**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| April 23, 2023  |  3rd Sunday of Easter (A) |
| Rev. Charles Preston |  Dan Comer, Music Technician |
| 9:30 Zoom & In-Person Worship | 9:30 Sunday School for Children |
| 2901 Nameoki Road | Granite City, IL 62040 |
| E-stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.com |  (618) 877-6060 |

Web-stjohnuccgranitecity.com

Large print bulletins are available from the Ushers.

***Bold italic denotes congregation reads or sings.***

\*Denotes all who are able, please stand.

**WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD**

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC, WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN Acts 2:14a, 36-41

“For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.” (Vs. 39)

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

 *Come As You Are* Crowder

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER1

What shall we render in thanks to God?

How shall we show gratitude to our Creator?

 ***We will gather with God’s people for worship;***

 ***we will renew our vows to our Maker.***

How shall we respond to the Power who frees us,

who rescues us from our futile ways?

 ***We will offer the sacrifice of our thanksgiving,***

 ***and enlist once more as servants of the Most High.***

How will we open our eyes to Christ’s presence with us?

Shall our hearts burn with the joy of recognition?

***We will stop to listen and to offer hospitality.***

***We will break bread with others in mutual love.***

Let us pray together:

 ***We will call on your name, O God, for you have offered us the cup of salvation and welcomed us into your family. How can we thank you for the love you have shown us in Jesus Christ? Meet us again in this hour, that we may***

-2-

***grow in faith and be responsive to your truth. Fill us with hope, renewing our confidence to face life in faithful trust and obedience. Amen.***

\*HYMN ***“Open My Eyes, That I May See”*** #480

\*LITANY OF CONFESSION2

Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus,

we walk with Jesus, but do not always recognize him.

***Yet Jesus persists, opening our hearts to truth and love as we share time and table with him.***

Let us confess the times we have not listened or paid heed to what Jesus tells us.

 ***Merciful God, you walk with us, even when we fail to see;***

 ***you call to us, even when we fail to hear;***

 ***you listen for our petitions, even when we fail to speak;***

 ***you whisper words of love,***

 ***even when we respond with indifference;***

 ***you call us to repentance,***

 ***even when we don’t see the need.***

 ***Forgive us, Holy One.***

 ***Heal our hardness of heart, that we may turn to you anew.***

 ***Open our minds to your Spirit,***

 ***that we may hear your words.***

 ***Refresh our souls, that we may speak of your love.***

 ***In the redeemer’s name, we pray. Amen.***

Our God is a redeeming God!

God’s promise of redemption and forgiveness of sins is kept.

In Jesus Christ, our Risen Savior, we are forgiven.

 ***Alleluia! And thanks be to God!***

**WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

EPISTLE LESSON 1 Peter 1:17-23 pg. 218

SPECIAL MUSIC *Because He Lives* Celtic Worship

GOSPEL LESSON Luke 24:13-35 pg. 84

REFLECTION

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

-3-

\*HYMN ***“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”*** #504

PASTORAL PRAYER & UNISON LORD’S PRAYER

 ***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.***

INVITATION TO STEWARDSHIP

OFFERTORY  *My Offering* Third Day

\*RESPONSE ***“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”***

Traditional Doxology pg.#34

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;***

***praise him, all creatures here below;***

***praise him above, ye heavenly host:***

***praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION1

 ***For all your saints, O God, who have guided our lives, for all the ways you have saved us from ourselves, for all the times your love has been poured out on us, we give thanks. You have taught us to offer hospitality and to share what you have given. This we do, with joy and gratitude. Receive these tokens of our renewed dedication. Amen.***

\*HYMN  ***“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”***  #496

\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE *The Swan* Saint-Sëans

1Adapted and Reprinted, with permission, from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2* by Lavon Bayler. Copyright 1992 by The Pilgrim Press.

2 Adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2014 Edition*, Copyright 2013 by Abingdon Press. Used by permission.

With the psalmist we proclaim, “You prepare a table before me … my cup overflows” (Psalm 23:5, NRSV). Welcome to worship as we praise and thank the Lord our Shepherd.

The **bulletin** is given in celebration of the 21st birthday of my Granddaughter Amelia Gray by her Grandmother, Glenda Mitchell.

-4-

If you would like to place **flowers on the altar**, and pick them up after church or on Monday, please call **Karen Orr** at (618) 558-4192. If you would like to sponsor the **bulletins**, please call the **church office** at (618) 877-6060. The next available dates to sponsor the bulletin are April 30th and May 7th.

Thank you to **Connie Ahlers** for serving as liturgist, to **Bob Jacobs** for greeting and to **Dan Comer** for serving as music technician.

**THIS WEEK**

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

 Sunday School for Children, 9:30 a.m.

 Fellowship Hall Rental, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

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

Tuesday: Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

 Policies & Procedures Meeting, 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday: TOPS, 9:00 a.m.

 Bell Choir, 5:30 p.m.

Thursday: Church Women United, 9:30 a.m.

Saturday: Volunteer Workday at DuBois

 **Pre-concert Dinner, 4:30 p.m.**

 **“Unbroken” Concert, 6:00 p.m.**

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

 Sunday School for Children, 9:30 a.m.

