



Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost
October 18, 2026

Rev. Dr. Barbara Dickason, BCC

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

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Liturgist Pre-service: Please check with Pastor Barb with any questions regarding the readings. Liturgist's words are in Blue. Pastor Barb's are in Red. Instructions are in Green.

Sunday 10:00 am — Walk down the aisle on Pastor Barb's right. Stop before the step for a prayer, then proceed on the floor around to the hand railing to climb to your seat. The Call to Worship is after the Meditation. You are welcome to use your bulletin or the screens for the hymns.

Singing Prelude *Be Now My Vision v. 1* Irish text and tune

**Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
nothing surpasses the love you impart –
You my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ.

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space. I am Pastor Barb, Wendy Seeley is our liturgist. Many thanks to all of our staff and volunteers for all that they do so that we can come together to worship God.

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given by Linda Newton & Patty Fjetland for Sandy Barrie: "Happy Heavenly Birthday."

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to share, please make sure that you let the office know. Call us, drop us an email, or follow the prayer request button in the app, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have notated your presence either at our welcome table or through the QR codes found in the pews. We are excited to get to know you. We also have an exciting new gift for you, so please stop by the Welcome Table if

you haven't already to pick it up. As a Wise Congregation for Mental Health, we invite everyone to wear a name tag, so that we can call each other by name.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,
as Venice United Church of Christ,
we empower and invite everyone
to join us in this divine place
that we share on line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,
no matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
and no one is turned away.

Following worship, everyone is invited to stay for coffee and fellowship across the lane in Naar Hall. Thank you to Church Family Life, who are our hosts this week.

There are a few additional events of which to take note.

On Monday, SpiritFed. Our Wednesday, Library open. Bible Study on Forgiveness . Please see Pastor Barb for more information.

On Friday, the men are meeting at Panera. And Knit-Wits are meeting in the parlor. On Saturday, the Men's fellowship will be gathering for breakfast.

Following worship, our Vision Team will be hosting a meet and greet for everyone who is interested in membership or associate membership and anyone who is interested in knowing more

about the congregation. If you are worshipping with us online today and are interested in this class remotely, please make sure that you email us at office@veniceucc.org so we can connect you.

There are many ways to get involved here at Venice UCC, whether through activities, volunteering for special projects or helping with our mission projects, or serving on a team or committee. Please check out the information table to explore new ways to become connected to the ministries of our church.

As we continue working together to Build a Strong Foundation, our monthly focus on relationship and prayer invites us to bring our whole selves into God's presence—and into our encounters with one another. In Matthew 22:15–22, a question designed to trap Jesus becomes an invitation to consider whose image we bear. How might our lives become a prayer as we give back to God the fullness of who we were created to be?

Alongside these words, Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl's *Heart of a Stranger* draws us into the intention behind the prayers she sings. As her teacher helps her recognize the connection already unfolding through her voice, we are invited to listen for the songs of our own hearts—and discover how our prayers connect us with God and each other.

May our worship align us again with God's holy purpose — to love one another as Christ loves us.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

We Approach God's Presence

Bringing in the Light of Christ

Give of Your Best to the Savior

Barnard

Responsive Call to Worship

Go to the Pulpit

Wendy Seeley

We gather as people created in God's image.

Our lives belong to the One who loves us.

We bring the prayers of our hearts.

God draws us together in compassion and care.

Christ calls us to give back to God what is God's.

We offer our voices, our choices, and our lives.

Come, let us worship the God of steadfast love.

May that love shape all we do.

Please rise in body or in spirit to sing, "I Sing the Mighty Power of God." The words are on the screens, and the music is in the bulletin.

Return to chair and stand for the Hymn.

*Hymn

I Sing the Mighty Power of God¹

1. I sing the mighty power of God
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad,
and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at God's command,
and all the stars obey.

3. On earth there's not a plant or flower
but makes your glory known.
The clouds arise and spread their showers
by order from your throne.
All life is but a gift from you
and ever in your care;
wherever people gather, you,
O God, are present there.

2. I sing the goodness of our God
that filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with a word,
and then pronounced them good.
Oh, how your wonders are displayed, where
I turn my eye:
If I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the sky!

¹ Words: Isaac Watts, Music: Ellacomb. Public Domain.



1 I sing the might-y power of God that made the moun-tains rise,
 2 I sing the good-ness of our God that filled the earth with food;
 3 On earth there's not a plant or flower but makes your glo - ry known.



