**St. John United Church of Christ**

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

May 2, 2021 Fifth Sunday of Easter

Rev. Karla Frost, Pastor Ritch Alexander, Organist

9:30 a.m. Zoom & In-Person Worship 11:00 a.m. Outdoor Worship

9:30 a.m. Sunday School for Children (618) 877-6060

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**Following safety guidelines, please keep social distance, mask up, and speak or sing the bold print moderately.**

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

A STORY FOR ALL GOD’S CHILDREN Acts 8:26-40

…and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. (Acts 4:8:36b-38)

PRELUDE *Communion for Organ* Litcomb

CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER Based on Psalm 22:25-31

The Psalmist said: “The poor shall eat and be satisfied;

those who seek him shall praise the Lord.

***We praise God in the great congregation.***

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.

***We praise God in the great congregation.***

All the families of the nations shall worship before the Lord.

***We praise God in the great congregation.***

Posterity will serve him;

future generations will be told about the Lord.

***We praise God in the great congregation.***

Let us pray together:

***Together with the peoples of all time and place, we praise you, O God. United by your love for us, and our love for you, we rejoice to love one another. Grant us your Spirit to strengthen our discipleship, as we seek to bear much fruit, to your glory.***

***Receive our praise as we worship, and as we dedicate each day to serving in Jesus’ name. Amen.***

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HYMN  ***“In Christ There Is No East or West”***

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***In Christ there is no east or west, in him no pride of birth;***

***the chosen family God has blessed now spans the whole wide earth.***

***For God in Christ has made us one from every land and race;***

***has reconciled us through his Son and met us all with grace.***

***It is by grace we are assured that we belong to him:***

***the love we share in Christ our Lord, the Spirit’s work within.***

***So brothers, sisters, praise his name who died to set us free***

***from sin, division, hate and shame, from spite and enmity!***

***In Christ there is no east or west—he breaks all barriers down;***

***by Christ redeemed, by Christ possessed, in Christ we live as one.***

RESPONSIVE READING *“Help Us Accept Each Other”*

Words: Fred Kaan. Words © 1975 Hope Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission, CCLI License #1334401.

Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;

***Teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.***

Be present, Lord, among us and bring us to believe

***We are ourselves accepted, and meant to love and live.***

Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life

***We struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.***

Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some,

***To love them as we find them, or as they may become.***

Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved

***In living situations to do the truth in love;***

To practice your acceptance until we know by heart

***The table of forgiveness, and laughter’s healing art.***

Lord, for today’s encounters with all who are in need,

***Who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread,***

We need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on:

***Renew us with your Spirit; Lord, free us, make us one!***

EPISTLE LESSON 1 John 4:7-21

SOLO  *As We Take the Sacrament* Tonioli

GOSPEL LESSON John 15:1-8

MEDITATION

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HYMN ***“I Come with Joy”***

Words: Brian Wren. Music: American melody; arr. Austin C. Lovelace. Words © 1971, 1995 Hope Publishing Company. Music Arr. © 1977 Hope Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission, CCLI License #1334401.

***I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved and free,***

***the life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me,***

***in love laid down for me.***

***I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed,***

***the new community of love in Christ’s communion bread,***

***in Christ’s communion bread.***

***As Christ breaks bread and bids us share, each proud division ends. The love that made us, makes us one,***

***and strangers now are friends, and strangers now are friends.***

***The Spirit of the risen Christ, unseen, but ever near,***

***is in such friendship better known, alive among us here,***

***alive among us here.***

***Together met, together bound by all that God has done,***

***we’ll go with joy, to give the world the love that makes us one,***

***the love that makes us one.***

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & THE 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.***

ORGAN RESPONSE *The Lord’s Prayer*

**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION & BLESSING PRAYER

***Lord of Life, as we prepare to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we remember your command that “those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.” With open hands***

***and hearts, our offerings and gifts for the work of the church show our love for you, and for our neighbors. Bless our giving, O Lord, and abide with us as we remain bold and faithful in discipleship. Amen.***

RESPONSE *Chime Response*

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INVITATION, SILENT CONFESSION, AND COMMUNION PRAYER

PREPARING AND SHARING THE ELEMENTS

(All confessing Christians are invited to partake from the Table of the Lord.)

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

***For the healing you have given us in the breaking of bread and the pouring out of the fruit of the vine, we thank you, O God. For the community you have restored in us through the sharing of life and love, we thank you, O Christ. For the courage and strength you have promised to us, we thank you, O Spirit. Send us forth from this time together with love to share and joy in our hearts. Amen.***

HYMN ***“They’ll Know We are Christians”***  Verses 1, 3 & 4

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***We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.***

***We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord.***

***And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.***

***And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.***

***Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.***

***We will work with each other; we will work side by side.***

***We will work with each other; we will work sided by side.***

***And we’ll guard each one’s dignity and save each one’s pride.***

***And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.***

***Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.***

***All praise to the Father, from whom all things come.***

***And all praise to Christ Jesus, his only Son.***

***And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one.***

***And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love.***

***Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.***

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *Postlude in G* Peterson

Welcome to worship on this beautiful spring day that the Lord has made! “Let us rejoice today and be glad” (Psalm 118:24, NIV)

The **altar centerpiece** is given in memory of Linda Bauer from Mom and Brother

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The **pulpit centerpiece** is given in memory of Christy Dawson’s April 30th birthday by her family.

If you would like to place **flowers on the altar**, and pick them up Monday, please call **Sue Goedeke** at (618) 791-0137. If you would like

to sponsor the **bulletins**, please call the **church office** at 877-6060. The next available dates are May 16, & 30.

**Thank you** to George Cochran who is serving as liturgist today.

**THIS WEEK**

Today: Sunday School for Children

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

Outdoor Service 11:00 a.m.

Noisy Offering

Monday: **Karla Out of Office All Week**

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

Tuesday: Quilters, 8:30 a.m.

Zoom Bible Study Cancelled

Wednesday: TOPS, 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Thursday: Cemetery Committee 5:00 p.m.

Next Sunday: Mother’s Day

Sunday School for Children

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

Outdoor Service 11:00 a.m.

Services Led by Rev. Thomas Nadelin

Begin Church World Service Blankets and Tools Offering

**OUR PRAYERS**

**Nursing and Assisted Living**

Ruth Buer, Loretta Cook, Hilde Few, JoAnn King, Mary Lee Krohne, and Karen Luddeke.

**At Home**

Ritch Alexander, Rose Marie Bauer, Isabella Boyer, Marlene Brokaw, Myra Cook, Janet Cowley, Randy Fischer, Bonnie Fornaszewski, Mary

Franz, Norman Hente, Bill McAmish, Billie Meyer, Sandy Mueller, David Oliver Jr., Cliff Robertson, Merle Rose, Valara Schorfheide, Marge Schmidt, June Stille, and Don Young.

**Illinois South Conference**

Dupo Christ UCC, Rev. Todd (Suzanne) Mushaney, Dupo First Congregational UCC, Retired Pastor, Rev. Allen and Lynn Reiter, Hamel, IL

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**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

**1 John 4:7-21**

**7**Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. **8**Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. **9**God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. **10**In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

**11**Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. **12**No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. **13**By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. **14**And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. **15**God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. **16**So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. **17**Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. **18**There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. **19**We love because he first loved us. **20**Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. **21**The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

**John 15:1-8**

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. **2**He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. **3**You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. **4**Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. **5**I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. **6**Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7**If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and becomemy disciples.