St. John United Church of Christ

"In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve"

October 18, 2026 — 21st Sunday after Pentecost (A)
Mr. Lorin Cope — 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 US TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENT

*GREETING ONE ANOTHER WITH A SMILE AND WAVE

*RESPONSE "***Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee***" #59

MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN 1st Thessalonians 1:2-6

2 We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our
prayers, constantly **3** remembering before our God and Father your
work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord
Jesus Christ. **4** For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that
he has chosen you, **5** because our message of the gospel came to you
not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full
conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be
among you for your sake. **6** And you became imitators of us and of the
Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy from
the Holy Spirit,

SOLEMN DECLARATION
We gather for worship surrounded by the love of God, rejoicing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and supported by the communion of the Holy Spirit.
Peace be with you.

And also with you

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP
Rock of Ages

CALL TO WORSHIP
We are drawn to worship by a Reality unseen.
God is more than we can ever imagine.
We gather in awe to bring our songs of praise.
We are amazed by the wonders around us.
We are summoned by One who is just and merciful.
How amazing that God chooses us as messengers.
We know God is with us as we gather to worship.

*HYMN ***"To God Be the Glory"*** #66

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION
Holy God, you created us in your image and called us your beloved children. In a world filled with competing loyalties, remind us of who we are and whose we are. When politics divides us, teach us the ways of peace. When power tempts us, teach us humility. When possessions claim too much of our attention, turn our hearts toward the treasures that cannot be bought. Give us wisdom to live faithfully in this world without allowing the world to determine our worth. May our worship today draw us closer to you and send us into the world ready to embody your love, justice, mercy, and compassion. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

*CALL TO CONFESSION

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION
Awesome God, how puny is our cleverness before the magnitude of your reality! How fleeting are our days measured against the far reaches of eternity. O God, we are trapped in our pretensions. Turn us to extravagant praise. Turn us to concern for all your children. Suppress in us sinful ways, that we may joyously render to you all that is already yours. Amen.

*ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

*HYMN ***"Glory Be to the Father"*** #734

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

Psalm Psalm 99

1 The LORD is king; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
2 The LORD is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
3 Let them praise your great and awesome name.
Holy is he!
4 Mighty King,[a] lover of justice,
you have established equity;
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Extol the LORD our God;
worship at his footstool.
Holy is he!
6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests,
Samuel also was among those who called on his name.
They cried to the LORD, and he answered them.
7 He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;
they kept his decrees and the statutes that he gave them.
8 O LORD our God, you answered them;
you were a forgiving God to them
but an avenger of their wrongdoings.
9 Extol the LORD our God,
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy.

SPECIAL MUSIC *I Believe the Promise* AMENZ

GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 22: 15-22

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said.
16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. **17** Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" **18** But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? **19** Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. **20** Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" **21** They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." **22** When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

REFLECTION

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

*HYMN ***"Lord I Want to Be A Christian"*** #457

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

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION

OFFERTORY *Come Ye Sinners Poor and Needy*

RESPONSE "***Doxology***" #44

*UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Generous God, receive these gifts and use them for your purposes. May they become food for the hungry, comfort for those who grieve, welcome for those who feel excluded, justice for those who are oppressed, and hope for those who have lost their way. And remind us that our greatest offering is not simply what we place in the offering plate, but the lives we offer to you each day. Use us, O God, as instruments of your love. Amen.

*HYMN "***Take My Life and Let it Be***" #466

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE *God Be With You*