That spread the flow-ing seas a - broad, and built the loft - y skies.
 God formed the crea-tures with a word, and then pro-nounced them good.
 The clouds a - rise and spread their showers by or - der from your throne.



I sing the wis-dom that or - dained the sun to rule the day;
 Oh, how your won-ders are dis-played, wher-e'er I turn my eye:
 All life is but a gift from you and ev - er in your care;



The moon shines full at God's com-mand, and all the stars o - bey.
 If I sur - vey the ground I tread, or gaze up - on the sky!
 Wher - ev - er peo-ple gath - er, you, O God, are pres-ent there.

***Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Return to the pulpit at end of song.

May God hear our hearts as we responsively pray for transformation:

God of steadfast love,

You have placed your image within us and
entrusted us with one another.

We confess that competing loyalties divide our hearts.

We seek security in what we possess
and approval from those who hold power.

We overlook your image in people whose needs interrupt our
comfort.

Forgive us.

Gather our hearts again in your love.

**Give us courage to examine our choices,
wisdom to discern what love requires,
and generosity to respond.**

Through Christ, who calls us to love. Amen.

***Words of Grace**

Hear the Good News:

God love never lets go of us.

Our failures do not erase God's image within us.

**Through mercy, we are forgiven; through grace, we are renewed
to love God and care for one another. Amen.**

Step back from the mic. to sing:

***Response**

Be Now My Vision v. 3

Irish text and tune

**Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise,
you, my inheritance, now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart,
great God, my treasure, may we never part.**

Return to the mic. as the chorus ends.

We Encounter God in the Word

Contemplative Reading *Heart of a Stranger*² Buchdahl

Rabbi Buchdahl was ordained as both a cantor and a rabbi. A cantor leads a congregation in prayer through music. In today's reading from *Heart of a Stranger*, Buchdahl remembers a painful stage of her training, when learning to care for her voice left her struggling to sing.

Her mentor recognized something beneath that struggle: *kavvanah*, the intention and attentiveness we bring to prayer. In today's contemplative reading, listen for how prayer arising from one person's heart draws a whole congregation together, helping a community hear God's voice.

“...[M]y first semester of cantorial school was rough. Most of my classmates were coming off serious vocal training. While I had always been a singer, I had never taken a voice lesson until cantorial school required it. ‘You are singing all wrong!’ my voice teacher announced. ‘You project from your chest and have no head voice, no mix between the two. Your range is limited, and you will lose your voice by the time you’re thirty-five if you keep singing this way.’ But I rather liked my sound. Natural and folksy. And people had always told me they liked it too. I’d never wanted to become an operatic cantor—much as I admired the virtuosos—and the thought of changing this essential part of my religious expression was uncomfortable. But my teacher was right. I didn’t want to destroy my vocal cords by singing incorrectly. She had to break down my voice to rebuild it.”

“The first semester ‘practicum’ performance arrived while I was still in the voice-demolition stage. This end-of-semester mini recital is supposed to display a command of liturgy, delivery, and musicianship. I had been coached weekly all semester to learn a complex range of Shabbat music, which, as required repertoire, everyone else had already mastered. I stepped before the podium and sang in the designated keys

² Angela Warnick Buchdahl, *Heart of a Stranger: An Unlikely Rabbi's Story of Faith, Identity, and Belonging* (New York: Pamela Dorman Books/Viking, 2025), 145, 147, 150.

that my diaphragm could not support, my sound thin and wavering. I couldn't glide my chest voice into my head voice, and I cracked like a prepubescent boy at his bar mitzvah. I desperately tried to focus on communicating the spirit of the prayers, but my shakiness betrayed me. I stood at the podium in Milstein Chapel, regretting the whole attempt to combine cantorial and rabbinic ordination. I should have been standing at the podium practicing sermons, not trying to sing 'Kol Nidre.'

"A cantorial student has one main calling card: her voice. What I had thought was a strength now seemed to fail me. I walked off the podium at the end of the practicum and turned away from my classmates so they would not see me crying. Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, a graceful soprano and a new mentor, walked up behind me. 'I know that was hard. And not what you want to sound like,' she said. 'But being a cantor is much more than your instrument. What moves people is an honest, pure kavvanah [intention] in your prayer-leading. This can't be taught. What people compliment me for when I pray is exactly what I see in you.'

