**St. John United Church of Christ**

***“In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve”***

May 16, 2021 Seventh Sunday of Easter

Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor Ritch Alexander, Organist

Karen Gaines and Connie Ahlers Chris McMillan, Guest Organist

9:30 a.m. Zoom & In-Person Worship 11:00 a.m. Outdoor Worship

9:30 a.m. Sunday School for Children (618) 877-6060

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**Following safety guidelines, please keep social distance, mask up, and speak or sing the bold print moderately.**

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN

From Desmond Tutu’s book God’s Dream

“God cries, too, when we hurt others and are our­selves hurt.”

PRELUDE Prelude in F Major J.S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

We gather in the presence of the One who abandons no one.

***Come Holy Spirit, our advocate and comforter.***

All are welcome in this sacred place, made holy through your presence with us.

***Open our hearts and minds this day, guide us into a loving relationship with all your children.***

We gather as God’s beloved people, leaving no one outside.

***Spark us with a word of life and radical belonging— a message that we share with others as we seek to live out Christ’s love.***

We call on the name of God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us.

*(Rev. Amy Petré Hill)*

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HYMN  ***“Blest Be the Tie that Binds”***

Words: John Fawcett. Music: Johann G. Nägeli; arr. Lowell Mason

***Blest be the tie that binds***

***Our hearts in Christian love;***

***The fellowship of kindred minds***

***Is like to that above.***

***Before our Father’s throne***

***We pour our ardent prayers***

***Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one***

***Our comforts and our cares.***

***We share our mutual woes***

***Each other’s burdens bear;***

***And often for each other flows***

***The sympathizing tear.***

***From sorrow, toil, and pain,***

***And sin we shall be free;***

***And perfect love and friendship reign***

***Through all eternity.***

RESPONSIVE READING

Creator, we come together in community, as one heart and body.

**Braid us together. Let us be bound in love to one another.**

We recognize in community when one of us struggles, all of us struggle.

**Braid us together. Let us be bound in love to one another.**

We join together this morning with a new desire for understanding those in our midst.

**Braid us together. Let us be bound in love to one another.**

We come to sing a song of hope. We come to dance a dance of peace. We come speaking the words of scripture that inspire.

**Braid us together. Let us be bound in love to one another.**

We are here. In this place. Let us be moved to understand the journey of others a little bit better today. And let us be ever mindful of the opportunities that will present themselves to us.

**Braid us together. Let us be bound in love to one another.** (Jeffrey Dale)

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Leviticus 19:33-34

SOLO *Olivet*  George Blake

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 25:34-40

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REFLECTION

HYMN ***“O Christ, the Healer, We Have Come”***

Words: Fred Pratt Green, Music: Robert A. Schumann

***O Christ, the healer, we have come***

***To pray for health to plead for friends.***

***How can we fail to be restored***

***When reached by love than never ends.***

***From every ailment flesh endures***

***Our bodies clamor to be freed;***

***Yet in our hearts we would confess***

***That wholeness is our deepest need.***

***In conflicts that destroy our health***

***We recognize the world’s disease;***

***Our common life declares our ills.***

***Is there no cure, O Christ, for these?***

***Grant that we all, made one in faith,***

***In your community may find***

***The wholeness that, enriching us,***

***Shall reach the whole of human kind.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD’S PRAYER

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.***

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION & PRAYER

***Loving God, open us to a new world. Where there is no longer least and greatest, rich and poor, haves and have nots. A world where all are treated as beloved precious children. Until that day comes, bless our small contributions of time, talent and treasures and may it work towards the building of your new world. Amen.***

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF ASSURANCE

Hear the Good News: No valley is too despairing, broken, or dusty for God to enter in. No fear, no chaos, no hopelessness is beyond the reach of the One whose breath gives us life.

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**Through Christ, God sees only our wholeness. Through Christ, forgiveness, love, and new life are always possible.**

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Make all things new.

**We are reclaimed and remade by the Spirit of Life. In our brokenness and in our wholeness we are God’s beloved. Thanks be to God. Amen.** (Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe, based on Ezekiel 37)

HYMN  ***“He’s Got the Whole World”***

Words and Music: African-American spiritual; arr. Eugene Thomas

***He’s got the whole world, in his hands***

***He’s got the whole world, in his hands***

***He’s got the whole world, in his hands***

***He’s got the whole world in his hands.***

***He’s got the wind and the rain, in his hands***

***He’s got the wind and the rain, in his hands***

***He’s got the wind and the rain, in his hands***

***He’s got the whole world in his hands.***

***He’s got the tiny little baby, in his hands***

***He’s got the tiny little baby, in his hands***

***He’s got the tiny little baby, in his hands***

***He’s got the whole world in his hands.***

***He’s got you and me, brother, in his hands***

***He’s got you and me, sister, in his hands***

***He’s got all of us together, in his hands***

***He’s got the whole world in his hands.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Classical Postlude* Franz Joseph Haydn

“God gave us eternal life,” says the writer of 1 John, “and this life is in his Son” (5:11, NRSV). We gather to worship the Giver of life. Welcome!

The **altar flowers** are given in celebration of the May 18th birthday of our Mother, Justine Walker, by her daughters, Carol Kovach and Linda Flach.

If you would like to place **flowers on the altar**, and pick them up Monday, please call **Sue Goedeke** at (618) 791-0137. If you would like to sponsor the **bulletins**, please call the **church office** at 877-6060. The next available dates are May 30 and July 18.

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**THIS WEEK**

Today: Sunday School for Children

In-person and Zoom Worship 9:30 a.m.

Outdoor Service 11:00 a.m.

Monday: Al-Anon, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

Tuesday: Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

Zoom Bible Study, 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday: TOPS, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Friday: Herald Deadline

Next Sunday: Pentecost Sunday

Communion

Wear Red

3rd Grade Bible Presentations

Sunday School for Children

In-person and Zoom Worship 9:30 a.m.

Outdoor Service 11:00 a.m.

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of Billie Meyer who passed from this life on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. A funeral service was held Saturday, May 15, 2021. May the peace and comfort that come from God sustain her loved ones during this time of grief.

**OUR PRAYERS**

**Nursing and Assisted Living**

Ruth Buer, Loretta Cook, Hilde Few, JoAnn King, Mary Lee Krohne, and Karen Luddeke.

**At Home**

Ritch Alexander, Rose Marie Bauer, Isabella Boyer, Marlene Brokaw, Myra Cook, Janet Cowley, Randy Fischer, Bonnie Fornaszewski, Mary Franz, Norman Hente, Bill McAmish, Sandy Mueller, David Oliver Jr., Cliff Robertson, Merle Rose, Valara Schorfheide, Marge Schmidt, June Stille, and Don Young.

**Illinois South Conference**

Edwardsville St. Paul UCC, Rev. Diane Grohmann. Evansville St. John UCC, Pastor Kevin Hirsch, Lay Supply Pastor. Retired Pastor Rev. Russell and Doris Miller, Metropolis, IL.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Leviticus 19:33-34**

**33**When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. **34**The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

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**Matthew 25:34-40**

**4**Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; **35**for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36**I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ **37**Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? **38**And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? **39**And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ **40**And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

