**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| May 21, 2023 |  7th Sunday of Easter(A)  |
| Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor | Dr. Almeda Lahr-Well |
| 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

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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 Matthew 25:35-36

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me’”

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

 *Brighter Days* Blessing Offor

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.***

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O God, come into our place of worship this day and enliven us.

***Come into each heart, each story, each prayer, each song, each life here today so that we may live and love with purpose, courage, and beauty.***

O God, who has created each of us in your image and made us one body, each as holy vessels of your presence to one another, create in and among us a holy place.

***Give us hearts and minds, we pray, to be open to human vulnerability, to listen to each other with patient and thoughtful attention and support, to perceive the grace of the differences in our embodied experience, to resist what excludes and diminishes, and to dismantle what acts as barriers to flourishing together in love and justice.***

O God, help us to trust your Spirit’s work to make us whole, together in relationships of mutuality and partnership, in sacred rhythms of giving and receiving.

 ***Gather us together to be your people in the world.***

In Jesus’ name we pray,

 ***Amen.***

\*HYMN ***“Hymn of Promise”*** #515

\*RESPONSIVE READING *(Jeffrey Dale)*

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.***

**WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

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HEBREW SCRIPTURE Isaiah 58:8-11 pg. 647

ANTHEM *Come Christians Join and Sing* Chancel Choir

GOSPEL LESSON John 1:1-5, John 8:12 pgs. 86 and 95

REFLECTION Help and Hope

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

\*HYMN ***“On Eagle’s Wings”*** #438

PASTORAL PRAYER AND 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.***

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION

OFFERTORY *Rest in the Father* Stephen Stanley

\*SUNG RESPONSE ***“Glory Be to the Father”***  #734

***Glory be to the Father***

***And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.***

***As it was in the beginning***

***Is now and ever shall be***

***World without end, Amen, Amen.***

\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

 ***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 they work toward the building of your new world. Amen.***

\*HYMN ***“God Be with You”*** #716

\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE

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In John 17, Jesus prays that his Father will protect and unify his followers. In confidence that God binds us together as Christ’s family, let us join in worship.

The **bulletin** is given in honor of Corey Fischer’s 36th birthday on May 20th and in memory of Valara Schorfheide’s birthday on May 24th by the Fischer family.

If you would like to place **flowers on the altar**, and pick them up after church or on Monday, please call **Pam Sullivan** (618-540-0098). 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 July 16th & 30th.

Thank you to **Karen Gaines** for leading our WISE worship service, to **Rae-Ellen Vogeler** for greeting and to **Dr. Almeda Lahr-Well** for serving as guest organist.

**THIS WEEK**

Today: **Herald Deadline**

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

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

 Fellowship Hour by Chancel Choir Tenors & Basses

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

Tuesday: Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

 Bible Study, 12:30 p.m.

Wednesday: TOPS, 9:00 a.m.

 Bell Choir, 5:30 p.m.

Next Sunday: **Pentecost Sunday - Wear Red!**

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

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

 Communion

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

**WITH SYMPATHY**

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of **Betty Horton** who died on Monday, May 15, 2023. May the peace and comfort that come from God sustain her loved ones during this time of grief.

We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of **Norman Hente** who died on Wednesday, May 17, 2023. A funeral service will be held at Irwin Chapel on Monday, May 22, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. May the peace and comfort that come from God sustain his loved ones during this time of grief.

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**MISSION OF THE MONTH**

Our May & June Mission of the Month is dedicated to the Church World Service Blankets and Tools offering. Envelopes were included in the May edition of the Herald. Additional envelopes can be found on the table in the Narthex.

**SCRIP**

Order for May will be submitted TODAY with delivery scheduled for next week. Is June still the most popular month for weddings? Consider gift cards to a store on the registry. Do you know a high school graduate heading off to college? A gift card to Target might be useful to decorate the new dorm room. Master list of vendors and St. John “favorites” order forms are on the table in the narthex. Give order form and check payable to St John UCC to Betty Meszaros. Cash is also happily accepted but only if giving order to Betty in person. Betty will be in fellowship hall after worship to accept your order or provide additional information. Cost is face value of the card with no tax or service fee. Rebate is automatically sent to church. Contact Melissa Lane at 314-575-7627 or Betty Meszaros at 618-451-1968 if any questions.

**SAVE OUR PLANT**

At the last Granite City Council meeting, Mayor Mike Parkinson announced a petition drive to save jobs at the US Steel Granite City plant. The goal is to gather 20,000 signatures from the region that is being impacted by the potential downsizing of the plant. The hope is to deliver these petitions to US Steel offices in Pittsburgh mid-June. Only names and addresses are requested on the petitions and no telephone numbers. Anyone over 18 can sign but only one petition please. Not limited to registered voters or Madison County residents. If you are willing to sign, please see Betty Meszaros in fellowship hall after worship today. Contact her at 618 451-1968 if questions. Thank you for supporting our community.

**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, Chuck King, Mina McBrian, Cindy Meyer, Sandy Mueller, Cliff Robertson, Merle Rose, June Stille, and Nancy Wilson.

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**Illinois South Conference**

Valmeyer St. John UCC, Rev. Steven (Carla) Boorsma. Waterloo St.

Paul UCC, Rev. Jeff (Bobbie) McCarn. Retired Pastor, Rev. Thomas Nadelin, St. Louis, MO.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Isaiah 58:8-11**

**8**Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. **9**Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, “Here I am.” If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, **10**if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. **11**The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.

**John 1:1-5, John 8:12**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was in the beginning with God. **3**All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being **4**in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. **5**The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

**12**Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

**Try our QR code! This little square will take you directly to our secure MyVanco website where you can contribute to any of our various funds. Just follow three simple steps:**

1. **Open your smart phone’s camera app**
2. **Aim the camera at the black and white square below and a link will appear on your screen.**
3. **Click the link and you’ll be directed to our donations website. From there, you can select a fund to which you’d like to make a contribution. Thank you!**

***“Hymn of Promise”***

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***In the bulb there is a flower;***

***In the seed, an apple tree;***

***In cocoons, a hidden promise:***

***Butterflies will soon be free!***

***In the cold and snow of winter***

***There’s a spring that waits to be,***

***Unrevealed until its season,***

***Something God alone can see.***

***There’s a song in every silence,***

***Seeking word and melody;***

***There’s a dawn in every darkness***

***Bringing hope to you and me.***

***From the past will come the future;***

***What it holds, a mystery,***

***Unrevealed until its season,***

***Something God alone can see.***

***In our end is our beginning;***

***In our time, infinity;***

***In our doubt there is believing;***

***In our life, eternity;***

***In our death, a resurrection;***

***At the last, a victory,***

***Unrevealed until its season,***

***Something God alone can see.***

***“God Be with You”***

***God be with you till we meet again,***

***By his counsels guide, uphold you,***

***With his sheep securely fold you;***

***God be with you till we meet again.***

***God be with you till we meet again,***

***‘neath his wings protecting hide you,***

***Daily manna still provide you;***

***God be with you till we meet again.***

***God be with you till we meet again;***

***If life’s perils should confound you,***

***God will put his arms around you;***

***God be with you till we meet again.***

\*\**On Eagle’s Wings* not printed due to copyright.