

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler

August 1, 2021

Tenth 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

“Fear stops us from make the leap, taking the chance, reaching out, and trusting ourselves.”—*Jeanne Boschert, The Ethical Exit*

“Progress always involves risks. You can’t steal second base and keep your foot on first.”—*Frederick Wilcox*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: The faithful shall speak of the glory of the Lord’s kingdom!

All: We will tell of the Lord’s mighty deeds!

One: The Lord is faithful in word and deed.

All: The Lord lifts up those who are falling.

One: Our eyes look to the Lord of our salvation.

All: The Lord is near to all who call upon him in truth. Amen.

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Gracious God, we give thanks for your mighty deeds and for your providential care. We pray that you will make your presence known to us this day and help us to trust in your guidance, that we may never be afraid to get out of our boats of relative safety and embrace each other and our community, that we may all celebrate your love for us together. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

How Firm a Foundation

618 Chalice/ # 32 HFG

**How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!**

**What more can he say than to you he has said,
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

**“Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed,
for I am your God, and will still give you aid.
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.**

**“When through the deep waters I call you to go,
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
and sanctify to you the deepest distress.**

**“The soul that on Jesus still leans for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to its foes.
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”**

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

Do you like baseball? We always want our team to win, of course, but to win the game, players have to take some chances. The pitcher has to try to figure out which pitch will be the hardest for the batter to hit. The goal is to get the batter out. But some batters will hit the ball. The batter has to take a chance in hitting the ball. If it’s a good pitch and you don’t swing, it’s a strike. If you swing and miss, it’s a strike. But if it’s a bad pitch, it would be a ball, and four balls means you get to go to first base. You have to take a chance. If the batter gets to first base, he might try to “steal” second base; he might try to run even if the batter doesn’t hit the ball. But it’s still taking a chance, because you might get caught and then you would be out. Every action in the game means you have to take a chance. If you don’t take enough chances, you can’t win the game.

The Bible story we will read this morning is about Peter taking a chance. He was in a boat in a storm and he saw Jesus walking on the water. He asked Jesus to tell him to walk on the water too. Jesus told him to come to him and Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, until he got scared. Then Jesus saved him. When God tells us to take a chance and do something scary, we need to trust that God will help us to do it. Because when God tells us to do scary things, it’s because God knows that it can turn out for the best if we trust God.

PRAYER Thank you God, for always being with us to help us through scary times. Help us to trust that you will take care of us so we can do what you tell us to do. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the

mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

SERMON

Get Out of the Boat

Rev. Dana Schindler

Last week we talked about the miracle of the Feeding of the 5,000. This is the ending of that scriptural passage, including another miracle. Jesus had sent the disciples on ahead of him so he could finally have some time to pray and rest. In reading this morning's text, the 28th verse jumps out at me:

²⁸ Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water."

While I'm not sure what I would have said in this situation, I'm pretty sure this isn't it. Apparently the other disciples didn't think about saying or doing it either. Peter wanted to know if it really was Jesus or if he was imagining things. Perhaps it was a test to see what Jesus was really capable of doing. This was really thinking outside of the box!

Could Peter actually walk on the water? This would certainly qualify as miraculous. It would certainly take a large amount of faith on Peter's part to even attempt walking on water, but it would also take an important action: Peter would actually have to leave the relative comfort and safety of the boat. He would have to GET OUT OF THE BOAT!

Let's think about risk. What was the last real risk you took in your life? What change have you made that could have impacted some aspect of your life for good or bad? Did you embrace the change, go kicking and screaming, or did you decide the change wasn't worth the risk?

Some of the risks we might take could include changing jobs, moving to a new city, buying a house, getting married or divorced, speaking out on a controversial issue or a host of other things. Having some level of fear and trepidation about taking a risk of this sort is not only normal, it is a safety mechanism. It is what keeps us from trying to do the things they hire stuntmen for in the movies. It keeps us from driving as fast as the car will go. It keeps us from spending our life savings on lottery tickets. It keeps us from trusting people who have proven untrustworthy before.

But some risk, some change in our lives is not only good but necessary for our emotional and spiritual well-being. 35 years ago, I took a tremendous risk and moved

to Germany, where I taught school for the Department of Defense Dependent Schools for 5 years. I did not know a soul in Germany, had never been there before, and didn't know more than a few words of German. But despite the fact I had never been more than a few hours' drive away from my parents' home, I went. Even though it meant leaving a comfortable community where I knew everyone and had a stable life, I went.

It turned out to be a good risk, but I didn't know that for sure up front. I made lots of friends, learned different ways of looking at things, did lots of traveling to places I may never be able to visit again, and met my husband. Sure, there were bumps along the way, but all in all, it was one of the best decisions I ever made. My life was improved immeasurably as a result of that move, but those changes only happened because I made myself GET OUT OF THE BOAT!

