

**Third Sunday after Pentecost**  
**June 18, 2023**  
United Church of Christ, Neillsville  
Pastor James Mohr

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**PRELUDE** *“Jig Fugue”* Dietrich Buxtehude  
Karen Mohr

**RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (based on Psalm 116)  
(Leader – light print – People: **bold print**)

Let us call upon our God, who always hears us.  
**We love our God, who listens to our every cry.**  
Let us bring an offering to God, in thanksgiving for all  
God has done.  
**We love our God, who listens to our every cry.**  
Here in this place let us proclaim the goodness of God!  
**We love our God, who listens to our every cry.**  
When we leave this place, let us live lives that bear  
witness to God’s love and justice.  
**We love our God, who listens to our every cry.**

**HYMN** *“Faith of Our Fathers”*  
#286 Red UCC Frederick W. Faber

**1 Faith of our fathers! Living still  
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;  
O, how our hearts beat high with joy,  
Whene’er we hear that glorious word!**

**Refrain:  
Faith of our fathers, holy faith,  
We will be true to thee till death.**

**2 Our fathers, chained in prison dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free,  
And truly blest would be our fate  
If we, like them, should die for thee! [Refrain]**

**3 Faith of our fathers! Faith and prayer  
Shall win all nations unto thee;  
And through the truth that comes from God,  
Man-kind shall then indeed be free. [Refrain]**

**4 Faith of our fathers! We will love  
Both friend and foe in all our strife,  
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,  
By kindly word and virtuous life. [Refrain]**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**O God, in mystery and silence  
you are present in our lives,  
bring new life out of destruction,  
hope out of despair,  
growth out of difficulty.  
We thank you that you do not leave us alone  
but labor to make us whole.  
Help us to perceive your unseen hand  
in the unfolding of our lives,  
and to attend to the gentle guidance of your Spirit,  
that we may know the joy you give your people.  
Amen.**

**PASSING THE PEACE**

**All are invited to greet one another with such  
words as “The peace of Christ be with you, and  
the response: “And also with you.”**

**PRAISE RESPONSE** *“Halleluja”*  
#236 NCH

**Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Halle, halle, hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

**CHILDREN’S TIME**

## **OLD TESTAMENT LESSON**

### **Genesis 18:1-15 and 21:1-7**

18The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. <sup>2</sup>He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. <sup>3</sup>He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. <sup>4</sup>Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. <sup>5</sup>Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” <sup>6</sup>And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” <sup>7</sup>Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. <sup>8</sup>Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

<sup>9</sup>They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” <sup>10</sup>Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. <sup>11</sup>Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. <sup>12</sup>So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” <sup>13</sup>The Lord said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ <sup>14</sup>Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” <sup>15</sup>But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

21The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. <sup>2</sup>Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. <sup>3</sup>Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. <sup>4</sup>And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. <sup>5</sup>Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

<sup>6</sup>Now Sarah said, “God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.” <sup>7</sup>And she said, “Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.”

## **EPISTLE LESSON**

### **Romans 5:1-8**

5Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup>through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. <sup>3</sup>And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, <sup>4</sup>and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, <sup>5</sup>and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. <sup>8</sup>But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

### **Matthew 9:35-10:8**

<sup>35</sup>Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. <sup>36</sup>When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup>Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; <sup>38</sup>therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

10Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. <sup>2</sup>These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup>Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup>Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

<sup>5</sup>These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup>but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup>As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ <sup>8</sup>Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

**SERMON** “A Laughing Matter” Pastor Jim

### **A LITANY ABOUT LAUGHTER**

(written by April Emick Fiet)