"That encouragement enabled me to get through the next semester. Benjie was the role model I had been missing in the cantorate. Her voice seemed to emit from the purest place, threading itself through the congregation lightly, binding us together. I felt holiness when she led. If she saw something of herself in me during that painful practicum, that was fuel enough."

"Miriam in the Bible, Ruthie (my childhood music teacher), and Benjie, my cantorial mentor, were the kind of pathfinders I wanted to be. Not a performer but a connector, a responder. Not only a song leader but a spiritual leader, helping people hear their own voices—and maybe even God's—through the making of heavenly sound."

Through Rabbi Angela Buchdahl, God is Still Speaking.

Thanks be to God!

*Please make your way to the handrail and take a seat.
Thank you for leading this portion of the service.*

Anthem

Seek Ye First
Chamber Choir

Lafferty

15-17 “Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. “Teacher,” they said, “we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

18-20 But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.” They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

21-22 “Caesar’s,” they replied.

Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.” When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

The Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray:

For the wisdom revealed through story,
for the courage to listen deeply,
and for the Spirit who opens our eyes to the Word of God,
we give you thanks and praise.
Amen.

During my senior year of high school, our teacher had received the credentials and permission needed to teach the freshman English composition course through a local community collegenon our high school campus. One of our assignments was to research and write a biography about one of our classmates. We had over a month to complete the assignment, as we were expected to interview family members and others who were significant in their life, and our grade would be partially ascertained by how well our interviewee believed we described who they were. Randomly assigned, I remember heading to a home I otherwise would not have been invited to, meeting relatives, family members, and instructors I otherwise would not have met.

The person who was writing my biography received similar instructions. But he didn't realize that when I arrived at school all I brought with me was a desire to make the most of my education and earn enough scholarships to go to college. I had, after all, accepted a challenge from a friend to learn how to lead by following, and having entered a new high school my freshman year, accepting that dare meant that everyone at my

new school would learn to know me as a follower, even though by that point in my life I had engaged in a multitude of leadership roles in a previous community. It was, for me, something of an experiment leading to self-examination, but it also meant that I limited the boundaries of that challenge to my school.

For during those same four years, I was continuing to make new connections and building relationships that allowed me to grow into new leadership roles. Ironically, they were generally in regionally and nationally based groups that did not include my high school peers. So, although I provided a long list of people to interview, my classmate assumed that, because I had recently moved to town, the only significant people to consult were my parents. The biography ended up being very two dimensional. He had ascribed to me intentions and descriptions that could be considered superficially correct, but otherwise the person he described was someone I didn't recognize. In that biography, I finally realized what it meant to show up somewhere and still be a complete stranger to those around me.

The interviewer had written about the person they encountered at school. There was more to me than that, of course. There were other parts of my life, other interests and commitments, other ways of being myself. But as I read, I began to recognize how little of that person I had brought with me through the school doors. How could the interviewer have known to look for someone I had not previously allowed them to meet?

We can become accustomed to that. We learn what is expected in a particular place and bring the parts of ourselves that seem to fit. At work, we bring our skills and intelligence, while keeping our spiritual lives somewhere else. At church, we bring our prayers, but perhaps hesitate to bring the questions our intelligence raises. We have places for our convictions, places for our compassion, places where we speak freely, and places where we have learned to remain quiet.

Most of the time, those arrangements do not arise from an odd high school dare. Instead, they generally develop so gradually that we barely recognize them. We are still ourselves in each place. Yet it may take someone describing the person they know to reveal how much of ourselves we have left outside.

And then we hear Jesus say, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's," and the arrangement can sound remarkably familiar. Surely there are things that belong in one place and things that belong in another. We end up with divided loyalties, and divided hearts. But surely, this is natural, right?

The coin they carry

In our scripture this morning, Matthew tells us that the Pharisees have been planning how to trap Jesus in his words. They send their disciples with the Herodians. The Pharisees' concern for living faithfully under God's law and the Herodians' support for the ruling Herodian order did not make them natural partners. But a question about paying tribute to Rome could serve both

groups: whatever Jesus answered, someone would have reason to challenge or bring an accusation against him.¹

So, they begin by praising him. He is a person of integrity, they say, someone who teaches God's way truthfully and is not influenced by another person's standing. Their description names qualities they intend to use against him. Surely someone so truthful will give them a clear answer.

So they ask, "Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?"

