**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

October 25, 2020 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor: Karla J. Frost Organist: Ritch Alexander

9:30 Worship (618) 877-6060

2901 Nameoki Rd. Granite City, IL 62040

E-stjohnucc2901gc@yahoo.com Web-stjohnuccgranitecity.com

**WE COME TO WORSHIP GOD**

**To follow safety guidelines**

**please keep social distance, masks up, and do not sing.**

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN

“Just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts.” 1 Thess. 2:4

PRELUDE *Prelude in C Major* J.S. Bach

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

“Which commandment in the law is the greatest?” someone asked.

***And the answer is: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”***

This is the greatest and first commandment, and a second is like it.

***We know it too: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”***

From age to age and generation to generation, God’s people have gathered to worship with love and commitment.

 ***Let us worship the everlasting God.***

 Let us pray:

-2-

***In remembrance of the saints who have handed the faith down to us from ages past, we give thanks to you, O God. For you inspired their work from generation to generation. We believe that you continue to lead your people in our time, sending prophets to speak your truth, and calling for our response. Bless our worship today, and the work we do to fulfill your mission, as together we follow your great commands. Amen.***

HYMN ***“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”*** Vss. 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

***O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,***

***our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.***

***Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure; sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.***

***A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,***

***short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.***

***Time, like an ever rolling stream, bears all of us away;***

***we fly, forgotten, as a dream dies at the opening day.***

***O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,***

***be now our guide while life shall last, and our eternal home.***

RESPONSIVE PSALTER READING From Psalm 90

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.

***Before the mountains were brought forth,***

***or ever you had formed the earth and the world,***

***from everlasting to everlasting you are God.***

You turn us back to dust, and say, “Turn back, you mortals.”

***For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past, or like a watch in the night.***

You sweep them away; they are like a dream,

like grass that is renewed in the morning;

 ***In the morning it flourishes and is renewed;***

 ***in the evening it fades and withers.***

Turn, O Lord! How long? Have compassion on your servants!

***Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,***

***so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.***

-3-

HEBREW SCRIPTURE READING Deuteronomy 34:1-12

SOLO  *Amazing Grace* Lani Smith

GOSPEL READING Matthew 22:34-46

REFLECTION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE, LORD’S PRAYER & RESPONSE

 ***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 & BLESSING

 ***With our offerings we share of ourselves, O God, willing and able to obey your commands. Bless our gifts so that they may carry your love to our neighbors both near and far, known and unknown. Bless our work together, in every circumstance, as we remain true to you forever. Amen.***

HYMN ***“Faith of Our Fathers”***

***Faith of our fathers, living still***

***in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword.***

***O how our hearts beat high with joy***

***whene’er we hear that glorious Word!***

***Faith of our fathers, holy faith,***

***we will be true to you till death.***

***Faith of our mothers, we will love***

***both friend and foe in all our strife,***

***and preach it, too, as love knows how,***

***by kindly words and virtuous life!***

***Faith of our mothers, holy faith,***

***we will be true to you till death.***

***Faith of the martyrs who, though bound,***

***were still in heart and conscience true.***

-4-

***How blest would be their children’s fate,***

***if they, like them, should live for you!***

***Faith of the martyrs, holy faith,***

***we will be true to you till death.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Praise My Soul the King of Heaven* Lani Smith

**Please remain seated until an usher dismisses each pew beginning from the back of the Sanctuary.**

The greatest commandments are to love God and neighbor. Welcome to worship, where we’re strengthened in God’s love so we can better love others. May God’s grace nourish you.

We welcome and thank **Chris McMillan**, who is serving as organist today while Ritch Alexander is on vacation.

The bulletins are given in remembrance of the October birthdays of **Gene and Mary Rita Ahlers**, parents of Jim Ahlers, by Connie and Jim Ahlers.

If you would like to place flowers on the altar, please call Sharon O’Toole at 314-420-1548. To give bulletins, please call the church office at 877-6060. Available dates are Nov. 15 and Nov. 29.

Our October **Mission of the Month** is flour for the Community Care and Salvation Army pantries, and the United Church of Christ Neighbors in Need Offering. Please clearly designate any gifts or use the special NIN envelopes.

Today we give extra thanks to our Carry-Out Sausage Dinner organizers**,** **Donna Brandes, Bob and Nancy Jacobs, and Dave and Karen Gaines**, and to **all the workers** who made last Sunday’s modified event a big success. Frozen cooked sausage is for sale at $5 for a bag of 4 links. Other food may also be for sale.

**Annual Reports** were due October 15. Please email or bring any late reports to the church office in preparation for our November 15 Annual Meeting. Booklets will be available for pick-up on Sunday, November 8.

-5-

The **scrip program** will be resumed with a shortened season. Orders will be accepted before and after worship services on November 1st and 15th, December 6th and 13th.  Order forms will be on the table in the narthex or just list the cards you are purchasing and give your list to Betty Meszaros.  Please include your check payable to St. John UCC with your order.

If you are uncomfortable attending in-person service or you are unable to leave your home, you can mail your order and check to the church, or call Betty at 618-451-1968. Arrangements will be made for delivery of gift cards.

Your cost is the face value of the card. Vendors offer $10, $25 or $50 denominations.  Rebates are sent automatically to the church and percentages vary by vendor. Stock up on cards for your personal use or get prepared for Christmas gift giving.  Please call Betty to check vendor availability, rebate percentages or with any other questions. Thank you for your support of this fundraising project for our church’s general fund.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**Deuteronomy 34:1-12**

**34**Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the Lord showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, **2**all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and

Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, **3**the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. **4**The Lord said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” **5**Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, at the Lord’s command. **6**He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. **7**Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated. **8**The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended.

**9**Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the Lord had commanded Moses.

-6-

**10**Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. **11**He was unequaled for all the signs and wonders that the Lord sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, **12**and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

**Matthew 22:34-46**

**34**When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, **35**and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36**“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” **37**He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ **38**This is the greatest and first commandment. **39**And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40**On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” **41**Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: **42**“What do you think of the Messiah?[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A34-46&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23913a)] Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” **43**He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22%3A34-46&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-23914b)] calls him Lord, saying,

**44**‘The Lord said to my Lord,
“Sit at my right hand,
    until I put your enemies under your feet”’?

**45**If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” **46**No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.