Emmanuel United Church of Christ

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

We Welcome You on this
Sixth Sunday of Easter
Rural Life Sunday
Service of the Word – May 9, 2021
9:30 AM

The Gathering

Ringing of the Bell
Our Life Together
The Solemn Declaration
Prelude
Call to Worship

Leader: O Lord, you have given us the gift of land.
All: May we ever protect and preserve it.
Leader: O Lord, you have given us the gift of water.
All: May we keep it pure and safe.
Leader: O Lord, you have given us the gift of air.
All: May we keep it pure and fresh.
Leader: O Lord, you have given us the gift of plants and trees.
All: May we ever use and protect them justly.
Leader: O Lord, you have given us the gift of birds and animals.
All: May we preserve and enjoy them.
Leader: O Lord, you have given us care of the earth.
All: O Lord, we accept the care of these gifts as our sacred stewardship. Amen.

Opening Prayer

***Hymn "For the Beauty of the Earth" #28 (NCH)**

***Affirmation of Faith**

We know that God is in the world—was and is and will be. God made it all, and continues to renew and remake and resurrect.
We know God best in the life of Jesus, who was and is our maker of hope, the one who saves.
We know the power and energy of God in the Holy Spirit.
We are filled with God's joy and pledged to discipleship and love.
We trust in God. We celebrate God. We work together for justice and peace through God.
We choose the ways of Christ. We are never alone.
Thanks be to God!

The Refreshment of Forgiveness

Call to Confession

The Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

Unwavering God, we keep asking what is it that You most want us to do with our lives in hope You might tell us something easier. Instead, You offer the same answer every time: Love one another as I have loved you. We confess that our love for others is not always what we hope it would be. We are quick to judge and slow to offer grace. We are swift to anger and resistant to make amends. We are prone to suspicion and resistant to build trust. We hear the greatest commandment, and if we are honest, we are filled with hesitation because it means we must change. Unwavering God, in these moments of stillness and silence, hear our struggles with the love You call us to practice…

(Silence is kept for personal reflection and prayer)

Assurance of Pardon

Leader: Friends, hear the good news. God's love is so extravagant and inclusive that it knows no bounds. It transcends borders and speaks a universal language. Abide in that love.
All: We will find joy in that love and be renewed by that love and we will replicate that love in the words. Amen.

***Choral Response "Gloria Patri"**

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

The Gift of the Word

Prayer for Illumination and the Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson Psalm 90
New Testament Lesson Mark 4:26-29
Gospel Lesson Matthew 13:1-9 and 18-23

Special Music "How Great Thou Art" Pastor Jan

Sermon "The Simplest and the Best" Pastor Jan

Offering Ourselves and Our Gifts

Call to Offering
Offertory
***Offertory Response "Take My Gifts" #562 (NCH)**
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.

***Prayer of Dedication**
Creator God, you have blessed our lives with relationships that both inspire and challenge. We offer these gifts so that we might continue to build relationships with one another and with Your whole creation. Bless these gifts that they may bring wholeness and life abundant to all Your people. Amen

The Ministry of Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (using debts and debtors)

The Gathered Go Forth to Serve

***Hymn "All Things Bright and Beautiful" #31 (NCH)**

***Charge**
Leader: As we return now to our homes, workplaces, and communities may the Holy Spirit open our eyes anew.
All: We will open our eyes anew to the vastness and splendor of the beauty all around us. May we hear, smell, see and touch God's glory evident in all of creation.
Leader: Above all, let us see God's beauty even in the brokenness of our brothers and sisters remembering that we are all created in our Saviors image.
All: We go now to love and serve our Lord. Amen.

***Benediction**
***Three-fold Amen #812 (NCH)**
***Postlude**

*Indicates that all who are able, please stand. **Bold** print indicates unison reading.
Notice Someone Missing? *If so give them a call and let them know they are missed.*