

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

**October 15, 2023**

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

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Liturgist: Noella Sama

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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

“Sanctuary”

TFWS #2164

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary  
Pure and holy, tried and true  
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living  
Sanctuary for you

CALL TO WORSHIP

*~ written by Eliza Buchakjian-Tweedy, Pastor at First Church Congregational, Rochester, NH. She blogs at <http://sermonizing.wordpress.com/>*

In the midst of fear and anger; in the midst of mayhem and destruction, God calls us.

**With everything else going on, who has time for a feast? We're busy, we'll get around to eating eventually.**

In the midst of our anxiety, our worry; in the midst of bill-paying and appointments, God invites us.

**We are tempted to just grab a bite, a sandwich between errands, a snack we can eat while driving, or checking email, or working on today's big project.**

The feast is spread! All are invited, all are welcome!

**We are invited. We are welcome. We are worthy. How will we respond?**

OPENING PRAYER

**Gracious God, in love You open wide the doors and welcome us into Your presence—saints and sinners alike. You spread a table before us, filled with the richest fare—a feast of love and mercy for the body and soul.**

**We come with joy to meet You here, to eat and drink at Your table, to taste and see Your goodness, to celebrate Your grace and mercy in our lives.**

**May Your Spirit inspire our praise and thanksgiving, our prayers and petitions as we worship together in Your presence.**

**In the name of Jesus Christ, our host and Lord, Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 22:1 – 14

ANTHEM

“God’s Gonna Set this World on Fire”

SJU Chancel Choir

*Traditional Spiritual; arr. Moses Hogan and Edwin Hogan*

God's gonna set this world on fire  
God's gonna set this world on fire one of these days, Hallelujah!  
God's gonna set this world on fire  
God's gonna set this world on fire one of these days  
  
I'm gonna sit at the welcome table ...  
I'm gonna eat and never get hungry ...  
I'm gonna drink and never get thirsty ...

TIME WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

MESSAGE

“INVITE EVERYONE”

Rev. Mary Ka Kanahan

OFFERTORY SONG  
OF REFLECTION

“Draw the Circle Wide”

*(lyrics: Gordon Light; music: Mark A. Miller)*

Draw the circle, draw the circle wide  
Draw the circle, draw the circle wide  
No one stands alone, we'll stand side by side  
Draw the circle, draw the circle wide  
  
Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still  
Let this be our song: no one stands alone  
Standing side by side  
Draw the circle, draw the circle wide

CALL TO GENEROSITY

O God, we thank you for your great generosity. All that we are and all that we have is a gift from you. Help us to serve one another and so reflect your spirit and goodness. Accept these offerings that the cause to which they are devoted may be used with your Wisdom to bring more of your love, peace and justice into the world.

CLOSING SONG

“For Everyone Born”

GTG #769

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
for everyone born, clean water and bread,  
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,  
for everyone born, a star overhead,  
and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!  
  
For woman and man, a place at the table,  
revising the roles, deciding the share,  
with wisdom and grace, dividing the power,  
for woman and man, a system that's fair,  
and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!

For young and for old, a place at the table,  
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,  
for young and for old, the right to belong,  
and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!

For just and unjust, a place at the table,  
for pain that we hold, the real need to grieve,  
in anger, in hurt, a mindset of mercy,  
for just and unjust, a new way to live,  
and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!

For gay and for straight, a place at the table,  
a covenant shared, a welcoming space,  
a rainbow of race and gender and colour,  
for gay and for straight, the chalice of grace,  
and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
to live without fear, and simply to be,  
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,  
for everyone born, the right to be free,  
and God will delight when we are creators  
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:  
yes, God will delight when we are creators  
of justice, justice and joy!

## BENEDICTION

~ from [\*Standing in the Gap\*](#), written by Rev. Dr. Bob Gross

Go forth, strengthened to do the work of Christ, standing in the gap, extending the invitation to the eternal banquet, rejoicing in God. Let your gentleness be known to everyone and don't worry about anything. The God who created you, the Christ who redeems you and the Spirit who empowers you is with you today and ever more.

**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 22:1 – 14**

22:1 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying:

22:2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.

22:3 He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come.

22:4 Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.'

22:5 But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business,

22:6 while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them.

22:7 The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

22:8 Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy.

22:9 Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.'

22:10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

22:11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe,

22:12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless.

22:13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

