

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain
September 19, 2021

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler
Seventeenth 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...”

As we continue to celebrate our 150th anniversary, we are excited to offer a special welcome to those who were married in this church today.

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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

Love does not dominate, it cultivates—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Sanctuary

2164 TFWS

**Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary
Pure and holy, tried and true
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living
Sanctuary for You (Repeat)**

***PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Gracious God, we give thanks for another day to worship you together. Bind us together in your holy love, that we may love you and each other as you have commanded. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

We Gather Together

276 Chalice

**We gather together
to ask the Lord's blessing,
to live in community,
seeking God's will.
We come now, as sisters
and brother, confessing**

the sins that divide
and the wrong in us still.

Beside us, forgiving
enabling, sustaining,
you call us, O Savior,
to life that is new.
You draw us away
from self-centered complaining.
You lead us and guide us
in ways that are true.

All praise to the Spirit,
provider, defender.
You offer us freedom,
to follow or stray,
Empowering all by
the hope you engender.
Grant wisdom and courage
to follow your way.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Grace, we come this day with contrite hearts. We have heard your command to love one another, but we find it too hard to do. We admit that we need your help, that we might do better. We pray that you will give us hearts filled with love and compassion for those we find difficult to love. Help us to overlook minor hurts. Give us the ability to offer reproach in love, that we might maintain loving relationships. And when we fail, give us the courage to try again and the strength to apologize sincerely when we are wrong. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Scripture tells us that the blood of Christ was spilled as a covenant of forgiveness of our sin. We have been forgiven. Go in peace. Amen.

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART (music: Bridal March)

Who can tell me when we usually hear that song? I asked Karen to play that song because we are celebrating the marriages of people those who got married in this church. I would like to ask each of those people to stand if they are comfortable doing so. (Ask when each got married).

There's an old custom around weddings that every bride must have:
something old,
something new,

something borrowed,
something blue.

I'd like to ask those who have been married here what they had that was old/new/borrowed/blue.

It's rather superstitious that the bride must have these things. People believe that it will make the marriage stronger, but there is absolutely no evidence to prove that. Frankly, I think it just makes something else for an already super nervous bride to worry about. Perhaps the real reason this became "a thing" is because it helps us to hold on to tradition, it helps us to remember our past as we step into a new future in a new relationship. There's a song I learned in scouting that comes to mind:

Make new friends, but keep the old,
one is silver and the other gold. Don't be afraid of new relationships, but don't forget the old ones. They are both precious.

PRAYER Lord, help us to make new relationships and do new things, but also help us to remember that our past is important too. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

SERMON "Promises, Promises" *Rev. Dana Schindler*

The Bible is a book of love. Not star-crossed lovers running toward each other on the beach. More I love you enough to care about you when everyone else turns their backs on you, when people talk smack about you behind your back, when life hands you the biggest trials of all I'll be right there with you. It's about God's never ending, deep, abiding love for us, no matter how badly we behave.

What is love?

Love is patient; it's teaching a child with no balance how to ride a bike or helping grandma how to bathe herself after a stroke leaves her unable to use her right side.

love is kind; it's taking notes for someone who has a broken arm or taking food to someone who is grieving.

Love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It doesn't brag that you won the lottery when your neighbor can't put food on the table for their family— unless you plan to share. It doesn't belittle people.

It does not insist on its own way; it doesn't bully others to get your own way. Love is not irritable or resentful; it is happy when the other person has success. it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. Love is being happy when someone does the right thing, not smirking when the other loses the race. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. It forgives wrongs and prays for the best to happen to others, no matter what the other has done.

Love never ends.

This passage from 1st Corinthians is read at many weddings, my own included. It isn't about romantic love between two people, but about agape love, the love of a friend, between members of a new church, struggling with individual differences.

It is about relationships and promises.

So let's talk about relationships and promises.

When we are baptized, our parents or guardians make promises to raise us in the faith of God. Members of the congregation promise to help with nurturing that faith through teaching, mentoring, and supporting us as we grow.

When we join a congregation, we affirm those promises the adults made for us. We promise to be a part of a church family, to support that family with our time, talent, and treasure. We promise to support that church family by being part of the ministry of the church and with our presence in worship, on committees, in leadership, as we are given the talent and opportunity to do. We promise to be faithful.

And when we are married, we make some of those same kinds of promises. We promise to be faithful to our partner in life, FOR life: when life is good and when life stinks; when we are healthy and when we are sick; when we have an abundance of resources and when we don't have enough resources to get through the day; when we have cause for celebration and when we have cause for mourning. And we promise those things for the life that we are given.

Yes, the days that we make these promises before God and in the company of families and friends are joy-filled celebrations and when we say them, we mean them with our whole hearts.

How are those promises working out for us?

