

Annual Meeting Worship Service Sunday, October 25, 2020



Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ

GREETING

Rev. Andrew Wilson, pastor of St. John's UCC, Smithton, IL

As we gather together in worship as the churches of the Illinois South Conference...

We welcome you in the presence of God,
who commanded faithful people throughout the ages
to love God, love neighbor and love ourselves.

We welcome you in the presence of Jesus, our teacher and brother,
who reminded us again that the whole of God's law can be summed up
in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

We welcome you in the presence of the Spirit,
which moves us to love our neighbor through the hearing and understanding of their diverse
voices and experiences.

OUR PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Pastor Norma Patterson, pastor of Good Shepherd of Faith UCC,
East St. Louis, IL

Lord, as your followers, as your disciples, as your Church,
teach us to love as you love us.

Because love is patient...

Help us to be slow to judge, but quick to listen,
hesitant to criticize, but eager to encourage,
remembering your endless patience with us.

Because love is kind...

Help our words to be gentle and our actions to be thoughtful.

Because love does not envy or boast, and it is not proud...

Help us have hearts that are humble and see the good in others.

May we celebrate and appreciate all that we have and all that we are, as well as doing
the same for those around us.

Because love is not rude or self-seeking...

Help us to speak words that are easy on the ear and on the heart.

When we are tempted to be wrapped up
in our own little world,
remind us there is a great big world out there
full of needs and hurts.

Because love is not easily angered

and keeps no record of wrongs...

Help us to forgive others as you have forgiven us.

When we want to hold onto a grudge,

gently help us release it

so we can reach out with a hand of love instead.

Because love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth...

Help us stand up for what is right and good.

Enable us to defend the defenseless, and help the helpless.

Show us how we can make a difference.

Because love always protects and always trusts...

Help us to be a refuge for those around us.

When the world outside is harsh and cold,
may our hearts and our churches be
places of acceptance and warmth.

Finally, because love always perseveres...
Help our hearts to continually beat with love for You and others.
Thank you for showing us what the word love really means. Amen

RAISING OUR VOICES IN SONG

“I Will Sing Of Your Love, Love, Love”
written, sung, produced and used with permission by
Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy

CHILDREN’S SERMON

Rev. Joan Mier, pastor of Concordia UCC, Belleville, IL

SCRIPTURE READING 1 John 4: 17-21 (NIV)

Rev. Elizabeth Terrill, intentional interim pastor of St. Paul UCC, Columbia, IL

¹⁷ This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love. Yet perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

¹⁹ We love because God first loved us. ²⁰ The truth is not in the one who claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. ²¹ Jesus gave us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Dream God’s Dream”
written by Byran Sirchio, CCLI #2485247

Duet: Rev. Christy Eckert, St. John UCC, Trenton, IL
and Tarrah Vaupel, an ISC member in discernment

Accompanist: Dr. Phil Wilhelm, Director of Music at O’Fallon UCC, O’Fallon, IL

SERMON

“Christ’s Love in Action: The 3 Great Loves”

Rev. David Sigmund, a “3 Great Loves” Ambassador for the UCC

WORK OF THE PEOPLE VIDEO

“Stranger”

video by The Work of the People, used with permission via our license
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music and dialogue written by Tracy Howe, RestorationVillageArts.org,
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THE LORD’S PRAYER

Rev. Karla Frost, pastor of St. John UCC, Granite City, IL

PRAYER SONG

“Leaning In”

written, sung, produced and used with permission by
Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy

*As you listen to this sung prayer of intention, you are invited to lift up your prayers,
petitions, concerns and joys to the Lord.*

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Liturgy written by Rev. Michelle Torigian, St. Paul UCC, Belleville, IL

INVITATION

Rev. Michelle Torigian

May the Spirit of God be with you!
God’s Spirit opens wide our hearts!
May God’s presence and grace be experienced
in this sacramental time together.
May we give God our excitement, thanks, and praise.

The great table knows no boundaries-
From chancels in sanctuaries,
To kitchens everywhere,
This meal is celebrated throughout the Body of Christ.

This meal reminds us of the times
it's connected us with the earth-
From the wheat and the grain harvested.

This meal reminds us of the people with whom we are connected-
The harvesters in fields,
the bakers of bread,
the laborers working in factories.

This meal reminds us of the young ones
joining us for the first time-
And the days gone by in which our ancestors
were part of this table.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Rev. Michelle Torigian

Holy Spirit, Holy Winds, surround these elements.
Bless our bread and cup.
Allow this sacrament and allow your Spirit
to open our souls to our neighbors,
to the needs of our children,
and to your creation surrounding us.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister

On the night before Jesus was betrayed,
deserted, and crucified,
He spent one more meal with his followers.

Maybe the conversation drifted to his teachings –
that we are to “love our neighbors as ourselves.”
Maybe the conversations recalled his time welcoming children,
sharing with them the love of the kin-dom of God.

Maybe he remembered their time by the lake,
or walking by the fields,
joyously soaking in the beauty of creation.

And so Jesus took a piece of bread.
He blessed it and told his followers to eat of the bread,
and when you do, “remember me.”

After supper, he took the cup filled with the fruit of the vine.
After blessing the cup, he passed it to his followers.
Whenever you drink from the cup, “remember me,”
he said to them.

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND THE FRUIT OF THE VINE

Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister

The Bread of Life reminds us of the neighbors
with whom we have broken bread,
for whom we have baked cookies,
with whom we have celebrated life with a cake.

The Fruit of the Vine recalls for us the vines of grapes
in the rolling hills with God’s creation surrounding us.
The table of which we are a part welcomes us as children of God –
no matter who we are on life’s journey.

The gifts of God for the Body of Christ.
May we share in this time together.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Rev. Shana Johnson, Conference Minister

Holy One, we share our gratitude for grape and grain. We thank you for our fellow
wanderers on this journey. May this sacrament refresh our spirits with God's great love
that we may love our neighbors as ourselves, build up the children of God, and
celebrate the gifts of creation surrounding us. Amen.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer, the General Minister, and President of the UCC

OFFERING PRAYER

Rev. John Holst, Zion UCC, Marion, IL

CLOSING SONG

“God of the Movements and Martyrs”
sung and produced by The Many
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<https://www.convergencemp.com>

BENEDICTION

Rev. Shana Johnson, ISC Conference Minister

May the road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be ever at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
And the rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of God's hand.

CLOSING VIDEO

“May the Road Rise Up To Meet You”
video by The Work of the People, used with permission via our license
with TWOTP, <https://www.theworkofthepeople.com>

This worship service was especially created by our Annual Meeting worship task force from the ISC Gatherings Team (Rev. Michelle Torigian, Mimi Llamas and our Conference Minister, Rev. Shana Johnson) with YOU in mind.

We want to extend our deep gratitude to all who participated and shared their gifts of voice and time in putting this worship experience together.

A special thanks to:

Nick Luer, a member of Friedens UCC in Irvington, who so generously and graciously shared his creative, technical and production skills to put together our Annual Meeting worship video in its final form. And to Rev. Nikki Shaw, our communications staff member who helped us LiveStream this worship for our watch party on Sunday, October 25, 2020.

