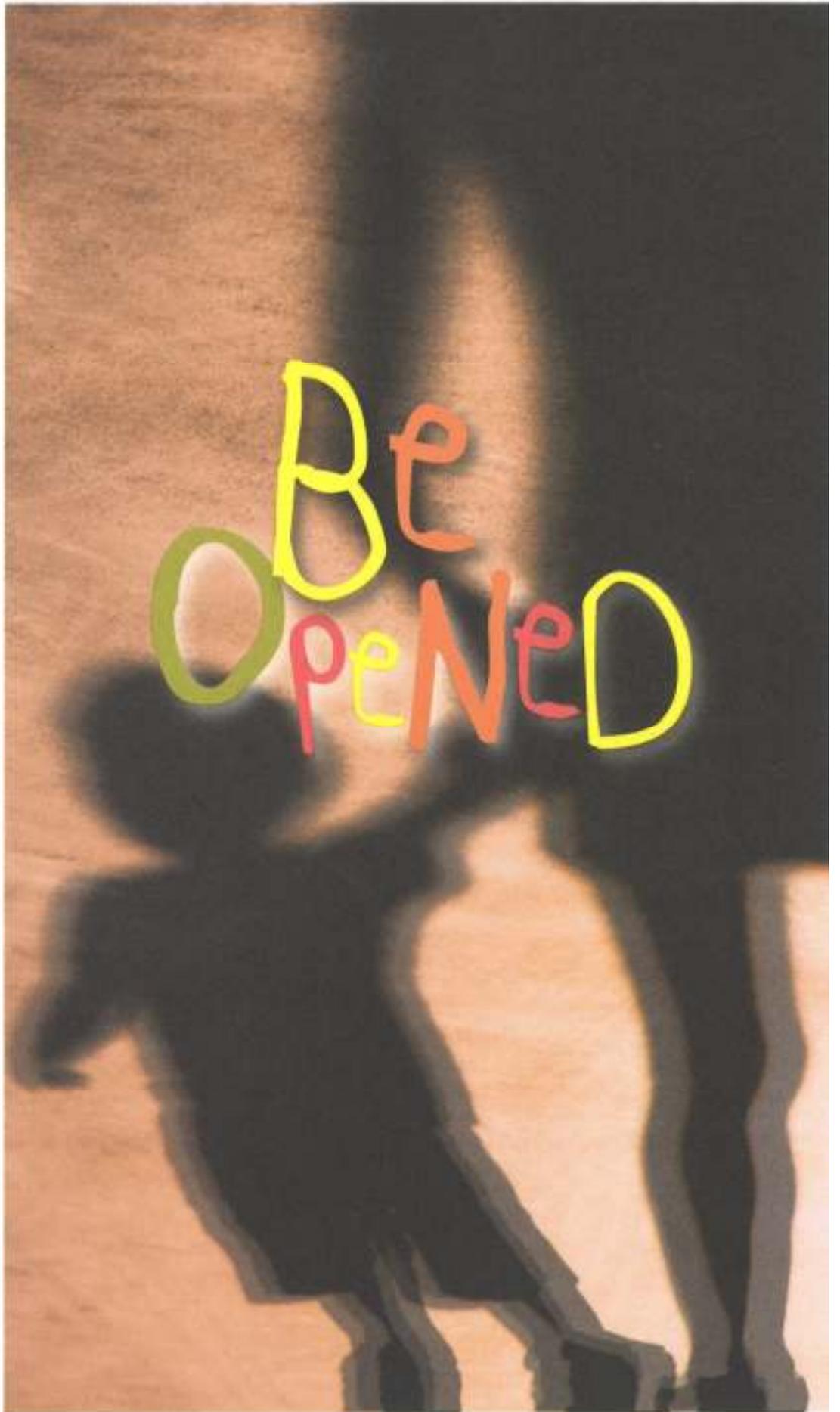


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OPENED



St. John's United Church of Christ
An "Open and Affirming" Congregation

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST - COMMUNION

Rev. Alice Rauch, Pastor

The Service: 10:00 a.m.

September 5, 2021

(Let us be silent and prayerful as we prepare ourselves for worship.)

MISSION STATEMENT OF ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Remembering that God calls us through Christ to be ministers with each other, St. John's United Church of Christ, as inspired and directed by the Holy Spirit, seeks: To be inclusive and accessible to all people; To provide loving service to all of God's people through mission and ministry; To strive for righteousness, justice, and peace.

*No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*

Prelude

Sharing of Announcements and Prayer Concerns

Moment of Meditation

Call to Worship: Psalm 146:1-2, 5-6)

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD, O my soul!

