



**A SERVICE OF THE WORD  
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sunday, July 16, 2023  
St. James and St. Mark's United Church of Christ**

Rev. Dr. Patrick Schultz  
Rev. Kim Henning, Guest Pastor  
Randy Sohn & Kathy Jurk, Organist      Lori Roelse, Reader

**"No matter who you are and what you've done, God wants you on his side.  
There is nothing you have to do or be. It's on the house. It goes with the territory."**

**Frederick Buechner**

Meditative Music  
Bells Ring  
Prelude Gathering for Word:

St. James: *The Church's One Foundation*

## **CALL TO WORSHIP:**

Greetings to you, church of Jesus Christ.

Let me announce what we know to be true.

You are baptized. God has laid claim to you in and through Jesus Christ.

You are delightfully loved, forgiven, and wrapped in the arms of grace.

I invite you to join me as we profess our faith using the words of the United Church of Christ Statement of faith.

**We believe in You, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to Your deeds we testify: You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin. You judge people and nations by Your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.**

**In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, You have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death, and reconciling the world to yourself.**

**You bestow upon us Your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.**

**You call us into Your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be Your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the Gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join Him in his passion and victory.**

**You promise to all who trust You: forgiveness of sin and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, Your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in Your Realm which has no end.**

**Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto You. Amen.**

Let us pray,

**O God, as we prepare to worship, we humbly seek the life-giving presence of your Holy Spirit. Alone, we do not know how to live. Alone, we squander our resources on things that do not satisfy our souls. Alone, we make decisions that are ill-informed. But with you there is life and hope and love. Awaken us to the wonder of this very moment in time. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

## **HYMN:**

St. James: (#43); St. Mark's: (#111)

*When Morning Gilds the Skies*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION:**

Knowing that there is a cost and joy to our discipleship....

Knowing that there are moments when we have terribly failed.....

Knowing that our trust in God is not as strong as we need it to be.....

Let us pray.

**As silently as a dove hovers in the sky, so we pray—Holy Spirit—come and hover within our hearts.**

**As brightly as a flaming fire burns in the night, so we pray—Holy Spirit—come and burn within us.**

**Remembering the fruit of the Holy Spirit, we confess what we know to be true.**

**Our love for you is occasional; it is not constant.**

**Our joy is seasonal, like a passing mood.**

**Our devotion to peace is selective.**

**Our patience with the shortcomings of others is shallow.**

**We can be less than kind, especially when we feel slighted.**

**We know we are not well; we harbor ill thoughts within us.**

**And our self-control is often out of control.**

**We repent of our sin, and we plead for your mercy through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **ASSURANCE OF PARDON:**

Beloved in Christ, hear the Gospel. God's love is steadfast. God's forgiveness and pardon are promised. With deep humility let us remember that our lives are quite void apart from God's love. Amen.

## **RESPONSE:**

*Breathe on Me, Breath of God*

St. James: (#191); St. Mark's: (#461)

## **THE PASSING OF THE PEACE:**

Let us take a moment to greet one another with, "The peace of Christ be with you," and "Also with you."

## **PSALM 119:105-112**

(The prescribed reading this morning is a small portion of an extensive psalm that celebrates the power of God's word. God's word is effective. God's word is a rock beneath our feet. God's word gives us hope. Let us pray.)

*Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.*

***I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,  
to observe your righteous ordinances.***

*I am severely afflicted;  
give me life, O Lord, according to your word.*

***Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,  
and teach me your ordinances.***

*I hold my life in my hand continually,  
but I do not forget your law.*

***The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
but I do not stray from your precepts.***

*Your decrees are my heritage for ever;  
they are the joy of my heart.*

***I incline my heart to perform your statutes  
for ever, to the end.***

## THE GOSPEL:

**Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. <sup>2</sup>Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup>And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!'*

*18 'Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'*

## YOUNG AT HEART:



*The Miracle of the Seed*

## HYMN:

*As the Deer*

St. James: Bulletin Insert & also on page #471 in STM's Worship & Rejoice

*Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.  
2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.  
3 Incline your ear, and come to me;  
listen, so that you may live.  
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.  
4 See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.  
5 See, you shall call nations that you do not know,  
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.  
6 Seek the Lord while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;  
7 let the wicked forsake their way,  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.  
9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.  
10 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.  
12 For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
13 Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;*

**PASTORAL PRAYER AND THE LORD'S PRAYER:**

**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, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**OFFERING:**

Offering, tithes and gifts can be made before or after worship in the offering baskets/plates at the welcome area of the church. St. James is also set up to take on-line offerings through the website (stmstjucc.org).

**OFFERTORY MUSIC:**

St. James: *O Jesus, I Have Promised*

*~ The offering is brought to the altar ~*

**DOXOLOGY:**

**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.**

**OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

**O God, you are source of life and all its blessing. Wherever we look, we see signs of your goodness. We see children who are loved. We see the lonely who are befriended. We see the poor who are cared for. We see the humble who are esteemed. Receive our gifts, we pray, as we seek to follow the way of Jesus. Amen.**

**HYMN:**

*What a Friend We Have in Jesus*

St. James: (#472); St. Mark's: (#473)

**COMMISSION AND BENEDICTION:**

**POSTLUDE:**

St. James: *More Than Conquerors*

# As the Deer

*Unison* D A C# Dsus A D A

1 As the deer pants for the wa - ter, so my  
 2 I want you more than gold or sil - ver, on - ly  
 3 You're my friend and you are my broth - er, e - ven

G A7sus A7 D G A A7 D A C#

soul longs af - ter you; you a - lone are my  
 you can sat - is - fy; you a - lone are the  
 though you are a king; I love you more than

Bm Dsus A D A G Asus A7 D

heart's de - sire and I long to wor - ship you.  
 real joy-giv - er and the ap - ple of my eye.  
 an - y oth - er, so much more than an - y - thing!

