

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 22, 2024

United Church of Christ - Neillsville

Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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RINGING OF THE CARILLON

PRELUDE *“Lord of Love Unfailing”*

Franz Joseph Haydn Karen Mohr

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Who among you is seeking the wisdom of God?

We long to hear God’s Word spoken to our hearts.

Who among you is seeking God’s bright and holy truth?

We long to learn the ways of wisdom and righteousness.

Who among you is seeking a Spirit-filled life?

We long to live lives of holiness and light.

God grants God’s wisdom generously to all who ask.

Come near, people of God!

Let us worship in wisdom and truth.

OPENING PRAYER (All)

God of holy wisdom, we have come here this morning to learn wisdom from your Word, from your Holy Spirit, and from one another. We have come so that wisdom may call us out of the darkness and into the light. We have come to have the deeper, richer, wisdom-filled life that you have promised to each of us. O God, make us ready to hear the Words spoken to our hearts this morning. Call us to hear your wisdom and grant us the courage to respond. Amen.

HYMN *“Be Now My Vision”*

#451 NCH Mary E. Byrne

**1 Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
nothing surpasses the love you impart—
You my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

**2 Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
ever within me, my soul is assured;**

**Mother and Father, you are both to me,
now and forever your child I will be.**

**3 Riches I need not, nor life’s empty praise,
you, my inheritance, now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart,
great God, my treasure, may we never part.**

**4 Sovereign of heaven, my victory won,
may I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

SCRIPTURE READING

OLD TESTAMENT Psalm 1 (NLT)

The Way of the Righteous

¹ Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.

² But they delight in the law of the Lord, meditating on it day and night.

³ They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season.

Their leaves never wither, and they prosper in all they do.

⁴ But not the wicked!

They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.

⁵ They will be condemned at the time of judgment. Sinners will have no place among the godly.

⁶ For the Lord watches over the path of the godly, but the path of the wicked leads to destruction.

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION – (All)

O God, we live our lives as best we can— dealing with difficult relationships and situations, putting failures and disappointments behind us, and moving into each new day with as much energy, goodwill, and optimism as we can muster. But here, right now, we seldom have the right answers, we seldom seek your higher wisdom in our lives, we just move ahead. Forgive us for not asking for your insight. Fill us with your wisdom, that we may live lives of goodness and peace. 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: *"Breathe on Me, Breath of God"*

#292 NCH vs. 1

**1 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew
That I may love the way you love
And do what you would do.**

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Proverbs 31:10-31 (NLT)

Woman of Strength

- ¹⁰ Who can find a virtuous and capable wife?
She is more precious than rubies.
- ¹¹ Her husband can trust her,
and she will greatly enrich his life.
- ¹² She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
- ¹³ She finds wool and flax
and busily spins it.
- ¹⁴ She is like a merchant's ship,
bringing her food from afar.
- ¹⁵ She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for
her household
and plan the day's work for her servant girls.
- ¹⁶ She goes to inspect a field and buys it;
with her earnings she plants a vineyard.
- ¹⁷ She is energetic and strong,
a hard worker.
- ¹⁸ She makes sure her dealings are profitable;
her lamp burns late into the night.
- ¹⁹ Her hands are busy spinning thread,
her fingers twisting fiber.
- ²⁰ She extends a helping hand to the poor
and opens her arms to the needy.
- ²¹ She has no fear of winter for her household,
for everyone has warm clothes.
- ²² She makes her own bedspreads.
She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns.
- ²³ Her husband is well known at the city gates,

where he sits with the other civic leaders.

