

**Sixth Sunday after Epiphany**  
**February 16, 2025**  
United Church of Christ - Neillsville  
Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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**RINGING OF THE CARILLON**

**PRELUDE** *"Deep River"* arranged by William M. Felton  
Karen Mohr

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Happy are those who follow the ways of the Lord.

**God's ways are just and merciful.**

Those who follow God's ways are continually  
nourished in faith.

**In all that they do, they prosper.**

Come, let us open our hearts to God's compassionate  
love.

**Let us celebrate God's mercy and justice. Amen.**

**OPENING PRAYER (All)**

**Glorious God, you invite us to sink our roots deep  
into your love and holiness, and to grow stronger  
each day in our faith in you. We give thanks that you  
understand us, and that the fruits we bear are  
consistent with what you created us to become. We  
gather to worship and praise you, our Creator and  
Redeemer, Protector and Guide. Amen.**

**HYMN** *"Like a Tree Beside the Waters"*

**#313 NCH** James F. D. Martin

*(Tune: Hyfrydol #355 NCH)*

**1 Like a tree beside the waters,  
Nurtured by your loving care,  
We, O God, your sons and daughters,  
Your enduring witness bear.  
In each passing generation  
May your voice of love be heard.  
Bless, we pray, this congregation  
With your holy, living Word.**

**2 Like a tree beside the river,  
Drawing life from holy streams,**

**Fill us with your love forever;  
Recreate our hopes and dreams.  
Through the storms of life sustain us  
By the wisdom of your grace.  
May the changing of the seasons  
Find us in your warm embrace.**

**3 We, beside the living waters,  
Drink from your eternal life.  
Give to all, your sons and daughters,  
Faith that rises over strife.  
O Living God, most glorious,  
Strengthen us for life today.  
By the hope of timeless promise  
Guide your church upon the Way.**

**LITANY OF CONFESSION & ASSURANCE**

Blessed are we when we let go of possessions  
for the kingdom of God unfolds in open places.

**Woe to us when we gather into barns for soon this  
life will be over.**

Blessed are we who know the ache of hunger  
for the empty places in body and soul are the fertile  
soil for new growth.

**Woe to us who fill our lives to capacity  
for we fail to recognize what is missing.**

Blessed are we who know sorrow for the ache of love  
lost is witness to the seed planted.

**Woe to us who have yet to know the pain of grief  
for the fullness of love is woven with sorrow.**

Blessed are we who know scorn for the rejection of  
humans keeps us mindful of that beyond.

**Woe to us who depend on the approval of others  
for to dance with the Spirit appears foolish.**

Blessed are we who live in the harmony of life in the  
Spirit,

**For we will recognize abundance. Amen.**

**CHILDREN'S TIME**

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **OLD TESTAMENT Jeremiah 17:5-10**

This is what the Lord says:

<sup>5</sup> “Cursed are those who put their trust in mere humans,

who rely on human strength  
and turn their hearts away from the Lord.

<sup>6</sup> They are like stunted shrubs in the desert,  
with no hope for the future.

They will live in the barren wilderness,  
in an uninhabited salty land.

<sup>7</sup> “But blessed are those who trust in the Lord  
and have made the Lord their hope and confidence.

<sup>8</sup> They are like trees planted along a riverbank,  
with roots that reach deep into the water.

Such trees are not bothered by the heat  
or worried by long months of drought.

Their leaves stay green,  
and they never stop producing fruit.

<sup>9</sup> “The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,  
and desperately wicked.

Who really knows how bad it is?

<sup>10</sup> But I, the Lord, search all hearts  
and examine secret motives.

I give all people their due rewards,  
according to what their actions deserve.”

### **OLD TESTAMENT Psalm 1**

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

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

<sup>3</sup> They are like trees planted along the riverbank,  
bearing fruit each season.

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

<sup>4</sup> But not the wicked!

They are like worthless chaff, scattered by the wind.

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

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

### **NEW TESTAMENT Luke 6:17-26**

<sup>17</sup> When they came down from the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of his followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and

from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup> They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil[a] spirits were healed. <sup>19</sup> Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone.

### *The Beatitudes*

<sup>20</sup> Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,

“God blesses you who are poor,  
for the Kingdom of God is yours.

<sup>21</sup> God blesses you who are hungry now,  
for you will be satisfied.

God blesses you who weep now,  
for in due time you will laugh.