They are asking about the tribute imposed by Rome upon a conquered people. Those paying it had no corresponding voice in choosing the emperor or determining the terms of Roman occupation. The payment acknowledged the authority of the power ruling over them, and resistance to that taxation had already become a focus of revolt.¹

For people who understood themselves to belong to God, the question carried a religious claim as well as an economic burden. What did paying Caesar imply about their allegiance to God? Yet refusing payment carried the possibility of punishment by Rome. If Jesus endorsed the tax, he risked alienating those who resented their subjugation. If he rejected it, the Herodians would have an answer that could be reported as resistance to imperial authority.¹

Jesus recognizes what they are doing. He names their hypocrisy and asks them to show him the coin used for the tax. They produce a denarius. The question they hoped would expose

Jesus now requires them to examine something they themselves are carrying.

"Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

"Caesar's."

The coin bears the emperor's likeness, and its inscription identifies him through claims connecting imperial power with divinity. They have brought into this conversation about obedience to God a piece of currency declaring the emperor's divine status. Their lives are already entangled with the order about which they are asking Jesus to pronounce judgment.²

"So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's," Jesus says, "and to God what is God's."

He has not given them the simple endorsement or refusal they sought. He acknowledges an obligation concerning Caesar while naming an obligation to God that their question cannot contain. They must still reckon with what belongs to each. And in their reckoning, they will also reveal to whom they are offering their day-to-day allegiance.

For those obligations do not establish two equal authorities, each possessing a separate portion of the world. Even while Caesar necessarily declares himself divine by right of office, if the Pharisees and Herodians are truly praying the Shema, then they should recognize that Caesar himself lives within God's creation. Even in the coin, they would recognize the (en)graven image of Caesar as an image their faith tradition declared an

idol. And yet, even in returning the coins to Caesar, Caesar's claim cannot encompass everything, and his inscription on a coin cannot make him divine.³

In his question and his answer, Jesus leaves his listeners with the work of discernment. They wanted an answer they could use against him. He gives them an answer that asks something of them: they can identify what bears Caesar's image. Have they considered what bears God's?

The image we bear

We know that the image on the coin belongs to Caesar. But what bears the image of God?

Genesis brings us back to the creation of human beings. From our scriptures we are reminded that the people asking the question bear that image. So do the people paying the tax, the people collecting it, and those whose work produces the wealth that passes through their hands. Read alongside that creation story, Jesus' question reaches beyond the coin toward the whole person holding it.⁴

We cannot divide that person into a self belonging to Caesar and another self belonging to God. Wherever we go, whatever responsibilities we carry, we remain people created in God's image. Our intelligence goes with us. Our compassion goes with us. The prayers of our hearts go with us. Our capacity to recognize injustice and respond with love goes with us, even

where we have become accustomed to leaving those faithful practices unspoken.

As we continue building a strong foundation through relationship and prayer, it is these very practices that we are learning to bring into our encounters with God and one another. We belong to God with the whole of our lives. And if we belong to God, then we belong to God when we walk through the school doors, when we arrive at work, and when we enter a conversation we would rather avoid. We bring our minds and our spirits with us. The circumstances change, but whose image we bear does not.

For Angela Warnick Buchdahl, that wholeness is already present within the prayers she sings, even while her voice is still developing. In *Heart of a Stranger*, she describes the demands of her musical preparation and the concern she carries about her voice. Her teacher, Benjie Schiller, recognizes something in her prayer-leading that Buchdahl needs to hear affirmed: “What moves people is an honest, pure kavvanah [intention] in your prayer-leading.”⁵

Her teacher hears the person within the singing. Buchdahl is still developing her instrument, but she is already bringing herself into the prayer. Her intention is reaching people. Within the work still before her, something holy is already taking place as her singing helps bind the congregation together.

That affirmation helps her recognize the calling she is living: connecting people with one another and with God, helping

them hear their own voices, and opening themselves to the giving back of our whole selves to sometimes be able to hear God's. She will still need to keep rebuilding her voice, but her songs, deeply rooted in her prayer life, already reveal her intention, relationship, and connection with the divine and her community.⁵

There is something deeply familiar about the temptation to bring only the part of ourselves a role appears to require. A singer brings a voice. A student brings the person known at school. We bring the abilities that make us useful and the qualities others have learned to expect. But prayer invites us to bring the whole person who is living within all those expectations.

