



St. John's United Church of Christ
An "Open and Affirming" Congregation
SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Rev. Alice Rauch, Pastor

The Service: 10:00 a.m.

February 23, 2025

(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.

Rooted in tradition, progressive in our outlook.

Prelude

Announcements and Prayer Concerns

*Call to Worship:

Come and learn the ways of life.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Bless those who curse you and pray for those who persecute you.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

We have come to follow Jesus.

Come and learn the ways of life.

*Hymn

"Awake My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve "

#491

Prayer of Confession - God of the grand reversal, we confess our easy attachment to revenge in its many forms. Instead of interrupting violence, it has been easy to practice it in word and deed. It has been easy to worship the lie of scarcity instead of trusting Your promise of abundance. By this, the way of the world has worked into our hearts and minds. Forgive us and free us from ourselves. Equip us anew with an outpouring of Your love. By this of You, form us into channels of grace. Deepen our love, expand our generosity, and mold us and the world with Your abundant mercy. Let the heart and mind of Christ take up residence in us anew. Amen.

Words of Assurance - *I have good news! The Holy One, Love Almighty, interrupts our missteps and misdeeds, our distractions and our detours. In Christ Jesus, God has shown us what forgiving love has already done and continues to do. It heals, it mends and makes a new chapter possible. This is the forgiving power of God that embraces you and me, here and now. It is the good news! You can trust it with your life. Thanks be to God!*

Sharing the Peace: The Peace of Christ be with you! **And also with you!**

Praise Response: *"Glory, Glory, Hallelujah"*

#2 (stanza 1)

Glory, glory, hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.

Glory, glory, hallelujah, since I laid my burdens down.

Words for All - Especially Children

Anthem *"Follow Me"* *Jordan*

Scripture: Luke 6:27-38

Message *"Holy Teachings"*

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer (sinned and sinned against 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.**

Celebrations and Joys

*Singing Our Gratitude *"God Whose Giving Knows No Ending"* #565 (stanza 1)

**God, whose giving knows no ending, from your rich and endless store,
Nature's wonder, Jesus' wisdom, costly cross, grave's shattered door:
Gifted by you, we turn to you, Offering up ourselves in praise;
Thankful song shall rise forever, Gracious donor of our days.**

*Dedication of Gifts and Offerings: **Generous God, thank You for pressing Your holy love into the lap of our lives. Bless these gifts we bring that they may be multiplied into a good larger than we can imagine. Also, bless us, that we might live our lives in gratitude, sharing freely without expectation of return. Through this way of Jesus, stretch our hearts, minds, and lives into channels of Your Holy grace. Amen.**

*Hymn *"Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love"* #498

*Benediction

Postlude

In Our Thoughts and Prayers

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

Ongoing Needs- Ann Albee, Anna Brouse, Betty Hackenberg, Jean Hartman, Kristian K., Christine Sartwell, Leslie Shearer, Dianna Spickler, Joanne Stahley, Linda Williams, Wayne Williams, Rev. Sharon Von Blohn.

Mostly Homebound- Ann Beasom, Richard Berry, Peg Brouse, Bill Fuller, Ken Moore, Ethel Moser, Ann Louise Snyder.

Immediate Concerns - Ed Crow, Rev. Sally Dries, The Family of Lola Fuller, Richard Furman, Bill Geyer, Craig Hoffman, John Marshal, Pam Mabus, Sue Miller, Todd O'Neil, Alice Savidge, Renee St. Clair, Cyndi Weaver.

CHANCEL FLOWERS - are given by Kay Nottis and Colleen Ross in honor of Pastor Gary's birthday!

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) or fill out a Welcome Card (located on the Welcome Table in the Narthex) and introduce yourself to the people 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.

FELLOWSHIP HOUR - Please join us after worship for a time of Fellowship and tasty treats. Sponsored by Sue & Jim Tomlinson.

