

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain
August 8, 2021

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler
Eleventh 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

POINTS TO PONDER

“You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore.”

— **William Faulkner**

“A bend in the road is not the end of the road...Unless you fail to make the turn.”

— **Helen Keller**

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not upon your own understanding.

All: **Our steps are made firm by the LORD, when he delights in our way;**

One: though we stumble, we shall not fall, for the LORD holds us by the hand.

All: **We will trust, and not be afraid, for the LORD is our strength, might, and salvation.** (Proverbs 3:5, Ps 37:23-24, Isaiah 12:2)

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Loving God, we come this day, thankful for your presence when times are tough. We pray that you will increase our trust as we approach new problems. Help us to remember that you are always with us, holding us gently in the palm of your hand, that we may achieve everything you have planned for us. In Christ’s name we pray, Amen.

*OPENING HYMN

We Are Your People

309 NCH

**We are your people,
Spirit of grace,
you dare to make us
Christ to our neighbors
of every culture and place.**

Joined in community,
treasured and fed,
may we discover
gifts in each other,
willing to lead and be led.

Glad of tradition,
help us to see
in all life's changing,
where Christ is leading,
where our best efforts should be.

Give, as we venture,
justice and care
(peaceful, insisting,
risking, resisting),
wisdom to know when and where.

Spirit, unite us,
make us, by grace,
willing and ready,
Christ's living body,
loving the whole human race.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Gracious God, sometimes we forget that we are your people and that you are for us when the whole world seems to be against us. Forgive us for our lack of trust. Forgive us when we forget that you have always been with us and have promised to be with us always. Help us to trust when we cannot seem to do it on our own. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The prophet Jeremiah tells us that God surely knows the plans he has for us, plans for our welfare and not for harm, to give us a future with hope. Let us trust and know that we are forgiven. Amen

HYMN

Open My Eyes

486 HFG

Open my eyes that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,

ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my eyes, illumine me,
 Spirit divine!

Open my ears that I may hear
 voices of truth thou sendest clear,
 and while the wave notes fall on my ear,
 ev'rything false will disappear.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my ears, illumine me,
 Spirit divine!

Open my mouth and let me bear
 gladly the warm truth ev'rywhere.
 Open my heart and let me prepare
 love with thy children thus to share.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my mouth, illumine me,
 Spirit divine!

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

School starts this week. I remember those days before the beginning. Days filled with excitement over seeing my friends from the last year and hoping they would be in my classes, some fear that they wouldn't and I wouldn't have anyone to sit with at lunch or play with at recess, and fear that the work would be too hard or the teacher might be really hard. This year we are still dealing with COVID-19, so that's still making school harder than it has to be. That worries your parents and teachers too. I hope that all of you will have a good school year, that you will have good friends and be good friends. I remember telling my son that if he didn't have a friend to look for someone else without a friend and be their friend. I hope that you will learn a lot of new things and that you will be curious—ask questions and listen to the answers.. But whatever happens, remember that God goes with you everywhere you go and when problems come, prayer is always a good thing to do. And don't forget to let your teachers and parents know so they can help.

PRAYER

Lord, bless these backpacks and the children and youth who carry them as they begin yet another year of school. Give them peace when they feel nervous, focus when they feel distracted, and energy when they feel tired. Open their minds to the lessons they will learn both inside and outside the classroom.

Help them to make friends that build one another up, and to be that kind of friend to others. Guide them in making good choices as they grow in wisdom and maturity. Be ever present with them in the classroom, on the school bus, on the playground, and at home; and may they feel your loving care in all they do. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING Ephesians 4:1-16

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people." (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

SERMON

Rev. Dana Schindler

Paul is writing to the members of the church at Ephesus from jail, so he is literally a prisoner of the government, but he is also a prisoner in the Lord. He is bound to Christ by love and faith. He BEGS the people of the church to remember that they have been called to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, that they are called with humility and gentleness, with patience, to bear with one another in love.

Wow!