At school, the interviewer was only able to encounter the person I had brought through the doors. In Buchdahl's prayer-leading, her teacher recognizes the person already present within the singing. Both encounters reveal something about how much of ourselves enters a place with us, and how much can be received when we are there with our whole selves.

Our minds and our spirits belong within the same life. The compassion we express in prayer can accompany us into a difficult conversation. The justice we seek for our neighbors can shape decisions that impact our lives, themselves becoming a prayer. The love we encounter in relationship with God can find expression in how we listen and respond. So, giving back what

is God's, means living as the whole person who bears God's image.

So, giving back itself becomes prayer.

The songs of our hearts

During our series on ... and prayer this month, we have been practicing ways of opening ourselves to God's presence: attending to the life around us, returning to familiar words, remembering that we belong to God and one another. This week, there are two prayer practices that I want to offer you, recognizing that some of us do not naturally worship God through music. So for those of you who connect in this way, I invite you to practice an evening prayer of examen.

This prayer, like Jesus' instruction in the temple, invites us to take a few moments at the end of each day to step into God's presence, and then ask of ourselves a question with three parts: 1. Where did I bring my whole self into my relationships today, 2. Where did I hold something back? And bringing both answers into your evening prayer, 3. Ask God to accompany you and all of us into tomorrow.³

For those of us who feel a natural, close connection to the Divine through song, in just a moment I am going to invite you to participate in a sung prayer. Singing gives our thoughts, our breath, our memories, and our feelings somewhere to meet.

³ The Way of Prayer, "Self-Examination" pp 87-88.

There are songs we carry within us, their words and melodies woven into our memories until they hold something of our lives. We have sung them beside people we love. We have heard them when we were grieving. Their words may have accompanied a beginning, a farewell, or a season when someone else's voice carried what we could scarcely say.

When we sing them, we bring more than our voices. Sometimes these songs bring laughter and joy, sometimes they bring tears. We bring the people we remember, the experiences through which those words have accompanied us, and the prayers we are still learning to express. These songs of our hearts can help us bring together what we have become accustomed to keeping apart.⁶

And when we sing together, the people around us bring lives we only partly know. There are joys and losses, questions and convictions, and stories that have scarcely come through these doors. Our shared prayer can make room for more than we have learned to see.

[Introduce the selected song and invite the congregation to sing, hum, or pray its words silently.]

Through the doors

The song we just sang together comes from that early part of my life – one of my best friends was already writing and composing choral music, a musical prodigy who was himself struggling to show up in life with his whole self. He would have

been one of the people on the list I had offered to my biographer. He would have been one of the people my biographer might have enjoyed getting to know.

Instead, when my classmate read what was supposed to be my biography, I finally recognized how much of myself had never entered the school. I finally recognized how much of myself my biographer didn't even know to look for. And while I knew why I had conducted that experiment to follow quietly rather than be myself, I never paused to consider the relationships and connections that I would never make as long as I refused to fully show up.

Jesus' words give us a question to carry too.

So, how do we give back? As people made in the image of the divine, so, how do we give back to God the fullness of who God created us to be?

Tomorrow, there will be doors to walk through and people to encounter. Some doors will be familiar, and others may be new. Whatever thresholds we pass over, may the prayers we sing accompany us there, gathering our minds, our compassion, our courage, and our love into the lives we bring.

So, give back to God what is God's—the whole of the person who bears God's image.

Amen.

Source notes

1. M. Eugene Boring, “The Gospel of Matthew,” commentary on Matthew 22:15–22, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 8; *Feasting on the Word*, Year A, vol. 4, supplied exegetical and homiletical perspectives on Matthew 22:15–22.
2. Boring, commentary on Matthew 22:19–21, concerning the denarius and its imperial inscription.
3. *Feasting on the Word*, theological perspective on Matthew 22:15–22, supplied excerpt, concerning civic authority, divine sovereignty, and conscience.
4. Genesis 1:26–27; *Feasting on the Word*, pastoral perspective on Matthew 22:15–22, supplied excerpt, connecting the coin’s image with humanity bearing God’s image.
5. Angela Warnick Buchdahl, *Heart of a Stranger* (2025), chap. 14, selected cantorial passage supplied for October 18: Benjie Schiller’s affirmation of Buchdahl’s *kavvanah* and her understanding of prayer-leading as connection.
6. *Companions in Christ: The Way of Prayer*, “Praying with Music,” especially the discussion of congregational singing, printed pp. 48–50, and exercise 3, “Sing from Memory,” printed p. 56. “Songs of our hearts” is the sermon’s framing of the practice.