THIS WEEK

Monday, February 24	9:30 am	Kinder Music (PAR)
Tuesday, February 25	9:30 am 10:30 am 7 pm	Kinder Music (PAR) Willowbrook Strings (PAR) Men's Westbranch Chorus (CHRM)
Wednesday, February 26		
Thursday, February 27	8:30 am 9 am 1:30 pm 7 pm	WW (FH) TOPS (CR) Trailside Troubadours (FH) Women's Barbershop (CH.RM.)
Friday, February 28		
Saturday March 1	10 am - 2 pm	Women's Barbershop (CH.RM./SANCT)
Sunday, March 2	8:45 am 9:15 am 10 am 3 pm	BELL CHOIR (SANCT) CHANCEL CHOIR (CH.RM) WORSHIP, COMMUNION, CHILDREN'S CHURCH CHOIR FESTIVAL, SUNBURY UCC

FUTURE

NEED A RIDE TO CHURCH - Rides to Church services are now available for folks. If you're in need of a ride to one of our services, please call the Church office (570) 523-0162 by at least the Friday prior to needing a ride.

MONTHLY MISSION OFFERING - The mission communion offering for the month of February is dedicated to Mazeppa Manna.

CHANCEL FLOWER CHART - The Chancel Flower Chart is located on the table in the Narthex. Please consider sponsoring a Sunday or two for flowers.

LAY-READERS NEEDED - There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex for Lay-readers. Please sign up for a month or split a month with someone.

EASTER FLOWER ORDERS - there are order forms in the Narthex for ordering flowers for Easter. The deadline for orders is March 9th.

THE OUTWARD SIGNS

February 16, 2025

Easter Flowers - \$124.00; Kitchen Items - \$150.00; Souper Bowl - \$285.75;
Chancel Flowers - \$50.00; Current Expenses - \$2,115.00;
Improvements/Maintenance - \$20.00; LEAF Fund - \$100.00;
Loose Offering - \$3.00; Mazeppa Manna - \$260.00; Memorial Fund - \$50.00;
OCWM - \$220.00; OGHS - \$50.00; St. John's Quilters - \$15.00;

GRAND TOTAL - \$3,442.75 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. Gary Nottis, *Pastoral Care Assoc.*

Todd R. Hummel, *Dir. Of Music / Organist*

Todd R. Hummel, *Bell Choir Director*

Todd Hummel, *Administrative Assistant*

Sue & Jim Tomlinson, *Greeters*

Keira Aulenbach, *Acolyte*

Brenda Adams, Don Adams, Sue Baish,
Barry Catherman, Alicia Graybill,
Lisa Graybill, Linda Sartwell, Dave Smit,
Tech Team

CCLI #20796546 One License #738455-A

Available to you, if needed, are Quiet Rooms 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 greeter or A/V team member.

LIVESTREAM OF SERVICE - We are live streaming the worship service on both Facebook and YouTube. If you would prefer NOT to be seen on the live stream, please ask a greeter to be seated in an area that is not visible by the cameras.
(Quiet room or elsewhere in the Sanctuary)

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

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Luke 6:27-38

Love Your Enemies

In her book, "The Hiding Place," Corrie ten Boom shares how during World War II, at the age of 50, she joined the Dutch resistance, working with her older sister, Betsie, in helping to hide their Jewish neighbors from the Nazis behind a sliding panel in a bedroom of their family home in Holland.

In 1944, though, the family was caught and arrested by the Gestapo. The sisters were subsequently sent to a concentration camp. Despite the brutal conditions, Betsie and Corrie clung to Jesus' command of loving one another, even the very people who were holding them captive.

Corrie, though, recalled how one especially trying day her sister spoke words of faith and encouragement to her, reminding her that, "if people can be taught to hate, they can be taught to love."

"We must find a way, you and I, no matter how long it takes," said Betsie said to the younger Corrie.

Corrie did find way. After the war was over, she committed the remainder of her days modeling what is perhaps one of the hardest things Jesus asks of us here in Luke's gospel: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.*

Corrie ten Boom illustrated radical love by forgiving the guards in the concentration camp. She continued to write and give lectures about the healing power of God's love extended to those who hurt us, and how that love was the only thing capable of healing a broken world.

Decades have passed since ten Boom wrote "The Hiding Place," and hate still seems to be winning over love. We read the news headlines and hear the broadcasts of retaliation and retribution rather than redemption and forgiveness. The few times the media does share such a story of love winning over hate, we find it hard to imagine — let alone imagine us being the ones displaying such love. It seems impossible. Unfathomable.

But we must find a way to love our enemies, bless those who curse us and pray for those who mistreat us. No matter how long it takes, the world, which has mastered how to hate, needs to be taught love. It's a lesson that begins at home.

Merciful God, You who are our hiding place in times of trouble, we boldly ask for the strength to do the impossible this day — love our enemies and forgive those who have hurt us. All things are possible with You, O God. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

