

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

**September 17, 2023**

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

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Liturgist: Kaylee Wong

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**WE GATHER IN GOD’S NAME**

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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 stream doth 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

Children of God, when we face upset, harm, and injustice in our midst, we sometimes turn to God and ask:

**How many times should I forgive?**

When Jesus says that we should forgive again and again and again, we want to say, “REALLY?”, and repeat the question:

**How many times should I forgive?**

Until God turns the question around: “How many times have I forgiven you?”

**Seventy times seven.**

“How many times have I loved you?”

**Seventy times seven.**

“How many times has my grace been sufficient for you?”

**Seventy times seven.**

Let us learn, then, how to forgive not out of our own power, but out of God’s, who forgives us so that we might be able to learn to live with one another well.

**Amen.**

## OPENING PRAYER

**God of all that you have created, as a people gathered in hope, we are so glad for your goodness and grace. We are also people moved by the despair of others. As a people of love, we ache for those who are lonely, lost and fearful. As a people of life, we mourn with those who are touched by death. As people who struggle to trust more fully in you, help us to move with your strength in the Spirit of Christ toward all whom we meet, and to not lose heart as we try to live out the gospel.**

ANTHEM

“Make Me a Channel of Your Peace”

SJU Chancel Choir

*Sebastian Temple*

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there is hatred, let me sow your love  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord  
And where there’s doubt, true faith in you

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there’s despair in life, let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
And where there’s sadness, ever joy

Oh, Master, grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving of ourselves that we receive  
And in dying that we’re born to eternal life

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 18:21 – 35

TIME WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

MESSAGE

**“HOW MANY TIMES”**

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

OFFERTORY SONG

OF REFLECTION

“There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy”

GTG #435

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.  
There's a kindness in God's justice, which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven.  
There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind.  
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.  
If our love were but more faithful, we would gladly trust God's Word,  
And our lives reflect thanksgiving for the goodness of our Lord.

## CALL TO GENEROSITY

As we gather, O God, may we also be more aware of the moments that are ours to share with others the many blessings you have given us. We are glad to give! Now, give us wisdom to use these gifts in the fulfillment of your mission in the world, through Christ our Lord.

## CLOSING SONG

“When We Are Living”  
(“*Pues Si Vivimos*”)

GTG #822

When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,  
And when we're dying, it is in the Lord.  
Both in our living and in our dying,  
We belong to God; we belong to God.

Through all our living, we our fruits must give.  
Good works of service are for offering.  
When we are giving, or when receiving,  
We belong to God; we belong to God.

'Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,  
When sensing beauty or in love's embrace,  
Whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,  
We belong to God; we belong to God.

Across this wide world, we shall always find  
Those who are crying with no peace of mind,  
But when we help them, or when we feed them,  
We belong to God; we belong to God.

## BENEDICTION

May you go from this place with a posture of forgiveness, leading and being led by the grace that saves us into right relationship with God, neighbor, self, and creation. Amen.

## POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer  
accompanist

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*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 18:21 – 35**

18:21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

18:22 Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

18:23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

18:24 When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him;

18:25 and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

18:26 So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'

18:27 And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

18:28 But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.'

18:29 Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

18:30 But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

18:31 When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

18:31 When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

18:32 Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

18:33 Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?'

18:34 And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.

18:35 So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