We Respond to God's Grace

Congregational Prayers

Joys

...

What a wonderful world with God in it.
Beautiful weather,
Getting up each morning,
Thankful that the Lord listens to prayers whatever they might be,
Music,
Kindness,
Our volunteers who do so much,
Those who light up our lives,
love,
playing golf,
the awe of each new day.
friends and neighbors who are like family,
being able to come to church,
being able to express ourselves to God,
diversity of the congregation,
God's new morning painting,
that we are able to celebrate our joys — for celebrating joy
reminds us that we share the same source of our joy,
the depth of human creativity and spirit,
gathering together to study God's word,
rebirth and recreation in communities that empower and hold us
as we ask tough questions of God and each other,
those who pitch in and help out,
birthdays, anniversaries, milestones...

When we pray for our loved ones, we have a duty of care to not spread their business without explicit permission. Instead, as we pray, we hold our loved ones close to our

heart and lift them up to God, trusting that the Spirit intercedes in all of our prayers, especially those too deep for words.

Intercessions:

Week of Oct 11 to Oct 18

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Ronnie (Patty Fjetland's sister)	Fred	Family/friends of Wayne Augustine
Chet Hamlin	Scotty	Family/Friends of Emily McNamyer
The parents of Bridgette Adams	Morgan	prayers for healing requested anonymously
Amanda (requested by Barb Quinn)		
Chris (requested by Patty & Linda)		

Jimmy, Christine, Cerenity, Mark, Helen, Rev. Ryan's family, Pam, Jack, Rick, Kip, Nancy

Those who are struggling with a cancer diagnosis.

We pray for those people who have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families, ... pets that need homes

We pray for everyone to be healthy,
Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that choose violence and war instead of diplomacy; all essential workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted by recent hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, and flooding;
and

The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra Leone, Immokalee Farm Workers, black and brown fathers and their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's work in dangerous places.

(Third Sunday: trespasses)

Silent Prayer

Prayers of the People and our Lord's Prayer

Creating God,

We are in awe of your love, which gives us life and draws us together. As we bring the prayers of our hearts, help us hear the voices around us: voices of gratitude and grief, longing and hope. Deepen our connection to you and to one another, that we may recognize your image in every person.

Guide us in the responsibilities of our daily lives. Where power demands our allegiance, keep us attentive to your call to love. Where people are diminished or harmed, give us courage to respond. May our prayers shape how we use our resources,

exercise our responsibilities, and work together for a world where all your children can flourish.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy.

We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as together we sing the prayer that you have taught us:

**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 trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory.
Forever. Amen.**

Musical Response *I Am Praying ...[with] You* Cluff/Sankey

**With you I am praying, with you I am praying,
with you I am praying, I'm praying with you.**

We Share God's Love

Mission Moment *Neighbors in Need*

What is the “Neighbors in Need” special mission offering? Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC’s justice ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice.

How is the offering used? Through this offering we express our deep commitment to reaching out and touching our neighbors with justice and compassion.

Where and how are the funds dispersed? Not only are NIN funds shared with CAIM, they are utilized by staff to develop curated and created social justice resources, i.e. webinars, bible studies, curriculums, advocacy tools, etc. within the program areas of environmental justice, racial justice, LGBTQ justice, economic justice, women’s justice, immigration justice, and more. Additionally, a portion of the monies collected are used to fund grants at the following levels and needs: Direct Service (\$1,000 – \$3,000) – provides funding to meet the immediate needs of an individual or group (i.e. food, clothing, utilities). Advocacy (\$3,001 – \$5,000) – offers funding to assist communities who wish to change policy on a state or federal level via an advocacy campaign. Grass Top (\$5,001 – \$10,000) – is a highly competitive tier which seeks

to award uniquely innovative programs which can be replicated in other settings.

What percentage of NIN donations are used directly to fund our commitment to service and mission? At present, we are pleased to state that nearly 100% of the monies raised from are used to fund our mission projects and programs which include our largest commitments to NIN grants and CAIM.

Invitation to Generosity

“So give back,” Jesus says. We have received life, love, and the care of a community. Our giving helps that care reach others—through nourishment, welcome, companionship, and the shared work of justice. As we offer our gifts, we give tangible expression to the prayers of our hearts.