I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,

Whose hope is in the LORD their God,

Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them;

Who keeps faith forever.

Hymn #23 *"There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"*

Prayer of Brokenness - God of Eternal Life, we confess that we are short-sighted. We seek the gains that we can experience and know. We look for signs that prove to us right now an assurance of our future. We fail to view how You are at work in the world around us, through all times and seasons. We seek the short-term goals and pleasures that ease our fears, instead of trusting You and living into Your ways of deep empathy, compassion, and care for our earth and for one another. Forgive us for our selfishness. Help us to turn to Your ways, to put our trust in You, to know that though we may not experience the fulfillment of Your justice and reign while we breathe, it will come. We live for it now and know that death does not have the final word, especially in the pursuit of justice and righteousness. For now, hold us to the path of mercy, love, and justice. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness - *When we put our trust in God, we will find our way. God's assurance comes through the love, support, and encouragement of one another, so be encouragers. Show mercy and practice loving-kindness, so that others may also learn by experiencing. For this is how we live into God's reign on earth. Go and share the good news of God's love, forgiveness, and mercy. Amen.*

Affirming the Peace Among Us

The peace of Christ is with you!

And also, with you!

You are invited to turn to the people around you and wave as a sign of graceful greetings this day.

Words for All - Especially Children

Scripture: Mark 7:24-37

Special Music

Message

“Showing Up”

Morning Prayer

Let us continue to pray in the words that Jesus taught us - **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 sins, as we forgive those who have sinned against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Sharing our Joys and Celebrations

Dedication of Gifts and Offerings:

Generous God, you have made rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable alike in your image. Bless the gifts we have gathered today that we may use them to protect the afflicted and bring greater justice to your world. Amen.

Order for Holy Communion

Invitation

Prayer: *Holy God, we praise and bless you for creation ... With the faithful in every place and time, we praise with joy your holy name:*

Holy, holy, holy, God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.

Prayer (Cont.): *Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and the fruit of the vine ... Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

We do remember and give thanks that you have called us to serve you. Amen.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

The Prayer of Thanksgiving (Together): We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ’s gifts. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth Your praise in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Hymn *“Open My Eyes, That I May See”*

Benediction

Postlude

THIS MORNING

St. John’s is pleased you have joined with us today. We hope that you have found this time to be a blessing. **Please sign** the attendance book located in the Narthex (and kindly include your mailing address/telephone number and/or email) and introduce yourself to the persons who are worshipping around you. If you are looking for a new church family and are interested in knowing more about St. John’s, please indicate that following worship to the Pastor or one of the ushers.

Available to you, if needed, is a Quiet Room for adults and children, where the service can be seen and heard. Also available are phonic-ear hearing units, large print bulletins, and large-print Bibles. Ask any usher.

Chancel Flowers - are given in honor of Charlie Dreese’s 94th birthday, and to celebrate Alicia and Karl Rauch’s wedding anniversary.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers This Morning

(please contact the church office, at 570-523-0162, with any updates)

Ongoing Needs- Oliver Auman, Betty Hackenberg, Janet & Richard Heaton, Ingrid, Christine Sartwell, Karin Shawver, Joanne & Bill Stahley, Leanne Trout (Dee Ledgerwood's Mother), Linda Williams, Wayne Williams.

Shut-In/Homebound- Ann Beasom, Richard Berry, Peg Brouse, Bill & Lola Fuller, Jane Hayes, Evelyn Mabus, Ken Moore, Ethel Moser, Loretta Roberson, Mary Stover.

Immediate Concerns - Scott Bower, Joyce, Maryjane H., Michelle L., Katelynn Mattison, Alice Savidge, Barbara Smith, Peg Swinehart.

THIS WEEK

Monday, Sept. 6	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tuesday, Sept. 7	7:00 pm 7:30 - 9:30 pm	HOSPITALITY (CR) Men's Westbranch Chorus (FH)
Wednesday, Sept. 8	7 am - 8:30 am	Lewisburg Sunrise Rotary (FH)
Thursday Sept. 9	9:00-10:30 am 7:00 pm	TOPS 1158 (CR.) MISSION/SOCIAL ACTION COMM. (PAR)
Friday, Sept. 10		
Saturday Sept. 11	12pm - 6pm	Pavilion rsvd. by member
Sunday, Sept. 12	10:00 am 11:00 am	WORSHIP - RALLY DAY RE-CREATION SINGERS PICNIC IN PAVILION

OFFICES CLOSED - The Church and Pastor's offices will be closed on Monday, September 6th in observation of Labor Day.

