

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 2026
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



PRIDE SUNDAY

St. John United Church of Christ

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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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: “You Are My All in All”

Jernigan and Tornquist

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Penitentiary Chaplains

***CALL TO WORSHIP (INSPIRED BY PSALM 13)**

One: We gather as a people to worship the Holy One who considers our cries and responds to our conditions.

Many: We gather even when wearied by the world because we trust in God’s steadfast love.

One: Our souls may ask, “How long, Holy One?” Yet our hearts rejoice in your saving acts.

Many: We gather even when shaken and sorrowful because we hope in God’s steadfast love.

One: We gather to sing to the Holy One who has been generous with us.

Many: Our worship and our work testifies to the goodness of the God who prevails. Let us worship the God of Life!

***INVOCATION**

God who provides, we acknowledge your presence that invites us to draw near to you. We glorify your name, for you, Holy and Righteous One, remain faithful to your creation. We open our hearts and minds to remember the testimonies of the past and to receive the truth

revealed in your word for the present. May you delight in our praise as we honor you and encourage one another in the journey of faithful living. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 539**

“Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant”

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

God of the Covenant, in you, we have new life. In you, we have a faithful companion. Yet, difficult moments confront us with the limits of our trust in you. We struggle to release control so that we might participate fully in your plan without fear, hesitation, or resistance. Help us, O God, to be your faithful service who trust you even through the tests and trials of life. May we know the assurance and peace of your eternal love. Amen.

WORDS OF GRACE

The Holy One loves you and has made you participants in an everlasting covenant. God will not abandon you in despair or deprivation. Rather, the one who creates also sustains. There is a ram in the bush, and the Sovereign God will continue to provide. Receive the grace of God.

***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:

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 22:1-14

Binding of Isaac

22 After these events, God tested Abraham and said to him, “Abraham!” Abraham answered, “I’m here.”

² God said, “Take your son, your only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him up as an entirely burned offering there on one of the mountains that I will show you.” ³ Abraham got up early in the morning, harnessed his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, together with his son Isaac. He split the wood for the entirely burned offering, set out, and went to the place God had described to him.

⁴ On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place at a distance. ⁵ Abraham said to his servants, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will walk up there, worship, and then come back to you.”

⁶ Abraham took the wood for the entirely burned offering and laid it on his son Isaac. He took the fire and

the knife in his hand, and the two of them walked on together. ⁷ Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father?"

Abraham said, "I'm here, my son."

Isaac said, "Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the entirely burned offering?"

⁸ Abraham said, "The lamb for the entirely burned offering? God will see to it, my son." The two of them walked on together.

⁹ They arrived at the place God had described to him.

Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He tied up his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. ¹⁰ Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice. ¹¹ But

the Lord's messenger called out to Abraham from heaven, "Abraham? Abraham?"

Abraham said, "I'm here."

¹² The messenger said, "Don't stretch out your hand against the young man, and don't do anything to him. I now know that you revere God and didn't hold back your son, your only son, from me." ¹³ Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught by its horns in the dense underbrush. Abraham went over, took the ram, and offered it as an entirely burned offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ Abraham named that place "the Lord sees." That is the reason people today say, "On this mountain the Lord is seen."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 13, page626

EPISTLE: Romans 6:12-23 ¹² So then, don't let sin rule your body, so that you do what it wants. ¹³ Don't offer parts of your body to sin, to be used as weapons to do wrong. Instead, present yourselves to God as people who have been brought back to life from the dead, and offer all the parts of your body to God to be used as weapons to do right. ¹⁴ Sin will have no power over you, because you aren't under Law but under grace.

Freedom from sin

¹⁵ So what? Should we sin because we aren't under Law but under grace? Absolutely not! ¹⁶ Don't you know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, that you are slaves of the one whom you obey? That's true whether you serve as slaves of sin, which leads to death, or as slaves of the kind of obedience that leads to righteousness. ¹⁷ But thank God that although you used to be slaves of sin, you gave wholehearted obedience to the teaching that was handed down to you, which provides a pattern. ¹⁸ Now that you have been set free from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ (I'm speaking with ordinary metaphors because of your limitations.) Once, you offered the parts of your body to be used as slaves to impurity and to lawless behavior that leads to still more lawless behavior. Now, you should present the parts of your

body as slaves to righteousness, which makes your lives holy. ²⁰ When you were slaves of sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. ²¹ What consequences did you get from doing things that you are now ashamed of? The outcome of those things is death. ²² But now that you have been set free from sin and become slaves to God, you have the consequence of a holy life, and the outcome is eternal life. ²³ The wages that sin pays are death, but God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 10:40-42**

Rewards

⁴⁰ "Those who receive you are also receiving me, and those who receive me are receiving the one who sent me. ⁴¹ Those who receive a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Those who receive a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² I assure you that everybody who gives even a cup of cold water to these little ones because they are my disciples will certainly be rewarded."