What makes it so hard to get out of the boat? Sometimes there is physical danger and we experience fear due to lack of safety. This is not entirely bad. But sometimes there is no easy solution and we have to decide between the lesser of two evils. In cases like this, it is human nature to want to stay put in the boat. Many of us will stay in a situation that we know is not good because we fear that the alternative will be even worse.

Sometimes we may fear a loss of those things that offer personal security. Just as a small child may not want to go anywhere without a security blanket, we don't want to leave the boat of financial security, personal safety or comfort. We don't want to risk losing our sense of security. And this too, is perfectly normal. But sometimes, the reactions that are normal, ones that most people might experience are the very reactions that keep us from changes that help us to adapt to new situations and keeps us from achieving personal and/or spiritual growth. Even a bad choice to get out of the boat can lead to learning valuable lessons, discovering unknown strengths and meeting new people who may turn out to be marvelous sources of support. These changes can transform us into new people.

I don't advocate change just for the sake of change, but I do advocate change that improves things. Unfortunately, changes that lead to improvement, don't always demonstrate that improvement right away. It is difficult to embrace change that doesn't seem to be an immediate improvement—we humans tend not to be the most patient of creatures.

Over the course of time, there have been a great many changes in the church. Many of them didn't seem like such a great idea at the time they were presented. When Jesus came to earth, it was not for the purpose of converting Jews to Christianity. Jesus was born a Jew, raised a Jew and died a Jew. The scriptures tell us that Jesus came not to end the law of God but to complete it. We humans didn't get the full message God gave us to begin with. There were 10 commandments and eventually, people got so wrapped up in keeping the rules that they forgot to keep each other. So we needed some redirection. I believe that the purpose of Jesus' life was to show us how to honor and live with each other. Jesus wanted us to GET OUT OF THE BOAT of living by the rules at the expense of other humans.

The apostle Paul wanted to help people to understand the teaching of Jesus. He understood those teaching to mean that Jesus wanted to bring all humanity together.

Just as Jesus welcomed both Jews and Gentiles, Paul organized churches that welcomed both Jews and Gentiles. This required the Jews who believed in Jesus to lay aside comfort and change some of their religious rules and regulations. In order to work toward the kingdom of peace and unity, they had to GET OUT OF THE BOAT and look at worship differently.

Martin Luther, who was responsible for the Protestant Reformation, had no intention of leaving the Catholic Church and starting a new religious group. He just thought they needed to change some of their faith and worship practices. When he tacked the 95 theses to the church door, it was to point out all of the reasons why members of the Roman Catholic Church needed TO GET OUT OF THE BOAT! Many were unwilling to consider change, so those who could no longer worship by sticking to those rules formed another group. How sad that they could not work together to resolve their differences. One long-term result was that now there are a lot of different denominations, which can cause confusion to those who have not yet accepted Christ. Getting out of the boat is necessary for progress. Getting out of the boat means letting go of “the way we’ve always done it.” We all know that statement well: “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” That one sentence has stopped more church progress with traditions and rituals; we have to get past hanging on to the ones that no longer serve a good purpose. Traditions usually have a good purpose when they begin, but sometimes that purpose is lost over time. I am reminded of the story of a young newlywed couple. One day the wife decided to bake a ham for dinner. She got out the ham, cut it in half, placed *both* halves in a roasting pan and put the pan in the oven. Her husband watched this and asked her why she cut the ham in half before putting it in the roasting pan. She looked at him for a moment and then said “I don’t know why. My mother always did it that way, but I have no idea why.” The young wife was curious and called her mother to ask why she always cut the ham in half before putting it in the roasting pan. Her mother admitted that she had always done it because her mother had always done it. So the mother called the grandmother to ask why SHE had always cut the ham in half. The grandmother told her that she had always cut the ham in half because she only had a small roasting pan. Then the mother remembered the grandmother saving half of the ham to cook the next day. The other women in the family continued to do what the grandmother had started, even though they didn’t need to and had no idea why they were doing it. It was time for these ladies to GET OUT OF THE BOAT of meaningless tradition.

How many traditions do we continue because that’s the way we’ve always done it? How many of them need to end because they no longer fit current circumstances? GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT means recognizing that things could be better than they are right now and that we can be the agents of change, if only we will take the risk.

GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT means giving up some of our comfort so others may feel comfortable too. Times change. Music styles change. Culture changes. In every time one can hear older generations bemoan the current younger generation and their immorality and selfishness. “They’ll never amount to anything.”

