St. John United Church of Christ

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"In Christ We Live, Celebrate, & Serve"

THE 22nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST / REFORMATION SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2026

Large print bulletins are available from the Ushers.

Bold denotes congregation reads or sings.

*[*denotes all who are able, please stand]*

GATHERED TO WORSHIP GOD

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC / BELLS CALLING TO WORSHIP

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

****GREETING ONE ANOTHER WITH A SMILE AND WAVE***

****RESPONSE**[1] *He Has Made Me Glad* **657**

I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart;
I will enter his courts with praise.
I will say, "This is the day the Lord has made!"
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.
He has made me glad, he has made me glad,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.
He has made me glad, he has made me glad,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.

A MESSAGE FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." *[John 8: 31-32, 36]*

THE GREETING *[adapted from 2 Corinthians 13]*

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



C: **And also with you.**

PRELUDE AND CENTERING OUR HEARTS ON WORSHIP

Toccata and Fugue in D minor

A CALL TO WORSHIP *[adapted from Psalm 46]*

L: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
C: **Therefore we will not fear, no matter what chaos is going on!**

L: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
C: **a city where God himself makes his home!**

L: Even when nations are in uproar, and kingdoms totter,
C: **The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.**

L: In the face of all our failures, all our distress, he speaks—
C: ***Be still, and know that I am God!***
I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.

L: The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

****THE OPENING SONG*** *A Mighty Fortress is Our God (Ps. 46)* ***507***

****A CONFESSION OF SINS***

call to confession

P: Holy and merciful God, we claim to be free,
C: **but often find ourselves enslaved to sin and shame,**
trying to hide our selfishness and self-righteousness.

P: Your Son came to be the ultimate Truth, and to liberate us
from our past, from evil, from death,
C: **yet our arrogance seeks to justify our disobedience,**
and even our good deeds are tainted,

P: driven, not by your love, but motivated by appearances,
C: **and by both our sense of entitlement**
and our rightful fear of your anger.



And yet your forgiving love invites us
to return to you, and so, with humble hearts
we confess our sins, the bad attitudes, harsh words,
and hurtful actions that have entrapped us.
By the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Savior,
forgive us, and liberate us, daily to walk as his disciples,
to know him as the Truth, and truly to be free. Amen.

a moment of silence for reflection

****THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON*** *[adapted from Gal. 5 and John 8]*

P: … justified before God by faith apart from any works of the law.
C: **Thanks be to God!**

***THE HYMN OF PRAISE**[2] *His Name is Wonderful* **102**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

THE FIRST LESSON *ROMANS 3: 19-28 [NRSV]*

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. [20] For "no human being will be justified in his sight" by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. [21] But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, [22] the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, [23] since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; [24] they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, [25] whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; [26] it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. [27] Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith. [28] For we hold that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law.

SPECIAL MUSIC *When You Walk/Climb Every Mountain*

THE SECOND LESSON *ST. JOHN 8: 31-36 [ESV]*

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." [33] They answered him, "We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free'?" [34] Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. [35] The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. [36] So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.



THE SERMON *FREE INDEED is based on the Readings*

WE RESPOND TO THE GOOD NEWS

***HYMN** *I Will Sing of My Redeemer* **356**

***THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** – *UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH 1959*

C: **We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and our Father, and to his deeds we testify:**
He calls the worlds into being, creates us in his own image and sets before us the ways of life and death.

He seeks in holy love to save all people
from aimlessness and sin.
He judges men and nations by his righteous will
declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth,
our crucified and risen Lord, he has come to us
and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death
and reconciling the world to himself.

He bestows upon us his Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,
tongues and races.

He calls us into his Church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be his servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the Gospel to all the world
and resist the powers of evil,
to share Christ's baptism and eat at his table,
to join him in his passion and victory.

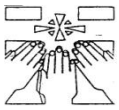
He promises to all who trust him
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
his presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in his kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto him. Amen.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH *[INTERCESSIONS]*

each prayer ends

L: …God, in your mercy--
C: **hear our prayer!**



THE LORD'S PRAYER *is spoken*

STEWARDSHIP INVITATION

OFFERTORY *His Eye Is on the Sparrow*

seated, as our gifts are presented, we sing

A PRAYER[3] *For the Life That You Have Given* ***684***

A PRAYER OF DEDICATION

standing

***A CLOSING SONG**[4] *ALL FOR JESUS* **460**

***THE BLESSING** *[adapted from Galatians 5 and John 8]*

P: …and the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and remain among you always.

C: **Amen!**

***POSTLUDE** *Theme of Vic Mizzy*



Thanks to those serving today:

The Presiding and Preaching Minister: The Rev. Hugh Fitz

The Musicians:

The Organist/Pianist: David Ekstrand

Others:

The Liturgist: Jim Watson

Acknowledgments

[1] *He Has Made Me Glad © 1976 Maranatha Praise, Inc.*

[2] *His Name is Wonderful © 1959, 19878 Manna Music, Inc.*

[3] *For the Life That You Have Given © 1990 Hope Publishing Company*

[4] *All For Jesus! © 1978 Novello and Company (admin. G Schirmer, Inc)*

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