

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2026
TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST
MATTHEW 22:34-46

“LOVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR”

St. John United Church of Christ

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Rev. Rosemary Captain

Organist/Pianist – Sharon Banjavcic

Liturgy – Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

Ushers –

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print.

Bible translation – CEB Common English Bible

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

THE BELL IS RUNG:

PRELUDE: “More Love to Thee with I Love Thee”

William Doane

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Neighbors in Need

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:**

(inspired by Psalm 90)

One: Holy One, you are our dwelling place! From everlasting to everlasting, you are God!

Many: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

One: Holy One, you are our dwelling place! From everlasting to everlasting, you are Sovereign!

Many: Let your work be manifest to your servants and your glorious power to their children.

One: Holy One, you are our dwelling place! From everlasting to everlasting, you are God!

Many: Let your favor be upon us and prosper for us the work of our hands — O prosper the work of our hands!

***INVOCATION:**

Loving God, we gather before you in praise and thanksgiving, wonder and awe, doubt and uncertainty, joy and pain. We seek your guidance and direction, assurance and challenge, correction, and encouragement. Make your presence known among us this day. Let your Spirit reign in our worship, in our hearts, and in our lives. Just your presence among us gives us comfort, strength, and joy. Be glorified in our love, O God. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 507 “Jesus – The Very Thought to Me”**

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

Gracious God, we hear the direction in biblical law, and we can reduce our faith into all the things we cannot do. We can begin to perceive following you to a way of life that restricts our choices and binds us to certain behaviors. Help us to recognize that life with you transcends the rules and invites us to loving you, our neighbor, and ourselves. Through the Law, the Prophets, and the Messiah, you have helped us know how to love better and more. Help us again today.. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Beloved, God loves you and your journey. With the help of God, continue on this journey with faith, hope, trust, and love.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

OLD TESTAMENT: Deuteronomy 34:1-12

34 Then Moses hiked up from the Moabite plains to Mount Nebo, the peak of the Pisgah slope, which faces Jericho. The Lord showed him the whole land: the Gilead region as far as Dan’s territory; ² all the parts belonging to Naphtali along with the land of Ephraim and

Manasseh, as well as the entirety of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea; ³ also the arid southern plain, and the plain—including the Jericho Valley, Palm City—as far as Zoar.

⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses: “This is the land that I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob when I promised: ‘I will give it to your descendants.’ I have shown it to you with your own eyes; however, you will not cross over into it.” ⁵ Then Moses, the Lord’s servant, died—right there in the land of Moab, according to the Lord’s command. ⁶ The Lord buried him in a valley in Moabite country across from Beth-peor. Even now, no one knows where Moses’ grave is. ⁷ Moses was 120 years old when he died. His eyesight wasn’t impaired, and his vigor hadn’t diminished a bit.

⁸ Back down in the Moabite plains, the Israelites mourned Moses’ death for thirty days. At that point, the time for weeping and for mourning Moses was over.

⁹ Joshua, Nun’s son, was filled with wisdom because Moses had placed his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to Joshua, and they did exactly what the Lord commanded Moses.

¹⁰ No prophet like Moses has yet emerged in Israel; Moses knew the Lord face-to-face! ¹¹ That’s not even to mention all those signs and wonders that the Lord sent Moses to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh, to all his servants,

and to his entire land— ¹²as well as all the extraordinary power that Moses displayed before Israel’s own eyes!

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17

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SECOND TESTAMENT: Acts 10:44-48

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on everyone who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ They heard them speaking in other languages and praising God. Peter asked, ⁴⁷ “These people have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Surely no one can stop them from being baptized with water, can they?” ⁴⁸ He directed that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited Peter to stay for several days.

***GOSPEL: Matthew 22:34-46**

Great commandment

³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had left the Sadducees speechless, they met together. ³⁵ One of them, a legal expert, tested him. ³⁶ “Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ He replied, “*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind.*

³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the

second is like it: *You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.* ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

Question about David’s son

⁴¹ Now as the Pharisees were gathering, Jesus asked them, ⁴² “What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?”

“David’s son,” they replied.

⁴³ He said, “Then how is it that David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, called him Lord when he said, ⁴⁴ *The Lord said to my lord, ‘Sit at my right side until I turn your enemies into your footstool’?* ⁴⁵ If David calls him Lord, how can he be David’s son?” ⁴⁶ Nobody was able to answer him. And from that day forward nobody dared to ask him anything.