During the 1960's many Americans got out of the boat of racist practices by embracing the civil rights movement. Many others saw no need to change discriminatory practices because it wasn't a problem for them personally. It was "the way we had always done it." A number of white people had seen the problem for what it was, but still had done

little that made significant positive change. But one very tired maid, just another unseen African-American woman, got things moving just because she was too tired to get up and move to the back of the bus. It was an action that was so out of the box that

it led many others to GET OUT OF THE BOAT! The Civil Rights Movement was not perfect, there were actions taken that didn't turn out the way many of the movers and shakers hoped, but thanks to all those who GOT OUT OF THE BOAT, African Americans now have a voice in our culture, they have a vote, they have infinitely more opportunities for education and employment than ever before. They are recognized as worthy of inclusion in society. There are still a lot of problems, but progress began.

What about us? What changes do we need to make in our lives? Some of us may need to reconsider our priorities and change our thinking, taking into account how our actions affect those around us. Some of us may need to stop doing things that are hurtful to us personally. We may need to start taking better care of ourselves.

Some of us may need to assess our relationships with friends and family. Some of us may need to make some serious changes in our personal relationship with God. It is easy to grow apart during good times when many of us view good things that happen in our lives as being the result of our own actions, as well as times that are challenging, when we may blame God for the things that happen as a result of our own poor choices. Any of these changes will require us to GET OUT OF THE BOAT of comfort and resistance to change.

What about our church? What changes do we need to make? How can we make our worship more meaningful to more people? What can we do to encourage others to join us in our family of faith? What can we do to make our community better? How can we deepen our relationships with our neighbors? We live in difficult times with many challenges that have never before been encountered. Even through all of this, we need

to remember that GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT is necessary for progress. GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT means letting go of "the way we've always done it." GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT means recognizing that things could be better than they are right now. GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT means giving up some of our comfort so others may feel comfortable too. GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT requires courage, strength and willingness to change. GETTING OUT OF THE BOAT can lead to miraculous, transformational happenings. But like Peter, nothing miraculous and transforming can happen until we GET OUT OF THE BOAT! AMEN.

PASTORAL PRAYER

God of grace and mercy, hear our prayers. We pray for strength and courage to get out of the boat when you call us. Push us when we stubbornly cling to the sides, refusing to answer your call to service in the church and in the world. Help us to remember why we hold on to traditions and help us to find new ways to accomplish your goals when

the old ones no longer work. Help us to care for others who may not even have a seat in the boat. Lead us to make room for them so that none will be left behind, for we know the only way we can enter the kingdom of peace and love is hand in hand.

We offer special prayers for those who are ill. Touch them with your healing hand. We pray for those facing natural and human-made disasters. Enable us to help as we can to make their lives better. We pray as well for those who remain unnamed but also need to know your presence. We pray for healing of physical and spiritual illness. We ask that you will touch the pain of each of your beloved children and help them to carry their burdens. We ask your blessings upon all of the people of the world for we know each person is one of your beloved children. Help us to see each one through your eyes of love. Help us to achieve justice for all in your holy name. 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

Sometimes offering ourselves to God can make us uneasy. What if we say “Here I am” and God asks us to give more than we want to give or do something that scares us? Let us trust that God has our backs and will give us the strength and ability to follow where God leads. 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/ # 458 HFG
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

God of Blessing, we thank you for everything you have given us and done for us. We pray that you will accept our gifts, bless them, and use them to build your kingdom of love and peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMN Break Now the Bread of Life #321 Chalice/ # 30 HFG

**Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as once you broke the loaves beside the sea.**

**Beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord;
my spirit waits for you, O living Word.**

**Bless your own word of truth, dear Lord, to me,
as when you blessed the bread by Galilee.
Then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
and I shall find my peace, my All in all!**

**You are the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
your holy word the truth that rescues me.
Give me to eat and live with you above;
teach me to love your truth, for you are love.**

INVITATION

LEADER: Luke, the evangelist, wrote of our risen Savior, who at the table with two of the disciples took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.

PEOPLE: **In company with all believers in every time and beyond time, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the breaking of the bread.**

COMMUNION PRAYER

LEADER: God be with you.

PEOPLE: **And also with you.**

PASTOR: Lift up your hearts.

PEOPLE: **We lift them to God.**

PASTOR: Let us give thanks to God Most High.

PEOPLE: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

PASTOR: Eternal God, who has created the heavens and the earth, giving breath to every living thing, we thank you for all the gifts of creation and for the gift of life itself. We thank you for making us in your own image, for forgiving us when we act as though you have no claim on us, and for keeping us in your steadfast care.

We rejoice in Jesus Christ, the only one eternally begotten by you, who was born of your servant Mary and shared the joys and sorrows of life as we know it.

We remember Christ's death, we celebrate Christ's resurrection, and, in the beloved community of your church, we await Christ's return at the end of history.

We take courage from the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit in our midst. We offer you our praise for women and men of faith in every age who stand as witnesses to your love and justice. With all the prophets, martyrs, and saints, and all the company of heaven, we glorify you:

ALL: Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty, the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

PASTOR: We remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, Jesus took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, Jesus also took the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." By eating this bread and drinking this cup, we proclaim Christ's death, celebrate Christ's resurrection, and await Christ's coming again.