 5th Sunday Cash Plate

 Game Night, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

**MISSION OF THE MONTH**

Our April Mission of the Month is “Random Acts of Kindness” - helping people or places in need.

**EVENING GUILD**

On May 1st, Evening Guild will host their Spring Gathering. All ladies of the church are welcome to attend. There will be a dinner and a bible story quilt program by Nancy Eisenhauer. The cost is $15.00 per person. We hope to see you there!

**HANGING BASKET SALE**

If you didn’t turn in your hanging basket order, we can still accept order forms today, Sunday, April 23rd. Pickup will be Friday, May 12th, and Saturday, May 13th, just in time for Mother’s Day that Sunday! These baskets would be a great gift for mom on her special day!

-5-

**FREE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN CONCERT**

Next Saturday, April 29th at 6:00 p.m. is the free contemporary Christian concert featuring the group “Unbroken”. If you haven’t made reservations for the dinner at 4:30, you have through **tomorrow, April 24th** to do so. Simply fill out the included reservation form and turn it in, along with your payment of $15.00 per person, to the church office. You do NOT need to attend the dinner in order to attend the concert.

**CHURCH BARBECUE**

On Saturday, May 6th, we will be hosting a church barbecue. The menu includes the following: Pork Steak Dinner w/ 2 sides for $12.00, Bratwurst Dinner w/ 2 sides for $12.00, or a Hotdog Dinner w/ 1 side for $6.00. Desserts will be available for an additional cost. The barbecue will run from 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. or until we sell out. Tickets for your meal can be purchased from Kiki Cochran (618-503-3608).

**OUR PRAYERS**

**Nursing, Assisted, & Independent Living**

Earl Buenger, Marcia Buenger, Ruth Buer, Hilde Few, JoAnn King, Karen Luddeke, Marjorie Schmidt, and Jerry Shonk.

**At Home**

Chloe Affolter, Isabella Boyer, Carol Braundmeier, Christopher Clark, Myra Cook, Bonnie Fornaszewski, Mary Franz, Luitgard Fries, Melba Grady, Lou Hasse, Norman Hente, Chuck King, Mina McBrian, Cindy Meyer, Sandy Mueller, Cliff Robertson, Merle Rose, June Stille, and Nancy Wilson.

**Illinois South Conference**

Smithton St. John’s UCC. Saint Jacob UCC, Rev. Philip (Kate) Barbier. Retired Pastor, Rev. Wesley and Doris Bornemann. St. Louis, MO.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**1 Peter 1:17-23**

**17**If you invoke as Father the one who judges impartially according to each person’s work, live in fear during the time of your exile. **18**You know that you were ransomed from the futile conduct inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold **19**but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. **20**He was destined before the foundation of the world but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. **21**Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your trust and hope are in God. **22**Now that you have purified

your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual affection, love one another deeply from the heart. **23**You have

-6-

been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.

**Luke 24:13-35**

**13**Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, **14**and talking

with each other about all these things that had happened. **15**While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, **16**but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. **17**And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. **18**Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?” **19**He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, **20**and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. **21**But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. **22**Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, **23**and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. **24**Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.” **25**Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! **26**Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” **27**Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

**28**As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. **29**But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. **30**When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. **31**Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. **32**They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” **33**That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. **34**They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” **35**Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

***“Open My Eyes, That I May See”***

***Open my eyes, that I may see***

***Glimpses of truth you have for me;***

***Place in my hands the wonderful key***

***That shall unlock and set me free.***

***Silently now, on bended knee,***

***Ready I wat your will to see;***

***Open my eyes, illumine me,***

***Spirit divine!***

***Open my ears, that I may hear***

***Voices of truth you send so clear;***

***And while the message sounds in my ear,***

***Everything false will disappear.***

***Silently now, on bended knee,***

***Ready I wait your will to see;***

***Open my ears, illumine me,***

***Spirit divine!***

***Open my mouth, and let me bear***

***Gladly the warm truth everywhere;***

***Open my heart, and let me prepare***

***Love with your children thus to share.***

***Silently now, on bended knee,***

***Ready I wait your will to see;***

***Open my heart, illumine me,***

***Spirit divine!***

***“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”***

***I am weak, but thou art strong;***

***Jesus, keep me from all wrong;***

***I’ll be satisfied as long***

***As I walk, let me walk close to thee.***

***Through this world of toil and snares,***

***If I falter, Lord, who cares?***

***Who with me my burden shares?***

***None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.***

***When my feeble life is o’er, time for me will be no more;***

***Guide me gently, safely o’er***

***To thy kingdom shore, to thy shore.***

***Just a closer walk with thee,***

***Grant it, Jesus, is my plea,***

***Daily walking close to thee:***

***Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.***

***“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”***

***What a fellowship, what a joy divine,***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms;***

***What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms.***

***Leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus)***

***Safe and secure from all alarms;***

***Leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus)***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms.***

***O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms;***

***O how bright the path grows from day to day,***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms.***

***Leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus)***

***Safe and secure from all alarms;***

***Leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus)***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms.***

***What have I to dread, what have I to fear,***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms?***

***I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms.***

***Leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus)***

***Safe and secure from all alarms;***

***Leaning, leaning, (leaning on Jesus)***

***Leaning on the everlasting arms.***