O Lord, giver of joy and laughter,  
**we thank you for giving us these gifts.**  
For the moments of laughter and unbridled joy you give to us:  
**for opportunities to laugh at ourselves,**  
For the belly laughs of children,  
**for friends and family who love us because of our quirks, and not just in spite of them,**  
For artists who give us the opportunity to see the world through the surreal,  
**For the courage to smile even when difficulties arise,**  
For those who have hope even when others think there is no hope,  
**For saints in the Lord who overflow with laughter and spread your joy to all of us.**  
For the words of Jesus that defy our logical minds;  
**For teaching us that we can be born again,**  
For the woman who finds a lost coin and calls her friends and neighbors to celebrate,  
**For the absurdity of a camel trying to fit through the eye of a needle,**  
For the father who is willing to look like a fool as he runs to greet his “Prodigal Son,”  
**For the generosity of the landowner who will pay workers a whole day’s wage when they only worked one hour,**  
For tiny bits of faith that can move entire mountains,  
**For the reality that nothing can live unless it first dies.**  
For the great reversal of the Gospel:  
**That the last shall be made first,**  
**that the rejected stone became the cornerstone,**  
**that those who wish to become great must serve,**  
**that the lost will be found,**  
**that the small will become great,**

**that though you are Wisdom, you choose to forget our sins,**  
**that when we are weak, your strength shines through us.**

O Lord, giver of joy and laughter,  
**Thank you for the gift you give us that allows us to enjoy these things to the full.**  
We can laugh because of the most amazing thing of all –  
**That you conquered death,**  
**That the tomb is empty,**  
**That light shone so brightly that it overcame the darkness.**  
**AMEN.**

**HYMN** “Dear Lord and Father of Mankind”  
#237 Red UCC John Greenleaf Whittier

**1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
Forgive our foolish ways!  
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,  
In purer lives Thy service find,  
In deeper reverence, praise.**

**2 In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
Beside the Syrian sea,  
The gracious calling of the Lord,  
Let us, like them, without a word  
Rise up and follow Thee.**

**3 Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.**

**4 Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still, small voice of calm.**

### **MORNING PRAYERS**

**PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR** (All)

**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**

## INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

The Holy Spirit comes down to us as a gift of presence, compassion, and companionship. We honor and uphold the Kingdom here on earth through our stewardship; as we are called to present our lives as a living testimony of the God who has created each one of us to be unique and minister to a world that needs what we have to offer in time, talent and treasure. Let us now uphold the glory of God by the giving of our gifts in the spirit of generosity.

One: We give...

**Many: To meet the needs of the Kingdom!**

One: We give...

**Many: Out of the generosity of our hearts!**

One: We give...

**Many: To further justice and peace in our world!**

**All: Amen and Amen.**

## PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

Generous God, may these gifts glorify your spirit and meet the needs of your Kingdom.

In the name of Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.

**HYMN** *"God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand"*

#254 Red UCC

Daniel C. Roberts

1 God of the ages, whose almighty hand  
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band  
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,  
Our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

2 Thy love divine hath led us in the past;  
In this free land with thee our lot is cast;  
Be thou our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay,  
Thy Word our law, thy paths our chosen way.

3 From war's alarms, from deadly pestilence,  
Be thy strong arm our ever sure defense;  
Thy true religion in our hearts increase;  
Thy bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.

4 Refresh thy people on their toilsome way;  
Lead us from night to never-ending day;  
Fill all our lives with love and grace divine,  
And glory, laud, and praise be ever thine.

## BENEDICTION

## POSTLUDE

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

## WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!

We are glad that you have joined us in person, through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call, seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### RADIO BROADCAST

11 AM Sunday radio broadcast on WCCN  
98.5FM and 1370AM

Youtube for June 18, 2023

<https://youtu.be/JkSs0VYzgzQ>

This week's radio broadcast  
is sponsored in loving memory of  
Clarence & Anita Miller  
by their children.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**TODAY Sunday, June 18th -**  
Dairy Food Give Away after worship

**Monday, June 19th -**  
9 AM - Card making

**Tuesday, June 20th -**  
1 PM - Bible Study - 510 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
\*every week at Marge Goetsch's home

HAPPY  
*Father's  
Day*

**TODAY**

**JUNE 18, 2023**

**FARM TO TABLE GIVEAWAY**

**10:00-10:15 A.M.**

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

**NEILLSVILLE**

**515 WEST 2ND STREET**

**SUMMER SERVICES 9:00 A.M.**

**DONATIONS FROM  
GRASSLAND DAIRY PRODUCTS INC.  
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**ALL ARE WELCOME**