MESSAGE: Jesus’ Challenge

Today we heard a miracle! Did you hear it? The Pharisees and Jesus agreed on something! When you think about it, both Jesus and the Pharisees had companion careers. They all had to know all the 613 Jewish laws, the Torah, and what the prophets of hundreds of years before had said. I’m glad I didn’t have to take that final exam. The problem came with the interpretation of those laws. Also there was the question did people actually keep all these commandments? Jesus had already spoken, in chapter

15, of the need for the heart to be renewed so that people would produce words and deeds which were appropriate, rather than making them impure. Jesus' challenge in the Sermon on the Mount was that the heart should be renewed, not just that the outward actions should conform with the proper standard. How can this be done?

Even those of us who have spent our whole lives trying to follow Jesus and live by his grace and love know that the heart doesn't seem to get renewed all in one go. Many, many bits of darkness and impurity still lurk in its depths, and sometimes take a lot of work, prayer and counsel to dig out and replace with the love which we all agree should really be there.

Let's go back to what Jesus and the Pharisees agreed on. Verses 35 – 40. ³⁵ a legal expert, tested Jesus. ³⁶ "Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?" ³⁷ He replied, "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind.*" ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: *You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.* ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."

Verse 37 are very important words and still are to all Jews. They are the beginning of a prayer called the "Shema". This prayer is spoken by Jews twice a day The Shema is Judaism's most central daily declaration of

faith, which begins with the Hebrew verse: "*Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One*" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The passages of the Shema are also hand-written on parchment and placed inside *mezuzot* on doorposts.

Having this prayer remembered as you go in and out of your home, plus saying the prayer twice daily helps the commandments come into their own.; when they are seen not as orders to be obeyed in our own strength, but as invitations and promises to a new way of life in which, bit by bit, hatred and pride can be left behind and love can become a reality. Perhaps we should follow this Jewish practice.

So Jesus and the Pharisees agree on this commandment, it was Jesus' turn to ask them a question. Verses 42 – 46 have this question: Jesus speaks, ⁴² "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" "David's son," they replied.

⁴³ He said, "Then how is it that David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, called him Lord when he said, ⁴⁴ *The Lord said to my lord, 'Sit at my right side until I turn your enemies into your footstool'*?" ⁴⁵ If David calls him Lord, how can he be David's son?"

I always found this passage to be a tongue twister and I didn't understand it. Rev. Barclay writes that the first Lord is God. The second Lord is the Messiah. That is to say, David calls the Messiah Lord. But, if the Messiah is David's son, how could David call his own son Lord? The

clear result of this argument is that **it is not adequate to call the Messiah Son of David. He is not David's son; he is David's lord.** Jesus is saying here, "It is not enough to call the Messiah Son of David. It is not enough to think of him as a prince of David's line and an earthly conqueror. They must go beyond that, for the Messiah is David's lord."

Now we come to the true reason Jesus is asking this question. David was a great warrior and king. When the people thought of a Messiah, they pictured a military leader who would defeat the Romans and any other oppressing nations. The Jews would be victorious. However, Jesus knew better.

This question and answer is the beginning of Jesus' teaching to change the minds of the people. The Messiah would not be a warrior. However, Jesus had to take his time and slowly make this truth evident to the people. If he spoke too soon, his ministries would come to an end quickly.

But how is he going to change their minds and visions? What's the opposite of war and violence? LOVE! Bingo! And now we are back where we started; **love.** *"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind."* And the second commandment is *"You must love your neighbor as you love yourself."* Amen

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"
Video

PASTORAL PRAYER:

OUR LORD'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE: 773

Remember me, remember me.

O Jesus, remember me.

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

Generosity is a spiritual discipline rooted in love. When we give of ourselves in time, treasure, and talent, we make our love for God and neighbor tangible in the lives of our community. So, let our love show through the gifts we bring to the glory of God and love of all.

OFFERTORY: "With Prayerful Heart" Bertha R. Frick

***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**

Holy Love, we dedicate these gifts to you in hope and trust that, through you, our generosity makes a

difference in the world. We give you thanks in advance for the fruit nurtured by this offering. As you bless these gifts, also bless the giver and those entrusted with the stewardship of these resources in your name and for your church and world. Amen.

Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, Wayne Huss, our Beloved Country.

***CLOSING HYMN: 457 “Jesus, I Live to You”**

***BENEDICTION:**

Let love be your law. Let love be your compass. Let love abound and abide.

And, know that the God of love is with you and for you, now and forever.

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: “In His Presence” Bertha R. Frick

PRAYER LIST: Cindy Jablonski, Carol Bulva, Jim Warning, Kim Holmes, Becky Ballard, Russ Hartmann, Marilyn Paul, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Pam and Syd Safriet,