It makes me wonder what is going on with the members of the church at Ephesus. Reading between the lines, it sounds like there is a lot of disagreement and people insisting on their own way. We know they are from varied backgrounds, so I suspect there are also differences in theology, especially since he refers to one Lord, one faith, on baptism and one God who is above all and through all and in all.

We are one! It's fine to be different, to have different ideas, but we are, at the end of the day, called to be one, bound in love through our faith. We are all parts of the body of Christ, the church. We are called to use the gifts we have been given for the benefit of our church community, so that we may work together as one.

And we are to stop childish arguments and speak the truth in love. Let's think about that one. Speaking the truth is pretty straight-forward. I have a friend who always speaks the truth. She is a little hard to take for most people because most people don't really want to hear things like "that's a terrible idea" or "did you comb your hair with a weed-eater." But at least she says it to your face, not behind your back. You always know exactly where you stand with her.

Speaking the truth in love is much harder to do. It means that you tell the truth, but you do so in a way that does not embarrass or hurt the other unnecessarily. It also means you hold people accountable for their actions. If someone does something hurtful, you tell them "I was really hurt when you said *** because you don't know the whole story." And then you tell them the whole story. Or "I wish you would listen when other people have ideas instead of shutting them down. Shutting them down makes them feel like their ideas are unwelcome. Even a bad idea deserves to be heard." Sometimes speaking the truth in love does embarrass or hurt the other person who has not given thought to how their actions or words are perceived, but it can be done without yelling or accusation, and it needs to be said TO the person directly, not about the person behind their backs. This is the type of maturity that Paul is talking about. And yes, it is hard. We always take a chance when we say something to someone that we know will be hard for them to hear. We risk losing friends, we risk hard feelings, we risk discomfort.

Yes, I think the people of the church at Ephesus had a lot of problems. But I've never seen a church family that didn't have some problems. But healthy church families are healthy because they are able to resolve disagreements by speaking the truth in love. And speaking the truth in love comes from the realization that we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is above all and through all and in all. My prayer for our family of faith is that we will remember that we are bound together by our one Lord, one faith, on baptism and one God who is above all and through all and in all.

And that we will speak the truth in love. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Loving God, we are so thankful that you are always with us. We are thankful for the example of Christ who always told the truth in love and compassion. Help us when we fail to follow that example. Remind us that it is your words we need to hear, no matter who speaks them aloud. Enable us to be people who listen more than we speak. We pray for a spirit of maturity, that we may put aside our own desires in order to work together as the body of believers you have called us to be, that we may be salt and

light to the world.

We offer special prayers this day for those who are sick in body or spirit and for those suffering from loss. May each one feel your comforting embrace and the healing they need. We pray for those who are traveling, that their journeys may be safe and restful. We pray for our community, that we may see the needs and work to help resolve them. We pray for our church, our leaders and our pastor. May we work together to bring new life and energy to our church family and our community. We pray for our country, that we may come together, despite our differences, and work together for the common good. And we pray for our world, that we may bring an end to this pandemic and learn to live in peace.

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

Gracious God, everything we have is yours. Bless these gifts of time, talent, and treasure, that we may use them to bring your kingdom of truth, love, and peace in this place. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Blest Be the Tie That Binds # 393 NCH/# 560 HFG

**Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.**

**Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.**

**This glorious hope revives
our courage by the way;
while each in expectation lives
and waits to see the day.**

**From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin, we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.**

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.

CHURCH ENGAGEMENT CONFERENCE August 11th at 10 am-3:30 pm at church. All church leaders urged to attend, all members welcome. To sign up text “CONFERENCE” to the church text line @ 618-268-1394

CHURCH COUNCIL meets August 11th at 7 pm @ church.

ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE meets August 12th @ 1:00 pm at church.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

AUGUST

MAZZIO’S NIGHT August 16th from 5-9 pm, sponsored by the Hitz Home Auxiliary. Proceeds will be used to help staff and residents of Hitz Home. Come join us for a great meal!

FAITHQUEST 2.0 TEAM meets August 18th @ 2 pm @ church.

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!

MAZZIO’S NIGHT September 13th from 5-9 pm, sponsored by the Vision Team. Proceeds will be used for outreach projects. Come join us for a great supper!

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

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