

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain
July 11, 2021

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

“Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...”

.....
GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

Welcome to worship today at Immanuel United Church of Christ in Hamel, IL, where our mission is “Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...”

.....
We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us today. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here! Please leave a comment to let us know you are here. Also note any joys and concerns you may have and feel free to greet each other in Christian love.

Music used is covered under our CCLI livestreaming license # 4012842.
Today for our service, you will need your worship guide, paper, and a pen.

PRELUDE

Karen Cain

POINT TO PONDER

I'm a child of the king, His royal blood now flows in my veins. And I, who was wretched and poor, now can sing. Praise God, praise God! I'm a child of the king.”

—Gaither Vocal Band

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Hope in Christ!

All: Hear the word of truth, the good news of our salvation.

One: Believe in Christ!

All: We are sealed with the mark of the Holy Spirit.

One: Live in Christ!

All: We embrace our inheritance, as children of God.

One: Live to the glory of Christ!

All: Amen!¹

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Gracious God, heavenly parent of us all, we come this day to give thanks for being your children, deeply loved, no matter who we are or what we have been through to get to this place. Hear our words of praise and thanks. Keep holding us close as we journey through our lives on our way to your presence. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

We Are God’s People

#2220 (TFWS)

**We are God's people, the chosen of the Lord,
Born of His Spirit, established by His Word;**

**Our cornerstone is Christ alone,
And strong in Him we stand:
O let us live transparently
And walk heart to heart and hand in hand.**

**We are God's loved ones, the Bride of Christ our Lord,
For we have known it, the love of God outpoured;
Now let us learn how to return
The gift of love once given:
O let us share each joy and care,
And live with a zeal that pleases Heaven.**

**We are the Body of which the Lord is Head,
Called to obey Him, now risen from the dead;
He wills us be a family,
Diverse yet truly one:
O let us give our gifts to God,
And so shall his work on earth be done.**

**We are a temple, the Spirit's dwelling place,
Formed in great weakness, a cup to hold God's grace;
We die alone, for on its own
Each ember loses fire:
Yet joined in one the flame burns on
To give warmth and light, and to inspire.**

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

Today we are going to talk about being adopted. Typically we think of children who have been adopted by people who are not the parents who gave birth to them. Often these are children whose parents may have died, but sometimes their parents simply cannot take care of them for some reason. So other adults might take these children to be like their own. One of the best descriptions of this that I ever heard was an adopted child who said that being adopted meant that she grew in her mommy's heart instead of in her tummy.

That's what our scripture is talking about today—how each of us was chosen to be God's children, no matter how old we are. We have all grown in God's heart and we are all loved very much. This is something to be very thankful for, because God's love for us, our adoption, means that we will never have to deal with our problems by ourselves. God will always be with us in our hearts, and we will always be in God's heart, no matter what happens.

PRAYER: Loving God, thank you for adopting us and letting us grow in your heart. Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC**My Tribute****# 14 (NCH)**

How can I say thanks
 For the things You have done for me?
 Things so undeserved
 Yet You give to prove Your love for me;
 The voices of a million angels
 Could not express my gratitude
 All that I am and ever hope to be
 I owe it all to Thee

[Chorus 1:]
 To God be the glory
 To God be the glory
 To God be the glory
 For the things He has done

[Chorus 2:]
 With His blood He has saved me
 With His power He has raised me;
 To God be the glory
 For the things He has done

[Bridge:]
 Just let me live my life
 Let it pleasing, Lord to Thee
 And if I gain any praise
 Let it go to Calvary

[Chorus 2:]
 With His blood He has saved me
 With His power He has raised me;
 To God be the glory
 For the things He has done

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Holy God, as we come into your holy presence,
 we confess our many shortcomings.**

**Our hands are unclean; our actions do not honor you;
 Our hearts are not pure; our words are often false;
 our worship is often of false idols.**

