

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 8, 2024 – 10 AM

United Church of Christ - Neillsville

Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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RINGING OF THE CARILLON

PRELUDE "Pipings!" James Southbridge
Deon Spangler

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Lord, open our hearts this morning to hear your
words of compassion.

Lord, help us to truly listen to you.

Lord, open our spirits this morning to strengthen our
faith.

Lord, help us to work for you.

Lord, make us ready to serve.

Lord, make us ready to witness to your healing love.

AMEN.

OPENING PRAYER (All)

Holy One, we call upon your name, for we know that
your name and favor are more precious than human
riches. You hate wickedness and abhor the neglect
of your people. You call us to righteousness, to
reach out to others with justice and mercy. You
teach us right from wrong, that we may truly live in
your grace. In the shadow of that grace, we offer
compassion and mercy to others.

**Abide with us this day, that we may serve you
forevermore. Amen.**

HYMN "I Come with Joy"

#349 NCH Brian Wren

**1 I come with joy, a child of God,
forgiven, loved, and free,
The life of Jesus to recall,
in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.**

**2 I come with Christians far and near
to find, as all are fed,
The new community of love
in Christ's communion bread,
in Christ's communion bread.**

**3 As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share,
each proud division ends.**

**The love that made us, makes us one,
and strangers now are friends,
and strangers now are friends.**

**4 And thus we meet, and better know
the Presence, ever near,
And join our hearts and sing with joy
that Christ is risen here,
that Christ is risen here.**

**5 Together met, together bound
in friendship we will stay,
And go with joy to love the world
and live the way we pray,
and live the way we pray.**

PRAYER OF TRANSFORMATION

God of unity and love, place within each of us a
spirit of hope and community. Have mercy upon us
when we speak without love or act without
humility. Cleanse us with the living water of your
grace. Create in us willing hearts to live in patience
and gentleness. Raise us up to be your children,
growing toward maturity in faith and love.
Strengthen this church, that we may be a model of
ministry and unity for all the world to see. In Christ's
name, we pray. Amen.

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 verse 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: Blessing of Backpacks

LITANY: Back to School Blessing

O Holy God, the time has come when school begins. As these children begin their studies, we ask a blessing on their backpacks in which they carry the books and folders, markers and pens and pencils they will use to learn.

Bless these backpacks and the children who carry them.

Bless, O God, all who will teach our children in the coming days and weeks and months. Give them the wisdom to find inspiration for each child. Give them the energy and creativity and love that will make their work a blessing to our children.

Bless the teachers and aides as they guide our youth.

Bless, O God, school office staff and administration that they may be faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to their care. Make them fair and merciful, able to do their crucial work with a spirit of grace and compassion.

Bless the professionals who supervise our schools.

Bless, O God, each one gathered here that we will seek every opportunity to grow in our knowledge and love of you. Grant that we may see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly.

Bless the parents and grandparents and guardians and all who care for your children and creation.

And bless, O God, these our cherished children, those whom we have promised to love and nurture at their baptism. Keep them safe, keep them excited, keep them ever seeking to learn more and to develop their gifts. Grant that through their study, they may gain the tools to grow in love and faith and service, all their days.

Bless, O God, these backpacks and the children who carry them. Amen.

HYMN "God of All Learning"

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Tune: BUNESSAN 5.5.5.4 D ("Morning Has Broken")

**1 God of all learning, God of all knowing,
We bring these backpacks filled with supplies.
Bless all these tools of learning and growing.
Use them, we pray, to change many lives.**

**2 Bless all the students, young ones and old ones —
Walking or riding, traveling by bus.**

**May they remember that you go with them,
And that they all are precious to us.**

**3 Some kids are poor and some kids are wealthy;
May we give all the tools that they need.
May we make sure they're safe, loved and healthy
So that they all may thrive and succeed.**

**4 Bless all who learn and bless those who guide them,
Bless those who teach and counsel and care.
May they remember you walk beside them.
Through all their school days, you, Lord, are there.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 (NLT)

¹ Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.

² The rich and poor have this in common: The Lord made them both.

⁸ Those who plant injustice will harvest disaster, and their reign of terror will come to an end.

⁹ Blessed are those who are generous, because they feed the poor.

²² Don't rob the poor just because you can, or exploit the needy in court.

²³ For the Lord is their defender. He will ruin anyone who ruins them.

NEW TESTAMENT James 2:1-10, 14-17 (NLT)

¹ My dear brothers and sisters, how can you claim to have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ if you favor some people over others?

² For example, suppose someone comes into your meeting dressed in fancy clothes and expensive jewelry, and another comes in who is poor and dressed in dirty clothes. ³ If you give special attention and a good seat to the rich person, but you say to the poor one, "You can stand over there, or else sit on the floor"—well, ⁴ doesn't this discrimination show that your judgments are guided by evil motives?