(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. For those of us online, please follow the QR code.)

***Song of Gratitude**

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

God of generous love,

Receive these gifts and the intentions of our hearts. Use them to nourish our neighbors, strengthen our community, and advance the work of compassion and justice. May our resources and our lives serve your loving purpose. Amen.

We Go to Carry the Light

***Hymn**

Here I Am, Lord⁴

Schutte

**1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?**

**3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?**

**2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them,
they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?**

Refrain:

**Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.**

⁴ Words and Music: Daniel L Schutte and New Dawn Music. Used with permission. One License #A-743301

HERE I AM, LORD

Dan Schutte

VERSES *Majestically*



1. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my peo - ple cry.
 2. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my peo - ple's pain.
 3. I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.



1. All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save. I who
 2. I have wept for love of them. They turn a - way. I will
 3. I will set a feast for them. My hand will save. Fin - est



1. make the stars of night, I will make their dark - ness bright.
 2. break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love a - lone.
 3. bread I will pro - vide till their hearts be sat - is - fied.



1. Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send? ____
 2. I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send? ____
 3. I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? ____

REFRAIN *a tempo*



Here I am, Lord. ____ Is it I, Lord? ____ I have heard you



call - ing in the night. ____ I will go, Lord, ____ if you



lead me. ____ I will hold your peo - ple in my heart. ____

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***Blessing and Benediction**

Go now, bearing the image of God.

May God's love guide your loyalties,

Christ's compassion shape your actions,

and the Spirit give you courage to seek your neighbors' good.

May prayer guide your choices each day.

And may you keep giving back, today and every day with generous hearts.

Go in peace. Amen.

***Sending Blessing**

God Be with You

Dorsey

**God be with you, God be with you,
God be with you till we meet again. *(repeat)***

***Postlude**

I Sing the Mighty Power of God

ELLACOMBE

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the
Light of Christ is carried into the world.
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

Supporting Our Service Today

Liturgist: Wendy Seeley

Welcome Table:

Deb Woudenberg

Greeter: Jenny Steindam

Acolyte: Bella Clapham

Head Usher: Nancy Bennett

Usher Team: Sue Atkinson,
Leslie Chabek, Jim Daugherty,
Don Jones, Nancy Knudson

Technology Team

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely,
Maria Groody, David Jack,
Linda Newton, Wally Davis,
Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated
by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are
given by Linda Newton & Patty
Fjetland for Sandy Barrie:
“Happy Heavenly Birthday”.

The **Church Sign** was changed
by Faye Newton & Lisa Sclafani

Sunday Librarian:

Helen Markus

Fellowship Host: Church
Family Life



Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Barbara Dickason, BCC

Staff

Gary Leidheiser: *Custodian*

Natashia Laughnan:

Social Media and

Communications Specialist

Barbara Quinn: *Music Director*

Lynda Weston: *Bella Handbell
Director*

UPCOMING CALENDAR

MONDAY OCTOBER 19



12:00 PM SPIRIT-FED
(ZOOM BIBLE STUDY)
MEETING ID: 83576594637
PASSWORD: 913882
6:30 PM BRIDGE - P

TUESDAY OCTOBER 20

9:00 AM STAFF MEETING
2:00 PM VISION TEAM MEETING - P
6:00 PM AUDUBON - NAAR HALL

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM LIBRARY OPEN
10:00 AM BIBLE STUDY- CR
10:30 AM FINANCE MEETING - P
1:00 PM CUT UPS - P
6:30 PM CHOIR

THURSDAY OCTOBER 22

6:00 PM GIRL SCOUTS - ED ROOM

FRIDAY OCTOBER 23

8:30 AM MEN'S WEEKLY COFFEE - PANERA
9:00 AM KNIT WITS - P
6:00 PM SOLAS CANDLELIGHT CONCERT
8:00 PM SOLAS CANDLELIGHT CONCERT

SATURDAY OCTOBER 24

8:30 AM MEN'S BREAKFAST - NH
10:30 AM SOCIAL JUSTICE ALLIANCE - NH

SUNDAY OCTOBER 25

9:00 AM LIBRARY HOUR
9:00 AM CHOIR
10:00 AM WORSHIP (IN SITU AND VIRTUAL)
AFTER WORSHIP FELLOWSHIP TIME - NAAR
11:00 AM - 11:15 AM LIBRARY OPEN