*Refrain* Bm Bm A G D F# G Bm F#

You a - lone are my strength and shield; to you a - lone may my

Em F#sus F# D A/C#

spir - it yield. You a - lone are my

Bm Dsus/A D/A G A7sus A7 D

heart's de - sire, and I long to wor - ship you.

**COME & JOIN US FOR WORSHIP ON SUNDAYS!**

**St. James UCC**

1st & 3rd Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.  
 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.

~ Sunday School is on summer break ~

**St. Mark's UCC**

1st & 3rd Sundays..... 9:00 a.m.  
 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays..... 10:30 a.m.

Services are recorded and available on our church YouTube channel:  
 St. Mark's & St. James UCC

Like us on Facebook 

Check out our Website: [www.stmstjucc.org](http://www.stmstjucc.org)

Join our prayer team; contact Karen in our Church office: [stmstjoffice@gmail.com](mailto:stmstjoffice@gmail.com)



# JOINT OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICE AND PICNIC!

Sunday, July 23rd

10:00am at St. James

Hot Dogs, Potluck, Fellowship  
and Games Following the  
Worship Service

## BUNCO



St. James and St. Mark's ladies join  
us for **BUNCO NIGHT**, Thursday,  
July 20th at 6:00 pm at St. James.

A \$5 participation fee is optional

Please join us and RSVP to

Jackie Mueller or Tammy Serketich or  
email [tserketich@yahoo.com](mailto:tserketich@yahoo.com)

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL ~ 2023

Growing With God

August 15, 16, 17

9am to noon

at St. Mark's UCC



All children welcome

# Staying Close, Staying Connected

## Our Church Celebrations!

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK TO:**

July 16<sup>th</sup> – Anna Marie Bramstedt, Deanne Schultz, Tanya Wasmer  
17<sup>th</sup> – Frederick Krause  
19<sup>th</sup> – Mary Jo Adamec  
20<sup>th</sup> – Hailey Henschel, Jane Vandoske  
21<sup>st</sup> – Randall Krause, Emily Urban  
22<sup>nd</sup> – Owen Bramstedt, Janice Marcheske

### **NO ANNIVERSARIES THIS WEEK**



**RURAL CHURCH YOUTH VOLLEBALL HAS A BYE TODAY**

**NEXT SUNDAY, JULY 23<sup>rd</sup> —6:30pm, St. Mark's/St. James  
VS Immanuel/Bethel at St. James.**

**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE THIS WEDNESDAY, JULY 19<sup>th</sup>**

**The Communion Worship Service will take place on  
Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup> instead of the 6<sup>th</sup>.**

# GPS

Grow – deeper in our faith and relationship with God.

Pray – pray daily for family, neighbors, and others.

Study – read the Bible, pray over what we read, ask questions.

*But still others received the seed that fell on good soil. They are those who hear the message and understand it. They produce a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than the farmer planted. - Matthew 13:23*

Most of the people that Jesus was speaking to were farmers. They understood all about seeds and plants because they grew their own fruits and vegetables. This story is more about the ground than the Sower. In his story, *some seed falls* on a path, where many people have walked packing down the dirt. The seed that fell on the path could not sink down into the dirt. Before the seed could even take root, birds came and ate the seed. *Some of the seed* that he scattered fell onto rocky places. Is there much dirt on rocky soil? No. Do you think that this is a good place for things to grow? No. Other seed fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and crowded out the plants. What is the number one rule about pulling weeds? You must get the roots out! Otherwise, they grow back! The strong roots of the weeds use up all the nutrients in the soil, and the plants are left with nothing. *Finally, other seed* fell on good soil. It produced a crop 100, 60, or 30 times more than what was planted. Farming experts know just what kind of soil is needed for their crops. They will add the right kind of fertilizer (vitamins and nutrients) so their plants can grow. If it is done right, a handful of seeds will produce bushels full of good things to eat!

This is what Jesus was saying to the people: The seed that is sown is the gospel - the good news about Jesus. The soil is the hearts of the people who make a choice about the message. **Hard Path:** Some of the seed fell on a path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some people hear the truth, but like hardened paths, they do not let it sink into their hearts. **Rocky Places:** Some of the seed fell onto rocky places. These people hear the message with great joy, but like seeds on rocky soil, they do not let it take root. They seem to be happy to hear about Jesus and His great love, but they do not let it sink into their hearts. On the outside, they may express great enthusiasm, but inwardly, they do not carefully consider it.

**Thorns:** Still other seed fell among **thorns**. Some people hear God's Word and start to grow and bear fruit. But soon they become worried about the problems of daily living. They may think if they only had more money and more "things" they would be happy. These wrong beliefs take up all the person's time and energy, just like the weeds steal all the nutrients from the good plants. These people do not focus

on living for God, so they don't produce any spiritual fruit. **Good Soil:** Still other seed fell on good soil. It produced a crop 100, 60, or 30 times more than what was planted. Isn't it great to know that some of the seed fell on good soil? This represents the people who heard God's word and believed it. They put their trust in Jesus. Their hearts received the message of the kingdom, and the seed will take root.

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## NOTES: