**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| September 17, 2023 |  16th Sunday after Pentecost (A)  |
| Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor | Dave Ekstrand, Dir. Of Music |
| 9:30 Zoom & In-Person Worship | 9:30 Sunday School for Children |
| 2901 Nameoki Road | Granite City, IL 62040 |
| E-stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.comWeb-stjohnuccgranitecity.com |  (618) 877-6060Instagram: @stjohnucc2901gc |

YouTube: gcstjohnucc Facebook: Search St. John UCC Granite City

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 AND BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*GREETING ONE ANOTHER WITH A WAVE

\*SUNG RESPONSE ***“Let There Be Peace on Earth”*** #614

***Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;***

***let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.***

***With God our creator, children all are we.***

***Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.***

***Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.***

***With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:***

***to take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.***

***Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.***

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron’s sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.” (Vss. 20-21)

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

 *Lord of the Dance* Shaker Melody

CENTERING THOUGHT1

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*O God, you are our strength and our salvation. You uphold and save us. We offer you our very lives.*

CALL TO WORSHIP2 AND PRAYER

We come to hear the story of God’s faithfulness to past generations.

***But we are looking to the future, not the past.***

Our God is also God of the future, the God who was with our ancestors will be with us as well.

***Then we can go forward in hope. Whatever else fails, God remains faithful.***

Let us pray together.

***Holy One, we know that nothing can separate us from your love. When we go astray, you call us back. When we wrong others, you call us to repent. When others wrong us, you call us to forgiveness. We praise and thank you for leading us in your good ways. Strengthen us with the wisdom of your teachings and your call to work together, in Jesus’ name. Amen.***

\*HYMN  ***“Thy Word”***  #664

\*RESPONSIVE EPISTLE LESSON

 Adapted from Romans 14:1-12

Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.

***Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.***

Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat, for God has welcomed them.

***Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike.***

Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

 ***Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord.***

Also those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God,

***While those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.***

For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves.

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.

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***For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.***

Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister?

***For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written,***

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

 ***So then, each one of us will be held accountable.***

**PRESENTATION OF BIBLES**

INTRODUCTION

LITANY OF WISDOM BASED ON PROVERBS 3

 My children, says the Lord, do not forget my teaching,

 but let your heart keep my commandments;

 ***For length of days and years of life they will give us.***

 Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you, says the Lord.

 ***Inscribe them on the tablet of our heart!***

 Then, O Lord, shall we find favor in your sight,

 ***And good repute among the people.***

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,

 ***And do not rely on your own understanding.***

In all your ways acknowledge him,

 ***And he will make straight your paths.***

Honor the Lord and turn away from evil.

 ***It will be healing and refreshment for your body.***

Keep sound wisdom and prudence,

 ***And they shall be life for your soul.***

Then you shall walk on your way securely,

 ***For the Lord will be our confidence.***

SCRIPTURE READINGS Proverbs 9:9-10

 Philippians 1:27

 John 3:16

PRESENTATIONS

SONG ***“The B-I-B-L-E”*** (Sing 3 times; faster each time!)

 ***The B-I-B-L-E, yes, that’s the book for me,***

 ***I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E.***

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SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS TIME

**WE HEAR GOD’S WORD**

HEBREW SCRIPTURE LESSON Exodus 14:19-31 pg. 58

SPECIAL MUSIC *Voice of Truth* Dave Ekstrand

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 18:21-35 pg. 19

REFLECTION

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

\*HYMN ***“Our Father, We Have Wandered”***  #371

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.***

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION

OFFERTORY *Come Share the Lord* Leech

\*SUNG RESPONSE3 ***“I Then Shall Live”*** Vs. 3 #372

***Your kingdom come around and through and in me,***

***your power and glory, let them shine through me;***

***your hallowed name, oh, may I bear with honor,***

***and may your living kingdom come in me.***

***The Bread of Life, oh, may I share with honor,***

***and may you feed a hungry world through me.***

\*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

 ***God of mercy and forgiveness, we respond to your love for us with our offerings. May our mercy and forgiveness for others be shown not only through these gifts, but also through our lives as we “live to the Lord” forever. Amen.***

\*HYMN ***“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”*** #712

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\*BENEDICTION

\*POSTLUDE  *Help Us Accept Each Other* Beck

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In the words of the Israelites: “The Lord is … the reason for [our] song, because he has saved [us]” (Exodus 15:2, CEV). Welcome to worship!

The **bulletin** is given in celebration of the 24th birthday on September 22nd of my Grandson Spencer Gray by Glenda Mitchell.