Grant us mercy, O God. Give us hands that are clean,

**hearts that are pure, tongues that are true,
and souls that worship you alone, so that we may glorify you. Amen.**

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

All you who seek God, and who have set your hope on Jesus Christ, hear the good news: we have received forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of God's grace. As forgiven and beloved children of God, let us set our hope on Christ, and live for the praise of his glory. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

Psalm 24

The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers. Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in his holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their souls to what is false, and do not swear deceitfully. They will receive blessing from the LORD, and vindication from the God of their salvation. Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

SERMON**Being Adopted*****Rev. Dana Schindler***

Some of you know that I worked at CASA for a while. For those who don't know about this organization, its purpose is to train volunteers who will then advocate for children who have been removed from their homes due to neglect and/or abuse. CASAs are assigned to a child or children from the same family and follow them while they are in foster care. It is hoped that the situation in their home of origin can be improved so it will be safe for them to return home, but sometimes it is not. And sometimes the parents realize they cannot change enough and give up their rights so their children can be put up for adoption.

This process often takes one to two years and can be very hard on the children as well as the adults who come to know them. One of the happiest days is when children who have known nothing but neglect and abuse, who have trouble trusting any adult because the adults in their lives have so often failed them, finally find parents who have demonstrated that they do love them and promise to work to make their lives as good as possible. One of the few truly happy days in family court is adoption day. Adoption days are parties.

In Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus, he talks about how we have been adopted by God, into the love and plans for our best welfare. The Holy Spirit is our Advocate and Christ is our example. We gain a family, a support system that is with us always.

But how does this work?

Paul tells us that we were chosen before the foundations of the earth were laid. Some theologians think this means we are predestined to be God's people, but others don't. Frankly, we just don't know. Many (including me) believe that God has chosen ALL people to be adopted into the kingdom. That is why we say "No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here." No one is excluded from God's adoption. That includes Jews, who were the first to acknowledge God, and Christians, who took the name of Christ to separate themselves from the Jews who did not believe Christ to be the messiah. But it also includes Muslims, who worship the same God, called Allah. It also includes everyone else, because all humans are God's children. We have all been adopted. But we have the choice to accept that gift of adoption. And some choose not to accept the gift.

Think of it as having a birthday with lots of presents and you see one that you simply choose not to open. The gift is still there, whether you open it or not.

But here are the other things we need to know about that gift. Once we open it and accept it, we will forever be changed. Jesus meets us wherever we are, but does not leave us there. Jesus shows us a better way to be, a better way to live our lives so that

we no longer feel abused and neglected. And we are not meant to keep it just for ourselves. We are meant to share it with others who have not realized they even have this gift. We are meant to share God's bottomless love and grace with everyone because God didn't just choose us, God chose everyone.

We are God's people because we have chosen to accept God's gift of love and grace, but with that adoption into God's family, we are also given the responsibility to share the gift through our love for each other, because they were also adopted by God before the foundations of the earth were laid. We are called to be advocates for those who are not receiving love and grace, for those who are excluded for any reason. We are called to pray and work for justice for those who are on the margins of society so that we may all live in peace.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Gracious God, we give thanks that you have chosen to adopt us, to make us your own beloved children, and provided us with love and grace upon grace. We are so grateful that you meet us where we are but do not leave us in those dark, depressing places. We give thanks for your gift of the Holy Spirit to act as our advocate and for your son, Jesus, who has taught us how to be the people we should be, people who love others and work to lift them up when they fall, people who work for justice for all people, people who love all of your other beloved people, even when they aren't like us, even when they don't like us.

We pray for our church, Lord. Help us to work together as a church family, to be respectful and loving of each other. Help us to hear your call and do your bidding, even when it is hard to do. We pray for our members, those who are healthy and those who need healing that only you can provide. We pray for those who are traveling, that they may enjoy their travel and return safely home. We pray for our church leaders and our pastor, that we may always follow where you lead, bringing the rest of our members with us. We pray for our community. Help us to reach out in love to those around us, that they may see your love through us.

We pray for our country, so divided. Help us to find common ground that we may achieve your will for us and our neighbors.

