

St. John United Church of Christ
“In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve”

August 23, 2026

13th Sunday after Pentecost (A)

Will Layman

David R. 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.com

(618) 877-6060

Web-stjohnuccgranitecity.com

Instagram: @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 SMILE AND WAVE

*RESPONSE¹

“Sanctuary” (sung twice)

#482

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true; with thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN Galatians 5:22-23[NRSVue]

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control.

There is no law against such things.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

[And also with you.]

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

Who At My Door is Standing graced by AMENZ

*CALL TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

One: Come, people of God, and gather in the presence of the living Christ.

Many: We come with open hearts and willing spirits.

One: Jesus asks us, “Who do you say that I am?”

Many: You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

One: Jesus calls us not only to speak our faith, but to live it.

Many: We will follow Christ in love, mercy, justice, and hope.

One: Christ call us to be the church, not simply a people who gather, but a people who serve.

Many: We are here to worship, to listen, and to follow where Christ leads.

One: Come, let us worship the living God!

Many: With joy and thanksgiving, we worship God!

*HYMN

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”

#68

*OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, we come before you today as your people, gathered in the name of Jesus Christ. We come with different stories, different questions, different experiences, and different understandings of faith. Yet you gather us together as one body. As we worship today, remind us that you are the living God. Open our hearts to your presence and our minds to your wisdom. When Jesus asks us, “Who do you say that I am?” help us to answer not only with our words, but with our lives. Teach us to follow Christ in the way we love, in the way we serve, in the way we welcome others, and in the way we seek justice and peace. Be present with us in this time of worship, and may everything we say, sing, and do bring glory to you. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Messiah and our Savior, we pray. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Lord, I'll Fly Away

graced by AMENZ

WE HEAR GOD’S WORD

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 16:13-20 [NRSVue]

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” ¹⁴ And they said, “Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” ¹⁵ He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in

heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” ²⁰ Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

REFLECTION

WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD

*HYMN

“The Church’s One Foundation”

#544

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the one holy universal Christian Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYER CONCERNS AND CELEBRATIONS

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.

OFFERING INVITATION

OFFERTORY

I Surrender All

*RESPONSE ***“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”*** #34

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heavenly host:
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen***

***UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

Gracious God, we give you thanks for every gift we have received from your hands. Today we return a portion of those gifts to you. Bless these offerings and use them to build your church and extend your love into the world. May these gifts provide help to those who are hurting, hope to those who are discouraged, welcome to those who feel alone, and opportunities for others to encounter the love of Christ. Bless not only these gifts, but also the hands and hearts that have given them. Teach us to remember that everything we have ultimately belongs to you. We dedicate these gifts to you and to the work of your kin-dom. In the name of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, the Son of the living God, we pray. Amen.

***HYMN “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” #719**

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE *Grace Greater than Our Sin

¹“Sanctuary” Words and Music by John Thompson (1950-) and Randy Scruggs (20th c.)