If you would like to place **flowers on the altar**, and pick them up after church or on Monday, please call **Christie Roth** (618-931-6194). Flower Emporium offers $25 (small), $30 (medium), or $35 (large) arrangements. If you would like to sponsor the **bulletins**, please call the **church office** at (618) 877-6060. The next available date to sponsor the bulletin is October 29th.

Thank you to **Diane Peach** for serving as liturgist.



**THIS WEEK**

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

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

 3rd Grade Bible Presentations, 9:30 a.m.

 Fellowship Hour by Altar Guild & Ushering

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

Tuesday: Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

Wednesday: TOPS, 9:00 a.m.

 Head Start in Nursery, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

 Bell Choir, 5:30 p.m.

 Chancel Choir, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday: **Herald Deadline**

 GCC Band Rehearsal, 6:15-9:45 p.m.

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

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

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

**MISSION OF THE MONTH**

The September MOM is collecting children’s socks, undergarments, leggings, etc. to donate to the local school district’s social workers to distribute to district children in need.

**CEMETERY CHAIRS**

Wishes do come true! Chairs for the Maryville Chapel have been on our wish list and, thanks to a bunch of awesome people, we now have the funding! Appreciation to the Brotherhood, Trivia Night, Connie Ahlers, and Karen & David Gaines for their kindness.

**WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY**

World Communion Sunday is October 1st. We ask that everyone bring bags of flour that will be donated to community agencies.

**NEIGHBORS IN NEED**

On October 1st, we will begin collecting the Neighbors in Need offering. Offering envelopes can be found on the table in the Narthex and will be included in the October edition of the Herald. In 2023, the Neighbors in Need **“BEHOLD!”** theme continues. This year’s focus is on environmental impact. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these acts are harmful to creation. We must be better stewards of our planet!

**SCRIP**

TODAY is the day to turn in scrip orders for the month of September.  Please give your orders to Melissa Lane or talk with her in Fellowship Hall after worship for additional information. Next order will be submitted third Sunday of October (sausage dinner day) then the schedule changes to the second Sunday in November and December due to holiday business closures. December 10th will be the deadline to order in time for Christmas delivery. Master list of vendors and St John ”favorites“ order forms are on the table in the blue folder in the Narthex. Give order form and check payable to St. John UCC to Betty Meszaros at any time. Cash is also accepted but only if giving order to Betty in person. You can still participate in the program if not attending in-person worship. Just drop off or mail your check to the church with a note of cards you are ordering. Cost is face value of the card with no tax or service fee. Rebate is automatically sent to the church. Contact

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Melissa Lane 314 575-7627 or Betty Meszaros 618 451-1968 if questions.

**PLASTIC BOTTLE CAP COLLECTION**

We are collecting plastic bottle caps to assist Eleanor Reynolds in her Girl Scout bench project. Bottle caps should be put in the tub in the Narthex.



If sorting & cleaning are in your plans, this will be the perfect time to hold aside items to donate to the all-church rummage sale. The event will be held **September 28th & 29th** this year and items can be brought to the stage in Fellowship Hall between September 5th and September 27th. No large electronics or heavy items please. General rule of thumb: If you would have to pay for it to be recycled, item cannot be accepted. This sale is sponsored by the Evening Guild with assistance appreciated from family and friends. All proceeds are given to church projects or local charitable organizations. Please mark the following important dates on your calendar. **Volunteers are especially needed during Set Up and Pricing**:

Tuesday, September 26th – 9:00 a.m. Set up

Wednesday, September 27th – 9:00 a.m. Pricing

**Thursday, September 28th – 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

 **Open for Shoppers**

**Friday, September 29th – 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**

 **Open for Shoppers**



The Annual Sausage Dinner is right around the corner! It will be held on Sunday, October 15th from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and will be available for both dine in and carry out. Pricing is as follows:

**Dine In:** (all you can eat)

Adults - $15.00

Children 6-12 - $10.00

Children under 6 - Free

**Carry Out:**

 All ages - $15.00

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All dinners will include sausage, sauerkraut, applesauce, mashed potatoes & gravy, green beans, and dessert.

For those who can volunteer to help, there will be a sign up board in the back of the church for you to register.

**ATTENTION EVERYONE!!!!**

Yes, believe it or not, that time is rapidly drawing nearer! The Sausage Dinner and Country Store is just over a month away! It isn’t too early to start making the items you would love to make for the “Big Day” October 15th. Featured in the Country Store every year have been Christmas Items, quilts, afghans, craft items, candy, jams, jellies, home canned goods, and other baked goods. Put your best foot forward and roll up your sleeves so you can make this year’s Sausage Dinner and Country Store a Huge Success!

