

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

July 30, 2023

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

All music used by permission. CCLI License #1325764; CCLI Streaming License #20116748

Liturgist: Dean Randall

[CC] = closed-captioned

WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“All Things Bright and Beautiful”

GTG #20

Refrain:

*All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all*

Each little flower that opens
Each little bird that sings
God made their glowing colors
God made their tiny wings

Refrain

The purple-headed mountain
The river running by
The sunset and the morning
That brightens up the sky

Refrain

The cold wind in the winter
The pleasant summer sun
The ripe fruits in the garden
God made them, every one

Refrain

God gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we might tell
How great is God almighty
Who has made all things well

Refrain

CALL TO WORSHIP

We come to worship the Triune God who creates, redeems, and sustains us all.

We come to worship God who never leaves us and yet whose purposes often seem hidden.

As the bulb hides the flower, as the seed hides the tree, as the cocoon hides the butterfly, so too does God bring forth life even when we cannot see it.

We gather today to learn how to watch, wait, and anticipate the season when God's unrevealed work will come into the open.

As silence gives way to song, as night gives way to dawn, as the past flows through the present into the future, so too does God tirelessly persist in bringing about the abundant life of the kingdom of heaven.

We gather today to learn how to join in God's dance as partners who prepare for the season when God's unrevealed work comes into the open.

As our end meets our beginning, as our time meets infinity, as our doubt meets our believing, so too does God meet our brokenness with persevering love, unfolding a new reality of flourishing for all creation.

We gather today to learn how to love as God loves so that we may be part of bringing God's unrevealed work into the open. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of preparation and transitions, we are already halfway through our summer months. We sit and wonder where the time went, did we spend it well in your service. Give us these next few weeks for renewal that we may be prepared to work through your church for your world. Keep us mindful of the needs of family, friends and others, that we will be your faithful disciples, for we ask these things in Jesus' Name. AMEN.

ANTHEM

"One Seed"
(Laurie Berkner)

Ingrid Sampson
soloist

My grandfather had a garden and showed my father
How to make it grow
Then my father, he had me
Now it's my turn to plant a seed

Chorus:

*One seed, two hands, dig a hole, start to plant
Watch it grow, pass it down, one Earth spins around*

My grandmother lived by the ocean
And showed my mother how to keep it clean
Then my mother, she had me
Now it's my turn to plant a seed

One seed, two hands, dig a hole, start to plant
Watch it grow, pass it down, one Earth spins around

Please protect me, and what I need
A place to play that's green, clean air to breathe
Don't forget me, teach me what you know
Remember what you leave you leave for me

One seed, two hands, dig a hole, start to plant
Watch it grow, pass it down, one Earth spins around

When I grow up I might have a daughter
Or a son of my very own
And as they're learning what they need, I'll show them
How to plant a seed

Chorus

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

TIME WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

MESSAGE

**IMAGINING A NEW REALITY:
“HIDDEN AND MIXED IN”**

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

SCRIPTURE INTO SCRIPT

(to the people on the left side of the congregation):

You are like mustard seeds. Praise be to God for the wonders that are hidden within you, yet to be uncovered and grow!

Mustard seeds? That doesn't sound like much. They are just something to be thrown down in the dirt. What's so good about being mustard seeds?

Within each of you are wondrous gifts and talents that you haven't found yet. Be patient and wait. God will reveal those gifts and you will discover the many ways in which you are called to serve. You may be those who offer shelter and nurture for others who feel lost and alienated. Just wait and be ready!

God, give us patience and help us to wait for you to work within us.

(to the people in the center of the congregation):

You are yeast! Praise be to God for the wonders that are hidden within you, yet to grow!

Yeast? It is a mysterious thing, using sugar and sweetness to help it grow. Why in the world would God call us yeast?

Energy and joy abide within you! You may be those who influence people, who invite them to open their hearts to God. One thing is for sure, you will transform people's lives in God's name.

Lord, give us patience and help us to be ready to work for you!

(to the people on the right side of the congregation):

You are treasures of great value. Praise be to God for the wonders that are hidden within you, yet to be discovered!

Treasures! Now that's more like it! We are already special!

The luster that you have is only the beginning of things. Your deep and abiding faith will lead others to new lives of hope and courage.

Help us, O Lord, not to get too impressed with ourselves. Give us hearts that focus on others in your name.

(to the whole congregation):

Come this day and discover who God calls you to be.

(the whole congregation responds):

We come, O Lord, offering our praise and our prayers to you in confidence of your abiding presence and creative intention within each one of us.

OFFERTORY SONG OF REFLECTION

“In the Lord I’ll Be Ever Thankful”

GTG #654

In the Lord I’ll be ever thankful
In the Lord I will rejoice
Look to God; do not be afraid
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near
Lift up your voices; the Lord is near

CALL TO GENEROSITY

God of all blessings, Jesus inspired us through his teaching to see your kingdom as a place where small things can have a mighty impact: a tiny mustard seed planted, or a bit of yeast mixed into the flour. We ask you this day to bless the gifts we offer, so that they may have a powerful impact when used according to your purposes. Bless us that we might see glimpses of your kingdom through our giving and grow in generosity in the process. In name of Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer, we pray. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

“We All Are One in Mission”

GTG #733

We all are one in mission; we all are one in call
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all
A single, great commission compels us from above
To plan and work together that all may know Christ's love

We all are called for service to witness in God's name
Our ministries are different; our purpose is the same:
To touch the lives of others by God's surprising grace
So every folk and nation may feel God's warm embrace

Now let us be united and let our song be heard
Now let us be a vessel for God's redeeming word
We all are one in mission; we all are one in call
Our varied gifts united by Christ, the Lord of all

BENEDICTION

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

Go forth today ready to catch glimpses of God’s never-ending, unstoppable, and always-present love at work in the world. And when that love feels hidden and distant, breathe deep and remember: unrevealed does not mean inactive. 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

Matthew 13:31 – 33, 44 – 52

13:31 He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;

13:32 it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

13:33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

13:44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

13:45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;

13:46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

13:47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind;

13:48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad.

13:49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous

13:50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13:51 "Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes."

13:52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