- ²⁴ She makes belted linen garments
and sashes to sell to the merchants.
- ²⁵ She is clothed with strength and dignity,
and she laughs without fear of the future.
- ²⁶ When she speaks, her words are wise,
and she gives instructions with kindness.
- ²⁷ She carefully watches everything in her household
and suffers nothing from laziness.
- ²⁸ Her children stand and bless her.
Her husband praises her:
- ²⁹ "There are many virtuous and capable women in
the world,
but you surpass them all!"
- ³⁰ Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last;
but a woman who fears the Lord will be greatly
praised.
- ³¹ Reward her for all she has done.
Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

NEW TESTAMENT James 3:13 – 4:3, 7-8a (NLT)

True Wisdom Comes from God

¹³ If you are wise and understand God's ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don't cover up the truth with boasting and lying. ¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God's kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

Drawing Close to God

^{4:1} What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? ² You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. ³ And even when you ask, you don't get it because

your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure.

⁷ So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Come close to God, and God will come close to you.

HYMN *“Grant Us Wisdom to Perceive You”*

#510 NCH vs. 1

**Grant us wisdom to perceive you,
Hearts awakened to receive you,
Minds alert to thoughts that grieve you,
God of mercy, hear us.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

NEW TESTAMENT Mark 9:30-37

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

³⁰ Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn’t want anyone to know he was there, ³¹ for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them. He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but three days later he will rise from the dead.” ³² They didn’t understand what he was saying, however, and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

The Greatest in the Kingdom

³³ After they arrived at Capernaum and settled in a house, Jesus asked his disciples, “What were you discussing out on the road?” ³⁴ But they didn’t answer, because they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve disciples over to him, and said, “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else.”

³⁶ Then he put a little child among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes not only me but also my Father who sent me.”

SERMON *“Confused and Ashamed”* Pastor Julie

HYMN *“Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love”*

#498 NCH

**Refrain:
Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbors we have from you.**

**1 Knelt at the feet of his friends,
silently washing their feet,
Jesu, you acted as servant to them. [Refrain]**

**2 Neighbors are rich and poor,
varied in color and race,
neighbors are near and far away. [Refrain]**

**3 These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love;
all these are neighbors to us and you. [Refrain]**

**4 Loving puts us on our knees,
showing our faith by our deeds,
serving the neighbors we have from you. [Refrain]**

**5 Kneel at the feet of our friends,
silently washing their feet,
this is the way we should live with you. [Refrain]**

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

STEWARDSHIP MOMENT Kirk Rodman

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory *“The Heavens are Telling”* Haydn

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

Holy God, You are the generous one, full of mercy and goodness for your creation. Send your wisdom with these gifts, that they may reach those who need your love and welcome. Bring about a harvest of goodness through these gifts sown in peace. Amen.

HYMN "O Lord, May All We Say and Do" (vs. 1-4)
Tune: TALLIS' CANON 8.8.8.8 ("All Praise Be Yours,
My God, This Night" #100 NCH)
Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

**1 O Lord, may all we say and do
Reflect the faith we have in you;
For faith is meant to change the way
We live our lives from day to day.**

**2 God, may we open wide the door
And welcome people who are poor;
And may we share with them our bread,
For faith without good works is dead.**

**3 Just as a spark can start a fire,
Our words can damage or inspire;
We pray for wisdom from above
To speak and act in gentle love.**

**4 May we not covet earthly things
Or seek the riches this world brings;
May we not boast of all our plans,
For, Lord, our lives are in your hands.**

JOYS AND CONCERNS

HYMN "O Lord, May All We Say and Do" (vs. 5)
Tune: TALLIS' CANON 8.8.8.8 ("All Praise Be Yours,
My God, This Night") Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

**5 O Lord, possessions rust away,
But your love fills us every day;
Through prayer and service in your name,
May we live out the faith we claim.**

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

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".

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 22, 2024
<https://youtube.com/live/dDHeGsDd2U0>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, September 22nd –

- **10 AM** Deacon Host – Byrl Buddenhagen
Greeter(s) – Carole Romens, Jenny Erickson
Usher(s) – Debbie Perkl, Mike Perkl
PowerPoint – Paul Vine

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Sept 22 - Sharon & Byrl Buddenhagen
Sept 29 – JoAnn & Wayne Voss
Oct 6 - Marla & Joel Raine
We need people to sign up

