

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY
WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND
UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE

July 16, 2023

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST // IN-PERSON & ONLINE SERVICE

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Guest preacher: Dawn Cooper Barnes, SJU Member

Liturgist: Karen Randall

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WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“Guide Me, O, Thou Great Jehovah”

GTG #65

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty.
Hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more.
Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing waters flow.
Let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield.
Be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside.
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee.
I will ever give to thee.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Written by Kwasi I. Kena, The Africana Worship Book, Year A (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2006), 70.

Despite hardship, our ancestors dared to dream God-sized dreams.

Praise God for hope-filled dreams.

Do it again, Lord. Dream big dreams through us today!

Praise God for new dreams for our generation.

Invisible God, be visible through our faith today.

Praise God who empowers us with faith to see what others miss.

Will we stop building a better future because of evil?

No! Our God will deliver us from evil!

Will we concede our neighborhoods because evil walks the streets?

No! God will judge all evildoers! Come now, Lord, and fulfill your dreams in us today!

OPENING PRAYER

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, January 2023.

Creator God, Holy Gardener who sustains and nurtures all life, open us today to your life-giving grace and transformative love. As we notice our internal struggles, empower us to greet the wheat and the weeds in our own hearts with care and compassion. As we recognize the challenges and suffering in our community, inspire us to meet the weeds and the wheat in our neighbors with acceptance and hope. We know that you alone have the final say, and so we give ourselves over to you as instruments of hospitality and grace that we would tend our neighbors even as we are tended by you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING 1

Psalm 139:1 – 12, 23 – 24

ANTHEM

“Gather Us In”

Congregation

Here in this place, new light is streaming
Now is the darkness vanished away
See in this space our fears and our dreamings
Brought here to you in the light of this day
Gather us in, the lost and forsaken
Gather us in, the blind and the lame
Call to us now and we shall awaken
We shall arise at the sound of our name

We are the young, our lives are a mystery
We are the old who yearn for your face
We have been sung throughout all of history
Called to be light to the whole human race
Gather us in, the rich and the haughty
Gather us in, the proud and the strong
Give us a heart so meek and so lowly
Give us the courage to enter the song

Here we will take the wine and the water
Here we will take the bread of new birth
Here you shall call your sons and your daughters
Call us anew to be salt for the earth
Give us to drink the wine of compassion
Give us to eat the bread that you
Nourish us well, and teach us to fashion
Lives that are holy and hearts that are true

Not in the dark of buildings confining
Not in some heaven, light years away
Here in this place the new light is shining
Now is the kingdom and now is the day
Gather us in and hold us forever
Gather us in and make us your own
Gather us in, all peoples together
Fire of love in our flesh and our bone

SCRIPTURE READING 2 Matthew 13:24 – 30, 36 – 43

TIME WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Mrs. Dawn Cooper Barnes

MESSAGE

**“BELIEVER’S JOURNEY:
GOD IS THE MASTER NAVIGATOR”**

Mrs. Dawn Cooper Barnes

OFFERTORY SONG OF REFLECTION

“Na You Dey Reign”

African Gospel Song

(Mercy Chinwo; video [CC])

CALL TO GENEROSITY

Holy God, we are living in days of division and polarization, and we regretfully confess that your church is not exempt from that statement. Regardless of where we stand, it is far too easy to look at those who see things differently and see them as weeds, stunting the good fruit we could bear. As we bring our offerings to you, the temptation to focus on our own agenda is strong. Help us to give generously without judging. Give us the faith to put them to your use, and humility to know that only you can see clearly what is wheat and what is weed. We pray in the name of Christ who knows all hearts. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

“Guide My Feet”

GTG #741

Guide my feet, while I run this race (yes my Lord!)
Guide my feet, while I run this race (yes my Lord!)
Guide my feet, while I run this race (yes my Lord!)
For I don't want to run this race in vain (race in vain)

Hold my hand...

Stand by me...

I'm your child...

Search my heart...

Guide my feet...

BENEDICTION

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, January 2023.

May you go forth filled with God's grace that overflows in hospitality and care for your neighbors as we work with God to bring about a new, life-giving reality for all creation.
Amen.

POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer
accompanist

Readings are NRSV unless otherwise noted. CEB=Common English Bible; CEV=Contemporary English Version; KJV=King James Version; MSG=The Message; NIV=New International Version; NLT=New Living Translation; TIB=The Inclusive Bible

Psalm 139:1 – 12, 23 – 24

139:1 O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

139:2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

139:3 You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

139:4 Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely.

139:5 You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
139:6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
139:7 Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
139:8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
139:9 If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
139:10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
139:11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"
139:12 even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
139:24 See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Matthew 13:24 – 30, 36 – 43

13:24 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field;
13:25 but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away.
13:26 So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well.
13:27 And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?'
13:28 He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?'
13:29 But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them.
13:30 Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"
13:36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."
13:37 He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man;
13:38 the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one,
13:39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels.
13:40 Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age.
13:41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers,
13:42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