⁵ Listen to me, dear brothers and sisters. Hasn't God chosen the poor in this world to be rich in faith? Aren't they the ones who will inherit the Kingdom he promised to those who love him? ⁶ But you dishonor the poor! Isn't it the rich who oppress you and drag you into court? ⁷ Aren't they the ones who slander Jesus Christ, whose noble name you bear?

⁸Yes indeed, it is good when you obey the royal law as found in the Scriptures: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ⁹But if you favor some people over others, you are committing a sin. You are guilty of breaking the law.

¹⁰For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God’s laws.

¹⁴What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don’t show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone? ¹⁵Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, ¹⁶and you say, “Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well”—but then you don’t give that person any food or clothing. What good does that do?

¹⁷So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

NEW TESTAMENT Mark 7:24-37

²⁴Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre. He didn’t want anyone to know which house he was staying in, but he couldn’t keep it a secret. ²⁵Right away a woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit, ²⁶and she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter.

Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia,

²⁷Jesus told her, “First I should feed the children—my own family, the Jews. It isn’t right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁸She replied, “That’s true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children’s plates.”

²⁹“Good answer!” he said. “Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter.” ³⁰And when she arrived home, she found her little girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.

³¹Jesus left Tyre and went up to Sidon before going back to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Ten Towns. ³²A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him.

³³Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man’s ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man’s tongue. ³⁴Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, “Ephphatha,” which means, “Be opened!” ³⁵Instantly the man could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly!

³⁶Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them not to, the more they spread the

news. ³⁷They were completely amazed and said again and again, “Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak.”

SERMON “Playing Favorites” Pastor Julie

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

HYMN “Take My Gifts” Shirley Erena Murray
#562 NCH

**1 Take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me,
gave me light and food and shelter,
gave me life and set me free,
now because your love has touched me,
I have love to give away,
now the bread of love is rising,
loaves of love to multiply!**

**2 Take the fruit that I have gathered
from the tree your Spirit sowed,
harvest of your own compassion,
juice that makes the wine of God,
spiced with humor, laced with laughter -
flavor of the Jesus life,
tang of risk and new adventure,
taste and zest beyond belief.**

**3 Take whatever I can offer -
gifts that I have yet to find,
skills that I am slow to sharpen,
talents of the hand and mind,
things made beautiful for others
in the place where I must be:
take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me.**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Remembrance

Blessing

Breaking Bread and Pouring Wine

Sharing The Elements

All are welcome to partake in the Feast of our Lord.

The table is open to people of all ages who confess

Jesus as Lord and seek to follow Christ's way.

Prayer Of Thanksgiving

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Invitation to Generosity

Offertory "Where'er You Walk" G.F. Handel

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

All that we do is in your holy name, O God. Even as we share the riches of our labors, may we continue to honor your name in all that we do. Bless these gifts given freely, that your justice and mercy may prevail in a weak and weary world. Amen.

HYMN "Standing at the Future's Threshold"

#538 NCH (verses 1,2,4) Paul R. Gregory

**1 Standing at the future's threshold,
grateful for God's guiding hand,
Asking no protected strong hold,
Called to be a pilgrim band,**

**Seeking ever for new vision
of the gospel for our day,
We move forward in God's mission
With our faith to show the way.**

**2 Midst the teeming cities' millions,
Witness to God's boundless love,
Reaching for each system's lost ones,
Seeking justice with each move;
Grant us courage, strength, and patience
To contend with vicious power,
Lead us forward in the faith that
Gives us hope in testing's hour.**

**4 Building justice as the bulwark
Of the peace that God would give,
Making sacrifice the hallmark
Of the life we're called to live:
Grant us, God, to bear our witness
To this peace in Christ, and move
Forward with our faith's own access
To the life of hope and love.**

JOYS AND CONCERNS

HYMN "Standing at the Future's Threshold"

#538 NCH (verse 5)

**5 Jesus Christ, eternal Savior,
Source of life and truth and grace,
We would ask no special favor,
With the lowliest seek our place,
Know the in-as-much of serving,
Have your cross as our command:
Lead us in this faith unswerving
Forward as your pilgrim band.**

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 Phil Follen in celebration of
Donita Follen's birthday.

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 8, 2024

<https://youtube.com/live/PhgspnFC9cE>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, September 8th –

- **9 AM** Deacon Host – Janice Miller
Greeter(s) – Lydia Schumacher, Karen Northup
Usher(s) – Cris Hediger, Larry Marshall
PowerPoint – Janice Miller

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Sept 8 – Rodman's
Sept 15 – Community Picnic
Sept 22 -
Sept 29 -

We need people to sign up



return to
10 AM this
Sunday,
September 8th



**NEXT WEEK
SEPTEMBER 15th**

FREE COMMUNITY

PICNIC

UCC-NEILLSVILLE

515 WEST 2ND STREET

FELLOWSHIP HALL

September 15, 2024 11:00 AM-12:00 PM

TAKEOUTS WILL BE AVAILABLE

