**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

November 15, 2020 24th 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](mailto: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

“Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.” Psalm 123:3-4

PRELUDE *Tocata in E Minor* Johann Pachelbel

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

God has richly blessed us,

***And calls us to use our gifts to build God’s kingdom.***

God has richly blessed us,

***And tells us to have courage, not fear.***

God has richly blessed us,

***And given us gifts to use.***

God has richly blessed us,

***And calls us to use our time, talent and treasure well.***

God receives all worship with joy;

***Blessed are we who offer our worship now.***

Let us pray.

***Holy God, we worship you in the light of faith and love, awake to your many blessings upon us. Help us use these blessings to promote your kingdom on earth***

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***as the realm of love and abundance shared with all. Help us encourage one another in our discipleship as individuals and the church, so that in every season your mission is accomplished. Bless us, we pray, with the wisdom of your Spirit and the teaching of your Son, now and forever. Amen.***

HYMN ***“Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”***

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***Called as partners in Christ’s service, called to ministries of grace,***

***we respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.***

***May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,***

***equal partners in our caring to fulfill God’s chosen end.***

***Christ’s example, Christ’s inspiring, Christ’s clear call to work and worth,***

***let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth.***

***Men and women, richer, poorer, all God’s people, young and old,***

***blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.***

***Thus new patterns for Christ’s mission, in a small or global sense,***

***help us bear each other’s burdens, breaking down each wall or fence.***

***Words of comfort, words of vision, words of challenge, said with care,***

***bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues, free and fair.***

***So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life***

***that surround each person’s sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.***

***Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase, messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.***

RESPONSIVE READING *How to Observe Thanksgiving*-author unknown

Count your blessings instead of your crosses;

***Count your gains instead of your losses.***

Count your joys instead of your woes;

***Count your friends instead of your foes.***

Count your smiles instead of your tears;

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***Count your courage instead of your fears.***

Count your full years instead of your lean;

***Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.***

Count your health instead of your wealth;

***Count on God instead of yourself.***

EPISTLE READING 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

SOLO  *Beneath the Cross of Jesus* John Duro

GOSPEL READING Matthew 25:14-30

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

***Giver of all blessings, take the gifts we offer and fill them with deeds of love and mercy. Increase their reach, and multiply the blessings potential they support. Bless us to be blessings for others, and to expand our efforts, as we serve in Jesus’ name. Amen.***

HYMN ***“They Did Not Build in Vain”*** Verses 1, 2, 3 & 4

***Words: Alan Luff. Music: John Darwall. Words © 1990 Hope Publishing Company. Lyrics reprinted by permission, CCLI License #1334401***

***They did not build in vain who founded here a church***

***as witness to God’s love amid a world of pain,***

***for still, to those who wish to see,***

***this place proclaims God’s mystery.***

***They build upon the rock that is the risen Lord,***

***the one foundation laid which stands each earthly shock; that, Spirit filled, we here might raise,***

***as living temples, prayer and praise.***

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***Those who have loved this place, a cloud of witnesses, surround and urge us on as we now run our race,***

***and so we lay aside each sin***

***in our desire to strive and win.***

***Though the horizon’s bend conceals the way ahead,***

***the footprints on the road show Christ waits at the end;***

***in him alone our faith shall stand***

***who waits for us at God’s right hand.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Eternal Father Strong to Save* John Chesterton

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

Psalm 90 begins: “Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.” Whether at home or in the sanctuary, we dwell with God. Welcome, as we worship the God of eternal blessings.

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

If you would like to place flowers on the altar, please call Sharon O’Toole at 314-420-1548.

Our **November Mission of the Month** is support for the vital programs at **Community Care**. Monetary and non-perishable food gifts please.

Today is our **annual congregational meeting** at 10:30 a.m.

**THIS WEEK**

Today Outdoor Worship, near flagpole, 1:00 p.m.

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

Tuesday Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

Bible Study on Zoom, 3:00 p.m.

Saturday Herald Deadline

Next Sunday Worship, on Zoom and in person, 9:30 a.m.

Totenfest and Harvest Home observed

Many holiday gatherings and traditions are being affected by COVID-19. If your tradition includes giving gift cards, please consider ordering through the scrip program. Orders will be accepted before and after worship services today and on December 6th and 13th.  Order forms for St. John “favorites” are on the table in the narthex or just list the

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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 prefer not to leave your home, you can mail your order and check to the church or call Betty at 618-451-1968. Contact Betty if you want to check vendor participation or if you want her to email a complete list to you.

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 Christmas gift-giving.  Gift cards make great stocking stuffers and are a nice way to show appreciation for an act of kindness.  Reminder: deadline to order for delivery by Christmas is December 13th. Arrangements will be made for delivery of gift cards after order is shipped. Thank you for your support of this fundraising project for our church’s general fund.

**OUR PRAYERS**

We extend our Christian Sympathy to the family of **Richard “Dick” Oliver** who died on Friday, November 6, 2020. A funeral was held on Saturday, November 14, at Irwin Chapel. May the peace and comfort that comes from God sustain his loved ones during this time of grief.

**Nursing and Assisted Living**

Loretta Cook, JoAnn King, Karen Luddeke, Shirley Thompson, Mary Lee Krohne, and Richard & Ruth Buer.

**At Home**

Ritch Alexander, Isabella Boyer, Marlene Brokaw, Myra Cook, Mary Franz, Norman Hente, Olen Hermes, Bill McAmish, Billie Meyer, Cliff Robertson, Valara Schorfheide, Merle Rose, June Stille, and Don Young.

**Illinois South Conference**

Mascoutah St. John UCC, Rev. Hugh (Bo) Fitz, Illinois South Conference/DuBois Center Staff, Retired Pastor Rev. Dr. Richard (Johann) Ellerbrake.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**1 Thessalonians 5:1-11**

**5**Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters,you do not need to have anything written to you. **2**For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. **3**When they say, “There is peace and security,” then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! **4**But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; **5**for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of

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darkness. **6**So then let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; **7**for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. **8**But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. **9**For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, **10**who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. **11**Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

**Matthew 25:14-30**

**14**“For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; **15**to one he gave five talents,to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. **16**The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. **17**In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. **18**But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. **19**After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. **20**Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ **21**His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ **22**And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ **23**His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’ **24**Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; **25**so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’ **26**But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? **27**Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. **28**So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. **29**For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. **30**As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’