<sup>22</sup> What blessings await you when people hate you and exclude you and mock you and curse you as evil because you follow the Son of Man. <sup>23</sup> When that happens, be happy! Yes, leap for joy! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, their ancestors treated the ancient prophets that same way.

### *Sorrows Foretold*

<sup>24</sup> “What sorrow awaits you who are rich,  
for you have your only happiness now.

<sup>25</sup> What sorrow awaits you who are fat and prosperous now,

for a time of awful hunger awaits you.

What sorrow awaits you who laugh now,  
for your laughing will turn to mourning and sorrow.

<sup>26</sup> What sorrow awaits you who are praised by the crowds,

for their ancestors also praised false prophets.

### **SERMON** “Blessings and Sorrows” Pastor Julie

### **HYMN** “Blessed Are the Poor in Spirit”

(Tune: NETTLETON, Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing)

**1 Blessed are the poor in spirit;  
all God's realm is surely theirs.  
Those in mourning will find comfort  
as an answer to their prayers.  
Meek ones whom this world despises  
will inherit everything.  
God, your kingdom still surprises;  
may we seek the reign you bring.**

2 Blessed, too, are those who hunger  
and who thirst for what is right.  
They will not be prone to wander,  
for your will is their delight.  
Those who show God's care and mercy  
will receive that mercy too.  
God, in Christ you show us clearly  
of the joy we have in you.

3 Those who share the peace God gives them  
will find blessings as God's own.  
Those oppressed for faithful living  
will call heaven's kingdom Home.  
When the world's ways seem distressing  
and we feel life's painful sting,  
God, remind us of the blessings  
of the wondrous life you bring.

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## 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 "A Simple Prayer" Eduard Grieg

#### Doxology

Praise God, the Source of life and birth;  
Praise God, the Word, who came to earth;  
Praise God, the Spirit, holy flame;  
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.

#### Prayer of Dedication

Almighty God, who made us who we are, we offer  
all of ourselves to You. Take our talents, our energy  
and our joy, and use us to share Your love. Take  
our mistakes, our regrets and our pain, and use us  
to bring Your healing. Magnify the gifts we offer  
before You today, to spread Your peace in the  
world. Amen.

### HYMN "When Peace, Like a River"

#438 NCH (vs 1-3)

1 When peace, like a river, upholds me each day,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll,  
Whatever my lot, you have taught me to say,  
"It is well, it is well with my soul."

#### *Refrain:*

It is well (it is well) with my soul (with my soul).  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

2 Though evil should tempt me, though trials should  
come,  
Let this blessed assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And has paid life and blood for my soul:  
*[Refrain]*

3 My sin - oh, the bliss of this glorious thought -  
My sin - not in part, but the whole -  
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more.  
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!  
*[Refrain]*

### JOYS AND CONCERNS

HYMN "When Peace, Like a River" #438 NCH (vs 4)  
Horatio G. Spafford

4 O God, speed the day that is filled with your light,  
When clouds are rolled back as a scroll;  
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall appear,  
"Even so" - it is well with my soul.

#### *Refrain:*

It is well (it is well) with my soul (with my soul).  
It is well, it is well with my soul.

### BENEDICTION

### POSTLUDE

Karen Mohr

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **RADIO BROADCAST**

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

This week's radio broadcast is sponsored  
anonymously  
"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, February 16, 2025  
<https://youtube.com/live/nknin0YhHyQ>

**Coffee fellowship after worship -**  
Sign up on back bulletin board

Feb 16 - Susie & Russ Karl  
Feb 23 - Joel & Marla Raine  
Mar 2 - ANNUAL MEETING  
Mar 9 -  
Mar 16 -

We need people to sign up



### Sunday, March 2nd,

immediately following the  
regular service,  
UCC will host its annual  
congregational meeting.

The intent is to provide members with information  
from each committee on past year activities as well as  
their plans and goals for the upcoming year.  
In addition, we will review committee membership  
and request approval.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Sunday, February 16th -

- **10 AM** Deacon Host - Sally Sadowska  
Greeter(s) - Karen Northup, Lydia Schumacher  
Usher(s) - Janet Meredith, Emile Miller  
PowerPoint - Reese Ziegler

- **11 AM** - Confirmation Class

### Monday, February 17th -

- **9 AM** Making Cards

### Tuesday, February 18, 2025

- **1 PM** Bible Study  
- **5:30 PM** Trustees Meeting

### Wednesday, February 19th -

- **3:30 PM** Future Connections & Outreach Mtg.  
- **5 PM** JAM Meeting at Calvary  
- **5:30 PM** Council Meeting