Thank you,

Donna Brandes, Chairperson 618-802-1072

Nancy Jacobs, Co-Chairperson 314-712-6388

**JUSTINE WALKER MEMORIAL NUT & CANDY SALE 2023**

It’s that time again to order your goodies from Terri Lynn Nut and Candy! All funds raised will go to support St. John Cemetery. Look for printed brochures in the Narthex and tower, as an attachment in the online bulletin and on the website. Please take a brochure home and choose your products. Once you choose your products be sure to fill in your order form, which will be on the last page. Payment at the time of ordering is required. Cash and checks are acceptable. Please make checks payable to St. John Cemetery.

If ordering remotely, you can submit your orders by:

* Phone to Joan Mueller 618-830-0647
* Email to stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.com
* You can either drop off your payment at church or mail to Joan Mueller - 4480 New Poag Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025

**PLEASE DO NOT USE THE DONATE BUTTON ON THE WEB PAGE AS IT IS NOT SET UP FOR FUND RAISERS.**

All orders and payments must be received by Sunday, October 8th. Your order will be delivered to you at church in late October/early November. If anyone is interested in taking orders outside of church, please contact Joan Mueller so she can provide brochures and order forms. We look forward to filling your orders and supporting our cemetery and their vital works. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Joan Mueller (618-830-0647). Thank you!

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**OUR PRAYERS**

**Hospital**

Carol Braundmeier is at Anderson Hospital.

**Nursing, Assisted, & Independent Living**

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

**At Home**

Chloe Affolter, Isabella Boyer, Christopher Clark, Bonnie Fornaszewski, Mary Franz, Luitgard Fries, Melba Grady, Lou Hasse, Ruth Hubbard, Chuck King, Mina McBrian, Cindy Meyer, Sandy Mueller, Cliff Robertson, June Stille, Janice Weeks, and Nancy Wilson.

**Illinois South Conference**

Freeburg St. Paul’s UCC, Rev. Andrew Lovins. Pension Board - UCC National Staff, Rev. Krista Betz, Belleville, IL. Retired Pastor, Rev. Nancy Spier-Lee and Kevin Lee, Dupo, IL.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Exodus 14:19-31**

**19**The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. **20**It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night. **21**Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and turned the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. **22**The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. **23**The Egyptians pursued and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh’s horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. **24**At the morning watch the Lord, in the pillar of fire and cloud, looked down on the Egyptian army and threw the Egyptian army into a panic. **25**He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, “Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.” **26**Then the Lord said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.” **27**So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. **28**The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. **29**But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. **30**Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead

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on the seashore. **31**Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

**Matthew 18:21-35**

**21**Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” **22**Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. **23**“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. **24**When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, **25**and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. **26**So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ **27**And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. **28**But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him by the throat he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ **29**Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ **30**But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. **31**When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. **32**Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. **33**Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ **34**And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. **35**So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

**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!**

***“Thy Word”***

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***Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet***

***And a light unto my path.***

***When I feel afraid, think I’ve lost my way,***

***Still you’re there right beside me.***

***And nothing will I fear***

***As long as you are near.***

***Please be near me to the end.***

***Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet***

***And a light unto my path.***

***I will not forget your love for me,***

***And yet my heart forever is wandering.***

***Jesus, be my guide***

***And hold me to your side;***

***And I will love you to the end.***

***Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet***

***And a light unto my path.***

*“Our Father, We Have Wandered”*  not printed due to Copyright.

***“Sent Forth by God’s Blessing”***

Words: Omer Westendorf. Music: Welsh folk tune; harm. Leland Sateren. Words © 1964 World Library Publications. Music Harm. © 1972 *Contemporary Worship 4: Hymns for Baptism and Holy Communion* (Admin. Augsburg Fortress). Reprinted by permission, CCLI License #1334401.

***Sent forth by God’s blessing***

***Our true faith confessing,***

***The people of God from this dwelling take leave.***

***The service is ended,***

***O now be extended***

***The fruits of our worship in all who believe.***

***The seed of the teaching,***

***Receptive souls reaching,***

***Shall blossom in action for God and for all.***

***God’s grace did invite us,***

***And love shall unite us***

***To work for God’s kingdom and answer the call.***

***With praise and thanksgiving***

***To God ever living,***

***The tasks of our everyday life we will face.***

***Our faith ever sharing,***

***In love ever caring,***

***Embracing God’s children of each tribe and race.***

***With your grace you feed us,***

***With your light now lead us:***

***Unite us as one in this life that we share.***

***Then may all the living***

***With praise and thanksgiving***

***Give honor to Christ and that name which we bear.***