? At my age?' ¹⁴ Is anything too difficult for the Lord? When I return to you about this time next year, Sarah will have a son."

¹⁵ Sarah lied and said, "I didn't laugh," because she was frightened.

But he said, "No, you laughed."

Isaac's birth ²¹ The Lord was attentive to Sarah just as he had said, and the Lord carried out just what he had promised her. ² She became pregnant and gave birth to a son for Abraham when he was old, at the very time God had told him. ³ Abraham named his son—the one Sarah bore him—Isaac. ⁴ Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old just as God had commanded him. ⁵ Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born. ⁶ Sarah said, "God has given me laughter. Everyone who hears about it will laugh with me." ⁷ She said, "Who could have told Abraham that Sarah would

nurse sons? But now I've given birth to a son when he was old!"

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

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EPISTLE LESSON: Romans 5:1-8

Therefore, we have peace with God

5 Therefore, since we have been made righteous through his faithfulness, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²We have access by faith into this grace in which we stand through him, and we boast in the hope of God's glory. ³But not only that! We even take pride in our problems, because we know that trouble produces endurance, ⁴endurance produces character, and character produces hope. ⁵This hope doesn't put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

⁶While we were still weak, at the right moment, Christ died for ungodly people. ⁷It isn't often that someone will die for a righteous person, though maybe someone might dare to die for a good person. ⁸But God shows his love for us, because while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 9:35-10:9-23**

Compassion

35 Jesus traveled among all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness. 36 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were troubled and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The size of the harvest is bigger than you can imagine, but there are few workers. 38 Therefore, plead with the Lord of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest."

Mission of the Twelve

10 He called his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to throw them out and to heal every disease and every sickness. 2 Here are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, who is called Peter; and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee; and John his brother; 3 Philip; and Bartholomew; Thomas; and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus; and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananaean; and Judas, who betrayed Jesus.

Commissioning of the Twelve

5 Jesus sent these twelve out and commanded them, "Don't go among the Gentiles or into a Samaritan city. 6 Go instead to the lost sheep, the people of Israel. 7 As you go, make this announcement: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with skin diseases, and throw

out demons. You received without having to pay. Therefore, give without demanding payment. 9 Workers deserve to be fed, so don't gather gold or silver or copper coins for your money belts to take on your trips. ¹⁰ Don't take a backpack for the road or two shirts or sandals or a walking stick. ¹¹ Whatever city or village you go into, find somebody in it who is worthy and stay there until you go on your way. ¹² When you go into a house, say, 'Peace!' ¹³ If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if the house isn't worthy, take back your blessing. ¹⁴ If anyone refuses to welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that house or city. ¹⁵ I assure you that it will be more bearable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than it will be for that city.

Response to harassment

¹⁶ "Look, I'm sending you as sheep among wolves. Therefore, be wise as snakes and innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Watch out for people—because they will hand you over to councils and they will beat you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ They will haul you in front of governors and even kings because of me so that you may give your testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ Whenever they hand you over, don't worry about how to speak or what you will say, because what you can say will be given to you at that moment. ²⁰ You aren't doing the talking, but the Spirit of my Father is doing the talking through

you. ²¹ Brothers and sisters will hand each other over to be executed. A father will turn his child in. Children will defy their parents and have them executed. ²² Everyone will hate you on account of my name. But whoever stands firm until the end will be saved. ²³ Whenever they harass you in one city, escape to the next, because I assure that you will not go through all the cities of Israel before the Human One comes."

MESSAGE: The Mission

Last Sunday we read Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26. Jesus reminded us that saying one thing is not the same as doing something with compassion. Jesus insisted; we must have compassion for all.

In the Gospel reading for last Sunday we saw that the followers of Jesus found in his word and example their authority for inclusive table fellowship. Today our lesson reveals that the church that was slowly forming understood its own mission in and through both the command of Jesus and the model of his own ministry. The summary description of Jesus as teacher, preacher, and healer is offered by our author Matthew as foundational for his description of the mission of the twelve.

Back in Matthew 4:23, five chapters ago, it reads "23 Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues. He announced the good news of the

kingdom and healed every disease and sickness among the people.” This is the same words Matthew is writing to us today, in 9:35 “Jesus traveled among all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, announcing the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.” We may see that Matthew is trying to give unity to our entire lesson today. Matthew has given teachings and miracles of healing, the whole of which not only characterizes Jesus’ ministry but will now characterize that of his disciples as well.

Jesus has a very difficult taste of teaching to be sure these disciples pass this “course” and get an A on their essay paper.

Verses 36 and 35 provides us with the motivation for Jesus’ ministry, again implying that his followers will be likewise motivated.

Let’s stop for a minute and think about that word “motivation”. I’m sure many of us have taken many classes over the years. Some of us taught school for many years. From those who sat at the desks, and those teachers who wrote on the board, we all learned one point of truth. If you want to succeed in learning anything from the class, you MUST BE MOTIVATED.! Can I get an AMEN on that?

That’s exactly what are first century professor, Dr. Jesus PHD, is doing in these passages. Jesus had compassion on the people in their state of oppression,

confusion, fear, and frustration, much like a sheep without a shepherd. Nancy, did you ever have a class of children who were oppressed, confused, fearful, and frustrated as lost sheep?

That’s what Jesus saw in front of him. So great was the need that Jesus could not, even with the help of his disciples, meet it. He called upon his followers to pray that God will send more laborers. The analogy of harvest, used elsewhere in Matthew to refer to the last judgment, here includes the present and urgent work that will, of course, have its final consummation and revelation on the last day.

In the meantime, friends, the rest of this passage teaches us, how to sign up for this course, “Helping and loving all of God’s people”, with step-by-step instructions. If you are motivated, I’m sure you will receive an “A” for the course; A for “All for Jesus”. Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC: “Here I Am Lord” Video – St John Choir with Stacie Pickens on the flute

**PASTORAL PRAYER:
OUR LORD’S PRAYER:**

**PRAYER RESPONSE:
743 “Be Still and Know”
Be still and know that I am God.**

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am God.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

What shall we return to the Holy One for God's bounty to us? God calls us to live fruitful and faithful lives that witness to and spread the good news of the kingdom in the world. God provides for our needs abundantly so that all may flourish. May we use the bounty that we receive as gifts to share rather than as resources to hoard. Let generosity, trust, and hope guide us to support the ministry of this faith community and the wider church.

OFFERTORY: "The Summons" John L. Bell

***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 DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING:**

Faithful God, thank you for the gifts we receive and that we give. Bless them so that needs will be met, your beloved will experience communal embrace, and you will be honored and glorified. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 300 "Jesus Shall Reign"**

***BENEDICTION:**

May laughter and love fill your heart

And joy and peace flow like a mighty river from you

As you share the glory of God in hope and peace

Boasting in the goodness of God

And delighting in the wonders of God

As you work the harvest of the kingdom

Go, and be fruitful in the power of God

***BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571**

O God of Love, O God of Peace

Make wars throughout the world to cease.

The wrath of human wrong restrain;

Give peace, O God, give peace again!

THE BELL IS RUNG:

POSTLUDE: "Triumphal March" Roger C. Wilson

PRAYER LIST: Bennie Pointer, Ginny Ganschietz, Patti French, Becky Ballard, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Russ Hartmann, Marilyn Paul, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, our Beloved Country

CONDOLENCES to the friends and family of Robert Bopp, husband of Sandy Bopp.