



Risk
and
Restoration

St. John's United Church of Christ
An "Open and Affirming" Congregation
TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Rev. Alice Rauch, Pastor

The Service: 10:00 a.m.

November 10, 2024

(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

Choral Introit ***"Surely the Presence of the Lord Is In This Place"***

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,

I can feel His mighty power and His grace.

I can hear the brush of angel's wings, I see glory on each face;

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

*Call to Worship (Inspired by Psalm 146)

From generation to generation, the Holy One has loved justice and righteousness, lifted the broken and opened possibilities for the dejected.

Help, hope, and happiness are of the Holy One, who reigns forever. Trust the Holy One!

When the power brokers, corrupt systems, and tools of violence have failed us, the Holy One has remained faithful to abiding love and abundant liberation.

Help, hope, and happiness are of the Holy One, who reigns forever. Follow the Holy One!

Praise the Holy One with song and dance, in spirit and in truth, for God's glory and for life abundantly!

Help, hope, and happiness are of the Holy One, who reigns forever. Praise the Holy One!

*Hymn

"God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending"

#565

Call to Confession

Prayer for Transformation and New Life - God of mercy and possibilities, forgive us for clinging to the measures of success and security in our world rather than trusting in the abundance of Your creation. Help us to recognize the kingdom coming and our role as participants in Your realm. Liberate us from the bonds of consumerism, scarcity, and self-centeredness, and make us vessels of Your love come alive in the world. Amen.

Words of Grace - *Beloved, you are inheritors of the kingdom of God. You receive riches beyond compare. The Holy One journeys with you and enables you to grow in grace, peace, and contentment.*

Sharing the Peace

The Peace of Christ be with you! And also with you!

Response

"We Praise You, O God"

#420 (vs. 1)

We praise you, O God. Our Redeemer, Creator;

In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.

We lay it before you, we kneel and adore you;

We bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

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 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.

THIS WEEK

Monday, November 11	9 am - 1130 am 9 am 12 pm 2 pm 4 pm 7 pm	Kinder Music (PAR) St. John's Quilters (CR) Lewisburg Garden Club (FH) WORSHIP/MUSIC (GP) FALL BOOK STUDY (GP) BVS rehearsal (FH)
Tuesday, November 12	9 am 10:30 am 7 pm	Kinder Music (PAR) Willowbrook Strings (NARTHX) Men's Westbranch Chorus (CH RM)
Wednesday, November 13		
Thursday, November 14	8:30 - 10:30 am 9 am - 10:30 am 1:30 - 3:30 pm 7 pm 7 - 8:30 pm	WW (FH) TOPS (CR) CHRISTIAN ED (ZOOM) Trailside Troubadours (FH) M.A.S.H. (ZOOM) Women's Barbershop Chorus (CH.RM)
Friday, November 15		
Saturday November 16	3 pm - 6 pm	CONFIRMATION CLASS (GP)
Sunday, November 17	9:00 am 10 am	CHANCEL CHOIR (CH.RM) WORSHIP, CHILDREN'S CHURCH

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 November is dedicated to Devitt House.

FALL BOOK STUDY - For our Book Study this fall we will study the Wisdom Literature in the Old and New Testaments, focused on the way the Biblical writers understood God to be revealed in the world or, given the nature of the world, how they thought they should live. We will consider how their wisdom can be applied to our lives today. We will meet on **Monday afternoons at 4:00, through Monday, November 11.**

Congregational Meetings - **TODAY, Sunday, Nov. 10,** There will be an informational meeting for the congregation about the proposed kitchen renovation immediately after the church service, with a **congregational vote to be held on Sunday, Nov. 17,** after the service. Both the informational meeting and the vote will be held in the sanctuary immediately after the church service.

THE OUTWARD SIGNS

November 3, 2024

T-Shirts - \$5.00; Thanksgiving Baskets - \$140.00; Building Use - \$60.00;
Chancel Flowers - \$100.00; Current Expenses - \$5,190.00;
Davy's Cards - \$200.00; Devitt House - \$354.00; Giant Cards - \$1,300.00;
Improvements/Maintenance - \$300.00; Loose Offering - \$60.00;
OCWM - \$410.00; Weis Cards - \$125.00;

GRAND TOTAL - \$8,244.00 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. Gary Nottis, *Pastoral Care Assoc.*

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

Todd R. Hummel, *Bell Choir Director*

Todd Hummel, *Administrative Assistant*

Beth Moser, *Greeter*

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)

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

November 10, 2024

Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17

Risk and Restoration

A seminary student was struggling to prepare a youth Bible study on how Ruth, a widowed Moabite gleaning fields in Bethlehem, cozies up one night to the owner of the land, Boaz, on the threshing room floor in the dark of night.

Yikes!

The pastor-in-training had no idea what to do with a text that seemed so racy for teens. And there lies the problem. Many times, ancient texts like this are read through modern lenses that sully a story pure with hope and redemption.

Ruth's and Boaz's story isn't R-rated. It's more H-rated. "H" for the Hebrew word "hesed," which is defined as a love that is merciful, steadfast, loyal and charitable. It is a story of love that transcends the physical. It is a story of love that illustrates God's love towards us.

When read through the lens of hesed, we see Boaz's charitable love that permitted Ruth to glean his fields. We see the caring love of Naomi when she tells her daughter-in-law to wash and anoint herself and then present herself to Boaz.

This isn't advice on how to snag a husband. Rather, the act of washing and anointing symbolized that the time of mourning was over. Out of love and concern, Naomi is telling Ruth it's time to live again. It's time to think about securing a more sustainable future. Remember, widows in the ancient times were vulnerable. Marriage was viewed as security.

Ruth listens to her mother-in-law and goes to the granary at night to see Boaz, thus, putting her reputation on the line. The granary was a man's place. Reputable women didn't go there alone nor at night. There on the threshing room floor, Boaz, who is a kinsman of Naomi's, gets past his initial shock of this young woman before him and looks upon her with eyes full of merciful love. Ruth's risk was worth taking. They marry and have a son, Obed.

It's amazing to think what a love that is merciful, steadfast, loyal and charitable can do in our lives. It is awe-inspiring to see just how a risk-taking love led to not only the restoration of Ruth's and Naomi's lives, but the restoration of all humankind. For in the genealogical opening of the Gospel of Matthew, among all the "begots," there is the name of Ruth and her son as the noteworthy ancestors of Jesus the Christ.

And that's the Bible study the seminary student presented to the teens that day, as together they explored the story of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz, through the ancient lens of hesed — God's powerful and restoring love.

Merciful God, may today we be open to the transformative power of Your love — love that is charitable, kind, loyal and steadfast. May this love restore Your world. Amen.