MESSAGE: Who is our enemy?

Before I talk about our Gospel lesson, I'd like to back up to last Sunday's message. The Gospel was from Matthew 10:24-39. However, there was so many lessons

to discuss, I cut it to 24-31. The lesson was all about "don't be afraid", the most frequently used command Jesus gave to the disciples and us. However, Jesus also said "we must also learn that there is one who deserves fear," in verse 28. Verse 28 states, "Don't be afraid of people who can kill the body, but can't kill the soul. The one you should be afraid of is the one who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna." Gehenna is a smouldering heap of garbage, also known as hell.

That's where I got lost. Rev. Craddock's book says "Verse 28 is difficult to understand because of the reference to destroying both body and soul in hell. The Rev. says Luke 12:4 radically alters the saying to make it clearer. *I'm not sure of that.* Luke says "The real enemy is the one who logs to cast people into Gehenna. It means we should recognize who the ultimate enemy is and it is not God." *Not helpful.*

Rev. Craddock continues, "Surely the point is not to offer a new theory about hell, to the effect that in hell the wicked are totally annihilated. The point seems rather to be in the contrast; you will stand before judges who can execute you, but you also stand before God whose power is not physical only or confined to the world only. In view of the difference, which will most affect your behavior?" *I'm still not sure about who to fear. I know there will always be people who think going to church is a stupid waste of time. They will plan parties*

and get-togethers on Sunday mornings. They don't understand that we give Sunday mornings to God, the one who gives us every other day. So I guess I'll just behave myself and stay away from people who want to send me to hell. If someone has a better explanation, please let me know. I think I'm trying to hard. I've been worrying about this verse for days. There's probably a simple explanation that is over my head.

So let's look at today's Gospel lesson. This is the end of Matthew's teachings including his Sermon on the Mount. He wrote it not just for the disciples but for the followers of Jesus. Apparently, Matthew has subordinated any historical interest in a mission journey of the Twelve to a larger concern with what Jesus says to the church for its life and ministry in a context of hostility and suffering.

The closing verses now shift the focus to speak of those who are hospitable to Christ's disciples. The reward of discipleship goes not only to those followers who have lost their family ties but also to those who welcome such disciples, knowing who they are and what their loyalties are. Of course, along with receiving a disciple's reward it also brings upon the people threats and hostility that the disciples themselves bear. *(Sorta of like what I mentioned before.)*

Whether it was 2000 years ago or today, being a Christian is not easy. Keep praying for strength and endurance. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "People Need the Lord" Video

PASTORAL PRAYER:

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 772

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

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

God is still creating and still providing. Let us honor the continued and new gifts of God's generosity by bringing forth a portion of what we receive so that all needs will be met. Let us participate in the realization of the kingdom through offering material resources to the Body of Christ.

OFFERTORY: "Living for Jesus" Chisholm and Lowden

***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**

Generous God, may the gifts we bring provide for our community and neighbors just as you provided a ram for Abraham. Bless our time, talent, and treasure for your glory and your kingdom. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: 543 “Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”**

BENEDICTION

Be confident that the Holy One will provide
For the promise of God is trustworthy
And the presence of God is enduring
Therefore, show up in the world
With boldness and clarity
That justice and righteousness will prevail
In the name of Holy Love and Everlasting Peace
May it be so for you and through you.

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: “Joyful, Joyful” Chester Nordman

PRAYER LIST: Connor Brink, Aidan Randall, Jane Bopp, Eleanor, Claire, Leah Captain, Bennie Pointer, Ginny Ganschinetz, Becky Ballard, Russ Hartmann, Marilyn Paul, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Pam and Syd Safriet, Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, Sue Ganschinetz, our beloved country.