RALLY DAY 2021 - Please join us on **Sunday, September 12th at 10:00 am** for our celebration of Rally Day. This year, our guest musicians will be **THE RE-CREATION SINGERS**. Please join us in worship and then a covered dish dinner to follow. We will be taking a "free-will" offering to support the work and ministry of Re-Creation.

FUTURE

WIRED WORD - The monthly Wired Word Study, will be held on the 4th Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be on September 23rd, at 7:00 pm via ZOOM.

Messy Church - A new program is starting at St. John's for families, called Messy Church. It's a new way of thinking about and "doing church" in a relaxed, joyful, creative way. We will experience God's love and friendship through playing and creating (and eating!) together.

Messy Church welcomes anyone in the congregation and community to join us. We will gather, do fun interactive activities with biblical themes, celebrate with stories, songs and prayers, and enjoy a meal together.

Messy Church programs can be found throughout the globe, and we're so excited to host our own at St. John's. Please mark your calendar for Sunday, September 26th, from 3:30 PM-5:30 PM, for the first of these quarterly events.

From the program creators: **MESSY CHURCH** is a form of church for all ages together that involves creativity, celebration, and hospitality. Church, but not as you know it!

SEPTEMBER COMMUNION & SPECIAL OFFERINGS - The offering for the month of September has been designated for the Lewisburg Food Pantry. We will also be gathering non-perishable food items/monies on September 26th in celebration of Harvest Home.



"Agnus Day appears with the permission of www.agnusday.org"

THE OUTWARD SIGNS

Sunday, August 29, 2021

Chancel Flowers - \$44.00; Current Expenses - \$1,860.00; Heiter Center - \$45.00;
 Improvements/Maintenance - \$5.00; LEAF Fund - \$10.00; Loose Offering - \$75.00;
 OCWM - \$241.00; Weis Gift Cards - \$200.00;

GRAND TOTAL - \$2,480.00 THANK YOU!

St. John's United Church of Christ

1050 Buffalo Road, Lewisburg, PA 17837 -- (570) 523-0162
 Worship 10:00 a.m. Office: Mon.- Fri. 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
 Website: www.stjohnslewisburg.org Email: stjohnsucc@ptd.net

It is a privilege to serve you today . . .

Rev. Alice Rauch, *Pastor*
 Rev. James E. Johnson, *Pastor Emeritus*
 Todd R. Hummel, *Dir. of Music/Organist*
 Todd R. Hummel, *Bell Choir Director*

Linda Sartwell / Sue Baish, *Sound Technician*
 Todd Hummel, *Administrative Assistant*
 Beth Moser, *Greeter*
 Acolyte
 Barry Catherman, *Video Technician*

CCLI #20796546 One License #738455-A

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 5, 2021

Mark 7:24-37

Be Opened

A woman comes to Jesus, asking for healing. Because this woman does not follow the same religion as Jesus and his followers, he at first turns her away. Did you catch that? It bears repeating in case you did not. Jesus refuses to heal the woman because she does not follow the same religion. Even Jesus cannot see past his notions of right and wrong, black and white, in and out.

But we have this story because the woman startles Jesus into changing his mind. Not only is her child healed, but Jesus and those who followed him then and follow him now are forever changed.

Even Jesus has to change his mind sometimes. Even Jesus has to pivot away from his entrenched beliefs to embrace a new way. Even Jesus has to be uncomfortably challenged before he can imagine a new way of doing ministry and healing those in need in his community.

This story is a powerful encouragement to those in leadership positions in church, who fear that change in this 21st context of ministry is both inevitable and impossible. Like Jesus, may you discover that while the only constant is change, you can be who you need to be to lead in these changing times. Jesus himself went through the process of recognizing that what he had been doing was no longer fruitful. Even Jesus saw that it was imperative that he open his heart and mind to new possibilities.

In her book, *Dynamic Discernment: Reason, Emotion, and Power in Change Leadership*, Sarah B. Drummond notes that she has studied change for more than two decades and in that time, she has “found that even change is changing.” She has uncovered “dramatic shifts in the language we use for the role of leader in bringing about change.” But change itself is not the end of the story. “Throughout the history of God’s interaction with creation, we see God providing the resources to face that which is uncertain and new.”*

What tools is God providing you in this time of rapid change? How can you make the best use of those tools? What prayer can you offer to our Christ, who shows us how to change our minds?

*Drummond, Sarah B. - *Dynamic Discernment: Reason, Emotion, and Power in Change Leadership*. The Pilgrim Press, 2019.