All these things we pray in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying: **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, the power, the glory forever Amen.**

GIVING OUR GIFTS

Through God's amazing love for us, we have been adopted as beloved children. As we reflect on these gifts we have received, let us consider what gifts we have to offer in thanksgiving. Your gifts of time, talent, and treasure will be used to strengthen our

ministries in this community and fulfil our financial obligations. Offerings may be placed in the offering plates outside the sanctuary or mailed to Immanuel United Church of Christ at 5838 Staunton Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025.

HYMN OF THANKS Take My Life, God, Let it Be # 448 (NCH)

**Take my life, God, let it be consecrated faithfully
Take my moments and my days, let them flow in ceaseless praise.
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**Gracious God, we give thanks for your many blessings, poured out in love.
Bless these gifts we bring, also given in love, that they may be used to
demonstrate your love for all people. Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN "To God be the Glory" # 72 (Chalice)

**To God be the glory, great things he hath done:
so loved he the world that he gave us his son,
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
and opened the lifegate that all may go in.**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.**

**Oh, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to ev'ry believer the promise of God.
The vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.**

**Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!**

**O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.**

GOING FORTH TO SERVE As we go forth to serve, please remember our opportunities this week. Join us for

PRAYER GROUP Will not meet together this Wednesday, but I encourage all who are a part of this church family to pray for the health of our church and our friends, family, and community, as we seek to hear God's will for us in this time and place.

CHRISTIAN ED. GROUP/FAITHQUEST 2.0 will meet on Zoom on July 29th @ 7:00 pm. We will be planning for September activities. All who are interested are invited to this meeting. Those who are at church each Sunday following the kickoff Sunday are asked to participate either as helpers or learners. This helps everyone to be part of the program in whatever way they are comfortable when they are here.

REVITALIZATION TEAM will be discussing new ideas for outreach and mission. Please let Pastor Dana know if you are interested.

QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL MEETING next Sunday, July 18 following morning worship. You may join us in the sanctuary or on Zoom.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Council Meeting August 4 @ 7 pm @ church

AHMA Planning Meeting for Walk in the Park August 7 @ 11 am, Fireman's Park, Alhambra.

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE WEBINAR August 11 @ 10 am @ church.

MAZZIO'S FUNDRAISER for Hitz Auxiliary August 16th from 5-9 pm.

VISION TEAM MEETING August 19th on Zoom.

AHMA WALK FOR GOOD September 11 at Fireman's Park in Alhambra 9-noon.

MAZZIO'S FUNDRAISER for Vision Team September 13 from 5-9 pm.

PPRC meets September 16 @ 7 pm.

FREE OUTDOOR COMMUNITY CONCERT @ church September 25, 6-8 pm featuring The Wild HouseKats. Bring your own chair.

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Ruth: officeiucc@gomadison.com

Pastor Dana: pastoriucc@gomadison.com

THE BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY in Hamel is open on Mondays from 9:00am till 10:30am. All who need assistance are welcome.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Pancake mix
 Flour
 Tomato paste
 Evaporated milk
 Shampoo
 Empty egg cartons

Syrup
 Pie filling
 Baked beans
 Coffee
 Dish detergent

Sugar
 Mashed potato mix
 Chef Boyardee Ravioli
 Bars of soap
 Laundry detergent

CONCERNS

Maria S.
 Kathie R.
 Tomiko J.
 Rose O.
 Michelle L.
 Jane B.
 Diane B.
 Rich R.
 Our Church
 Our country as we deal with pandemic
 Pastor Dana, as she leads

Harry S.
 Martha K.
 Wayne S.
 Roger W.
 Kristy K.
 Mary Ann C.
 Luella L.
 Kyle T.
 Hitz Home workers and residents

Lillie H.
 Carole G.
 Sherri R.
 Kathleen L.
 Dorothy D.
 Jake G.
 Maurice M.
 Church Council

BENEDICTION

And now, until we meet again, may each one be held safely in the palm
 of God's hand. Amen.

POSTLUDE

¹Ministry Matters