For those of us who are church members, are we supporting our church family with our time? Do we attend services and events? Do we give our time and talent to help out when our time and talents are needed? Do we give financial gifts to support the ministries and staff of our church? Do we donate to the food pantry? Are we looking for ways we can help here at church and in our community? Do we support the church by inviting others? Do we support each other through kindness and telling the truth and stopping the spread of any gossip we might hear?

How about in our marriages? Are we honest with each other? Do we speak kindly? Do we support each other? Do we help the other when needed without resentment? Are we faithful to our partner? Do we put them first, before friends and strangers? Do we spend time with them? Do we consider their needs? Do we share responsibilities for home and family? Do we have honest conversations with each other? Do we make our partner feel special by doing big or small things to show our love?

We made promises in front of God, family, and friends. Let us always remind ourselves to honor those promises so that we will be known as trustworthy and true. At the end of our time in church, in life, with our family and friends, only faith, hope, and love remain, and the greatest of these is love. Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Gracious God, as we celebrate our anniversary by honoring those who have been married in this church building, let us remember all promises to love each other. Let us honor our promises that deepen our relationships to one another. Help us to remember that we not only belong to you but to each other as well. We pray that our love for each other will indeed last forever so that we can not only be healthy families and a healthy church, but that we can demonstrate to the people of our communities and country that love of each other is truly the answer to our problems.

We pray for our church, its leaders, and its pastor, that those in positions of power will hear your guidance and lead our people well and that our people will trust us enough to follow. Push each of out of our comfort zones so that we will follow Christ with confidence and humility.

We offer special prayers today for those people and situations on our prayer list, for our friends and families, for those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit, for those suffering loss of loved ones, loss of independence, loss of resources. And we pray for those affected by fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and gun violence. Give us, we pray, the willingness to do what we can to help all of those in need.

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

Love is one of the greatest gifts God has given us and we are called to give it generously to all we meet. As we consider that, let us also consider all of the other gifts of time, talent, and treasure we have received due to God's great love for each of us. Let us give according to our blessings. 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

The Doxology

382 HFG

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
 Praise God all creatures here below
 Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God, we pray that you will use our gifts and our promises to love you and each other, and bless them, that they may increase. May they bless each of us and each one we meet with your abundant, never-ending love. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

The Gift of Love

526 Chalice

Though I may speak with bravest fire,
 and have the gift of all inspire,
 and have not love, my words are vain,
 as sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess,
 and striving so my love profess,
 but not be given by love within,
 the profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,
 our spirits long to be made whole.
 Let inward love guide every deed;
 by this we worship, and are freed.

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

Sept. 19th Celebration of Marriages of those married at Immanuel. Join us after service in the fellowship hall for refreshments and a display of wedding pictures and dresses.

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, chips, 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.

Sept. 26th Stained Glass Windows Sunday After worship, we will have activities for all ages.

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.

TREATS FOR THE TRICKED Many people have been "tricked" by hurricanes, floods, and fires. We would like to "treat" them to much needed cleaning supplies. We will be collecting supplies to make cleaning buckets. Please purchase and donate items from the list or make a financial contribution by October 31st. Then on November 14th after worship, we will meet to fill our cleaning buckets to send to those in need. We have buckets for this purpose.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR EACH BUCKET:

- Four scouring pads
- Seven sponges, including one large
- One scrub brush
- Eighteen reusable cleaning towels (e.g. Handi Wipes or Easy Wipes)
- One 50 oz. or two 25 oz. bottle(s) of liquid laundry detergent
- One 16-28 oz. bottle of liquid disinfectant dish soap
- One 12-16 oz. bottle of household cleaner that can be mixed with water (no spray bottles)
- One package of 48-50 clothespins
- Clothesline, two 50 ft. or one 100 ft.
- Five dust masks
- Two pairs heavy-duty, waterproof dish washing gloves (Latex-free, non-surgical)
- One pair work gloves, cotton with leather palm or all leather
- 24-28 heavy duty or contractor type 30-45 gallon trash bags on a roll and removed from carton
- One 6-9 oz. bottle of non-aerosol insect repellent

All cleaning items must be new – all liquid items must be capped and securely tightened. Place all items into the bucket, making sure they are packed securely to avoid damage during shipment. Snap the lid on tight and seal with packing tape.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES**OCTOBER**

150TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION will take place on Sunday, October 3rd.

Conference Minister Rev. Shana Johnson will be preaching. Worship will be followed by a catered dinner. If you have not already sent in your RSVP please do so ASAP so we can adequately plan for our meal.

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

Canned Corn	Canned Green Beans	Pancake mix
Syrup	Sugar	Flour
Chef Boyardee Ravioli	Pie Filling	Tomato Paste
Bars of soaps	Shampoo	Dish Detergent
Rice	Coffee	Evaporated Milk
Baked beans	Laundry detergent	
empty egg cartons and plastic bags		

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	Ray
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