PEOPLE: Amen. Come, Christ Jesus!

PASTOR: Gracious God, we ask you to bless this bread and cup and all of us with the outpouring of your Holy Spirit. Through this meal, make us the body of Christ, the church, your servant people, that we may be salt, and light, and leaven for the furtherance of your will in all the world.

PEOPLE: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

All: Eternal God, you have called your people from east and west and north and south to feast at the table of Jesus Christ. We thank you for Christ's presence and for the spiritual food of Christ's body and blood. By the power of your Holy Spirit, keep us faithful to your will. Go with us to the streets, to our homes, and to our places of labor and leisure that whether we are gathered or scattered, we may be the servant church of the servant Christ, in whose name we rejoice to pray. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Precious Lord, Take My Hand # 628 Chalice/ # 611 HFG

Precious Lord, take my hand,
 Lead me on, let me stand,
 I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
 Through the storm, through the night,
 Lead me on to the light:

Take my hand, precious Lord,
 Lead me home.

When my way grows drear,
 Precious Lord, linger near,
 When my life is almost gone,
 Hear my cry, hear my call,
 Hold my hand lest I fall:

Take my hand, precious Lord,
 Lead me home.

When the darkness appears
 And the night draws near,
 And the day is past and gone,
 At the river, I stand,
 Guide my feet, hold my hand:

Take my hand, precious Lord,
 Lead me home.

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

PRAYER GROUP Wednesday morning at 10:00 am on Zoom as we pray for the health of our church and our friends, family, and community. We hope to hear God's will for us in this time and place.

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

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**AUGUST**

LUNCH IN THE PARK group will meet at the church at 10:30 am to prepare food for

the last Lunch in the Park at Noon, August 3rd. Come celebrate our last lunch of the season.

SUPPER CLUB will meet August 7th at Diamond Mineral Springs in Grantfork @ 5 pm. Sign up in the Narthex/call Kathie R./text "Supper" to church text line @ 618-268-1394

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE August 11th at 10 am-3:30 pm at church. All church leaders urged to attend, all members welcome.

VISION TEAM meets August 19th at 7 pm on Zoom.

FREE CONCERT The congregation is invited to attend a free Carillon concert performed by Karen Cain on Sunday, August 22, 2021 at 5:00 pm. Gordon Moore Park Rose Garden, Rt. 140, Alton, IL. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the roses while listening to the beautiful music of the bells!

SEPTEMBER

AHMA WALK FOR GOOD will be held September 11 from 9-Noon at Fireman Park in Alhambra. There is a choice of 3 walking trails that can be combined for a total of 1.9 miles or shorter walks of .5-.6 miles. Come join us for a fun walk!

PPRC will meet September 16th at 7 pm.

APPLE BUTTER has been cancelled for this year. We hope to continue this next year.

FREE COMMUNITY CONCERT featuring The Wild HouseKats will be held Saturday, September 25th from 6-8 pm here at the church, outside if weather permits. There will be hotdogs, corn on the cob, and drinks for sale/donation. If you would like to hear a sample of this group's music, you can check out their Facebook page. Vision Team is sponsoring this event for community outreach. We hope that everyone will come to this kickoff for our 150th Anniversary Celebration.

OCTOBER

150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION will take place on Sunday, October 3rd. Conference Minister Rev. Shana Johnson will be preaching. Other details will be forthcoming. Please make plans to attend and to invite those who haven't been attending church.

QUARTERLY MEETING October 10th following worship.

LECLAIRE PARKFEST October 17th. The Vision Team will have a dessert tent to raise funds for outreach.

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	Syrup	Sugar
Flour	Pie filling	Mashed potato mix
Tomato paste	Baked beans	Chef Boyardee Ravioli
Evaporated milk	Coffee	Bars of soap
Shampoo	Dish detergent	Laundry detergent
Empty egg cartons		

CONCERNS

Maria S.	Harry S.	Lillie H.
Kathie R.	Martha K.	Carole G.
Tomiko J.	Sherri R.	Sherri's Sister
Rose O.	Roger W.	Kathleen L.
Michelle L.	Kristy K.	Dorothy D.
Jane B.	Mary Ann C.	Jake G.
Diane B.	Jane	Maurice M.
Rich R.	Kyle T.	Wayne S.
Karen's Mother	Karen's Brother-in law	Our Church
Our Church Council	Hitz Home workers and residents	
Our country as we deal with pandemic		
Disaster Victims	Pastor Dana, as she leads	

BIRTHDAYS**ANNIVERSARIES****E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

Ruth:	officeiucc@gomadison.com
Pastor Dana:	pastoriucc@gomadison.com

BENEDICTION

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

POSTLUDE