

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 1, 2024

United Church of Christ - Neillsville

Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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RINGING OF THE CARILLON

PRELUDE *"Prelude and Fugato on Crusader's Hymn"*

Gordon Young

Karen Mohr

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 15)

Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may
live on your holy mountain?

**Those who lead blameless lives and do what is right,
speaking the truth from sincere hearts.**

Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may
live on your holy mountain?

**Those who refuse to gossip or harm their neighbors
or speak evil of their friends.**

Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may
live on your holy mountain?

**Those who honor the faithful followers of the Lord
and keep their promises even when it hurts.**

Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent? Who may
live on your holy mountain?

**Those who lend money to the poor without interest,
who cannot be bribed to lie about the innocent.**

Such people will stand firm forever.

**Let us dwell in the tent of the Lord and worship in
God's holy presence. Thanks be to God!**

OPENING PRAYER (All)

Loving God, we rejoice to be with you and with one
another. You are the God who makes all things new
and who redeems our past. Instill in us, again, your
hope in place of our despair; your peace where our
hatred threatens; your joy amidst our depression;
your love overwhelming our apathy. May your Holy
Spirit surround and indwell this congregation now,
and forevermore. Amen.

HYMN *"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"*

#43 NCH

Charles Wesley

**1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, on earth be found,
fix in us Thy humble dwelling;
all your faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, you are all compassion;
pure, unbounded love impart,
visit us with Thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.**

**2 Breathe, O breathe your loving Spirit
into every troubled breast;
Let us all in you inherit,
let us find your promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.**

**3 Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all your life receive;
suddenly return and never,
nevermore your temples leave.
You we would be always blessing,
love you as your angels love,
pray, and praise for your unfailing,
Wounded arms outstretched above.**

**4 Finish then, your new creation;
pure and spotless may we prove;
let us see your great salvation
perfectly restored in you;
Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
Crowned as saints, we ever shall be
lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

When the busyness of our lives erodes the intentions
of our hearts:

Merciful God, forgive us.

When our personal agendas take precedence over
reaching out to others:

Merciful God, forgive us.

When we keep putting off being more active “doers of the word”:

Merciful God, forgive us.

When we resist change, knowing that our acting and thinking are limited by our prejudice and ignorance:

Merciful God, forgive us.

When we only half-listen to those who cry out to be fully heard:

Merciful God, forgive us.

Silent Reflection

Gracious and merciful God,

Transform us into “do-ers” of your word, not just hearers. Equip us to proclaim the gospel not in overbearing ways but sensitively and lovingly. Strengthen us with the Holy Spirit to be fruitful and active witnesses to Jesus in all we do and say. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

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 words such as "The peace of Christ be with you, and the response: "And also with you".

RESPONSE: “Sanctuary”

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
Pure and holy, tried and true;
With thanksgiving, I’ll be a living
Sanctuary for you.**

CHILDREN’S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9 (NIV)

¹ Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ² Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

⁶ Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.” ⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? ⁸ And what other nation is

so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? ⁹ Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.

OLD TESTAMENT Living Psalm 15 by Chris Davies

God, who has access to your love?

Who gets to feel belonging?

Is it the rich who profit off the labor of others?

It’s whomever lives with attention to neighbor, Speaking what’s real and honoring the work. It’s whomever sees the mental load, the home management, the essential workers, and honors them all (more than just the money,)

Your love in abundance for those who do not seek extraction of labor, of earth.

Instead witness to the people, first, in covenant with creation.

Whomever is attentive to abundance economies, equity of resources, Whomever lives by these values in their actions as well as their words: They shall not fail.

NEW TESTAMENT James 1:17-27 (NIV)

¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸ He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created.

¹⁹ My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, ²⁰ because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. ²¹ Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—

not forgetting what they have heard but doing it— they will be blessed in what they do.

²⁶ Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. ²⁷ Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

HYMN *"I Then Shall Live"* Text: Gloria Gaither
Tune: FINLANDIA 11.10.11.10.11.10

**1 I then shall live as one who's been forgiven;
I'll walk with joy to know my debts are paid.
I know my name is clear before my Father;
I am his child, and I am not afraid.
So greatly pardoned, I'll forgive another;
The law of love I gladly will obey.**

**2 I then shall live as one who's learned compassion;
I've been so loved that I'll risk loving, too.
I know how fear builds walls instead of bridges;
I dare to see another's point of view.
And when relationships demand commitment,
Then I'll be there to care and follow through.**

**3 Your kingdom come around and through and in me,
Your pow'r and glory, let them shine through me;
Your hallowed name, oh, may I bear with honor,
And may your living kingdom come in me.
The Bread of Life, oh, may I share with honor,
And may you feed a hungry world through me.**

NEW TESTAMENT Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23 (NLT)

¹ One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³ (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. ⁴ Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony."

⁶ Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'

⁸ For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition."

¹⁴ Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand. ¹⁵ It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart."

²¹ For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."

SERMON "Tradition" Pastor Julie

HYMN *"The Well-Loved Traditions"*

Text: Copyright © 2015 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette.
Tune: FOUNDATION 11.11.11.11 ("How Firm a Foundation")

**1 "The well-loved traditions have gotten us through,
Yet see your disciples — the things that they do!"
Some leaders told Jesus, ""They have no respect!
The old ways we follow are what they reject!"**

**2 The Lord said, "Isaiah has shown who you are!
You wash every bottle, container and jar.
You're clean in appearance. Yet look deep within:
You're distant from God and content in your sin!"**

**3 Forgive us, Lord Jesus, for caring too much
For rules and traditions and standards and such.
For while they are useful and good in their place,
In keeping them, sometimes we overlook grace.**

**4 Our worship is proper, yet some feel left out.
We celebrate faith, then pass by those who doubt.
We pray at our tables yet sometimes ignore
The hungry and homeless, the outcast and poor.**

**5 O Lord, may appearances match what's inside.
Take all our hypocrisy, hatred and pride.
Lord, fill us with good things from heaven above,
Till old ways and new ways are bursting with love.**

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory "This is My Father's World"

English Melody

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

God of light and beauty, every gift is from you.
Even our ability to give is a blessing of your love.
We offer you what we have and what we are.
Use our gifts to give birth to a world of
righteousness where none are in need and where
all draw close to your grace. Amen.

HYMN "God Will Take Care of You" Civilla D. Martin
#460 NCH (verses 1-3)

1 Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
Beneath God's wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.

Refrain:

God will take care of you,
through every day, o'er all the way;
God will take care of you,
God will take care of you.

2 Through days of toil when heart grows frail,
God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

3 All you may need God will provide,
God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

JOYS AND CONCERNS

continued HYMN

"God Will Take Care of You" #460 NCH (verse 4)

4 No matter what may be the test,
God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon God's breast,
God will take care of you. [Refrain]

COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RADIO BROADCAST

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

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored by
Rosie & Jim Repinski
in praise of Jesus Christ.

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
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.

YouTube link for Sunday, September 1, 2024

<https://youtube.com/live/7bryKvubzp8>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, September 1st –

- **9 AM** Deacon Host – Wayne Voss
Greeter(s) – JoAnn & Wayne Voss
Usher(s) – Wendy & Craig Sigurdson
PowerPoint – Barb Petkovsek

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Sept 1– Petkovsek's
Sept 8 –
Sept 15 –
Sept 22 -

We need people to sign up