

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

August 30, 2026

14th Sunday after Pentecost (A)

Will Layman

David R. Ekstrand, Dir. of Music

9:30 Zoom & In-Person Worship

9:30 Sunday School for Children

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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 ***“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, may 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.

MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN Matthew 5:14 [NRSVue]

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid.”

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

[And also with you.]

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

Be Still My Soul

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Come, people of God, and bring with you all that you carry—
your hopes, your questions, your fears, and your expectations.

Many: We come to follow Jesus, even when we do not know exactly where the road will lead.

One: Jesus calls us beyond what is comfortable and familiar.

Many: We are ready to listen for his voice.

One: Jesus calls us to take up our cross and follow.

Many: We will seek the courage to take the next faithful step.

One: Let us worship the One who leads us on the way.

All: We come to worship Christ, trusting that his way leads us to life. Amen.

*HYMN²

“The Summons”

#350

*OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, we come before you today with our hopes and our expectations. Sometimes we think we know exactly how things should go. We think we know what you should do, where you should lead us, and what the life of faith should look like. Yet, you remind us that your ways are greater than our ways. Open our hearts to Jesus today. Help us hear his invitation to follow, even when the road is unfamiliar. Give us courage to let go of what keeps us from you, strength to carry what you place before us, and faith to take the next step even when we cannot see the whole journey. May our worship today draw us closer to Christ and closer to one another. In the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher, our Savior, and the one who calls us to follow. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC *Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)*

By David Ekstrand

WE HEAR GOD’S WORD

GOSPEL LESSON

Matthew 16:21-28 [NRSVue]

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the

elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³ But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me, for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." ²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? ²⁷ "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

REFLECTION

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

#344

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 Love to Tell the Story

*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

Generous God, receive these gifts and use them for your work in the world. May they bring hope to those who are discouraged, help to those who are struggling, welcome to those who feel forgotten, and justice to those who have been pushed aside. And as we offer our gifts, help us remember that you ask for more than what is in our hands. You ask for our hearts, our time, our compassion, and our willingness to follow. Take what we give today and multiply it for your purposes. May our lives, as well as our offerings, become expressions of Christ's love. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

***HYMN *“Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”* #457**

POSTLUDE *(Reprieve) I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

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²“The Summons” Words and Music by John L. Bell (1949-) Used with permission CCLI License #133401.