

**Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**  
**July 16, 2023**  
United Church of Christ, Neillsville  
Pastor Sue Vornholt

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**PRELUDE** *“Ode to Joy”* Beethoven  
Karen Mohr

**RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Our Shared Life and Service**

We thank God for these opportunities for fellowship and service.

**Thanks be to God!**

**GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** (All)

**Come, let us worship God!**

**Come, let us worship our Creator!**

**God is the great Sower, scattering seeds of life and abundance across the earth.**

**We are the soil the Sower plants, created to nurture and sustain the seeds of God’s life-giving love.**

**God is the great Gardener, tilling and cultivating our soil with love and grace.**

**We notice the rocks and thorns in our soil and call on the Gardener’s love and grace to transform us into good soil.**

**God is the great Life-giver, sowing seeds and tending the soil to produce the fruit of abundant life.**

**May we nurture and grow God’s new reality, bearing the fruit of flourishing and abundance for all God’s creation.**

**Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER** (All)

**Creator God, the sun eases over the horizon. My eyes open. My heart waits for you. I thank you, God, for the ways you have been present in my life and in the lives of those I love. You are the God of the morning times. Show me how to live this day as a grateful response to your goodness. Through Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.**

**HYMN** *“I Woke Up This Morning”*

**#85 NCH** African American traditional  
Jeffrey Radford

**1 I woke up this morning with my mind  
(Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus,  
Woke up this morning with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
woke up this morning with my mind  
(Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus,  
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.**

**2 Singing and praying with my mind  
(Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus,  
Singing and praying with my mind stayed on Jesus,  
Singing and praying with my mind  
(Hallelujah) stayed on Jesus,  
Hallelu, hallelu, hallelujah.**

**PRAYER OF CONFESSION** (All)

**Loving God, Sower and Reaper of love, we admit to you that we are like stony fields, capable of growing goodness and sharing it around, but also we allow goodness to wither and weeds to flourish.**

**Your mercy has taken root in us, but we do not share enough of it with others,  
your justice has grown on us, but we have inadequately implemented it,  
your truth has showered on us, but we have let it run to waste,**

**your love has blossomed among us, but we have been slow to set fruit.**

**Most loving God, please open the furrows of our lives to receive again the seeds of your Gospel. Rain your mercy upon us, shine your warmth and light into every dark place, and bring forth in us not the harvest we deserve but the harvest that in your glorious love you have destined for us. Through Christ Jesus our Savior.  
Amen!**

#### **WORDS OF GRACE (Pastor)**

Listen, to this Word:

“Where sin abounds, love much more abounds.”

Receive from such abundance and give thanks. You, my siblings, are among the richest people in the world. You have the wealth of Christ with you always, even to the end of time.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

#### **PRAISE RESPONSE**

(sung twice)

**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.**

**Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia.**

#### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Give voice to God’s love and peace; those around us need to hear the Good.

**ALL: The Peace of God be with you.**

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.”

#### **CHILDREN’S MESSAGE**

##### **SCRIPTURE**

##### **Old Testament**

##### **Isaiah 55:10-13**

<sup>10</sup>For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup>so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

<sup>12</sup>For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. <sup>13</sup>Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

##### **New Testament**

##### **Matthew 13:1-9**

<sup>13</sup>That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!’

##### **Matthew 13:18-23**

<sup>18</sup>“Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

##### **SERMON “Seeds in the Dirt”**

Pastor Sue Vornholt

**HYMN** *“Johnny Appleseed Grace”*

Oh, the Lord's been good to me.  
And so I thank the Lord  
For giving me the things I need:  
The sun, the rain and the appleseed;  
Oh, the Lord's been good to me.

Oh, and every seed I sow  
Will grow into a tree.  
And someday there'll be apples there  
For everyone in the world to share.  
Oh, the Lord is good to me.

Oh, here I am 'neath the blue, blue sky  
Doing as I please.  
Singing with my feathered friends  
Humming with the bees.

I wake up every day,  
As happy as can be,  
Because I know that with His care  
My apple trees, they will still be there.  
The Lord's been good to me.

I wake up every day  
As happy as can be,  
Because I know the Lord is there  
Watchin' over all my friends and me  
The Lord is good to me.

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

One: Let us pray as Christ Our Savior has taught us.

**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

**INVITATION TO GENEROSITY** (Pastor)

God is the giver of life; Christ is the Gift sent to share  
our life, and the Holy Spirit the power that enables us  
to continue in generosity, justice, and joy. Let us open  
our hearts and our lives to God and one another.

**PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING** (All)

Creator God from whom all blessings grow: as we  
dedicate our tithes and offerings, we acknowledge  
that you have blessed us to be the fertile soil from  
which the good news of your kingdom will spring  
forth. Move us, we pray, beyond seeing our role as  
passive or powerless, depending totally on the  
quality of the seed and the expertise of the planter.  
Remind us that you are counting on us for  
fruitfulness, demonstrating for the world your love,  
grace, and power as we bear fruit that eases the  
suffering sick, feeds the hungry, brings justice to the  
oppressed and love and compassion to those who  
feel disconnected or forgotten.  
In Christ, we pray. Amen.

**CLOSING HYMN** *“God Be With You”*

#81 NCH

Jeremiah Rankin

1 God be with you till we meet again;  
By good counsel guide, uphold you,  
With a shepherd's care enfold you;  
God be with you till we meet again.

**Refrain:**

Till we meet, till we meet,  
Till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
Till we meet, till we meet,  
God be with you till we meet again.

2 God be with you till we meet again;  
Wings of shelter safely hide you,  
Daily manna still provide you:  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

3 God be with you till we meet again;  
When life's perils thick confound you,  
Put unfailing arms around you:  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

4 God be with you till we meet again;  
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,  
Smite death's threatening wave before you:  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

**BENEDICTION**

Beloved, remember: you are dirt. May you go forth  
and receive the Gardener's tending so that we may all  
become good soil ready to receive, nurture, and grow  
the seed of the gospel wherever we go. Amen.

**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



This week’s radio broadcast is sponsored by “a faithful listener”.

**MEAL GIVEAWAY** TODAY  
**JULY 16, 2023**  
**UCC-NEILLSVILLE**  
**515 WEST SECOND STREET 10:00-10:15 AM**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Monday, July 17th –  
9 AM – Card Making

Tuesday, July 18th –  
1 PM – Bible Study – 510 W 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
\*every week at Marge Goetsch’s home

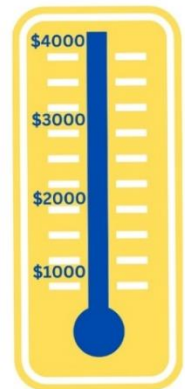
**Hosting Coffee Fellowship**

IS SUSPENDED THRU THE  
SUMMER MONTHS –  
will start again in  
September



**\$4000**

Our goal has been reached thanks to a very caring church family.



Youtube link for Sunday, July 16, 2023

<https://youtube.com/live/twzoYCV3790?feature=share>