Sixth Sunday of Easter

Sunday Celebration • May 5, 2024 • 10:00 AM





A JUST PEACE AND OPEN AND AFFIRMING CHURCH

Founded in 1853

Rev. Paul Werner, Pastor Ciaran Krueger, Music Director Christy Schrecengost, Church Administrator Jonathan Rizzo, Accompanist





Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2024

Liturgist: Marie Nolan



As a courtesy to those who have gathered for worship, please silence your phone and any other mobile devices.

"When I say it's you I like, I'm talking about that part of you that knows that life is far more than anything you can ever see or hear or touch. That deep part of you that allows you to stand for those things without which humankind cannot survive. Love that conquers hate, peace that rises triumphant over war, and justice that proves more powerful than greed."

Fred Rogers

"Life is short, and we have never too much time for gladdening the hearts of those who are traveling the dark journey with us. Oh, be swift to love, make haste to be kind."

Henri-Frédéric Amiel

"We do not draw people to Christ by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it."

Madeleine L'Engle

"In this life we are to become heaven so that God might find a home here."

Meister Eckhart

"Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage."

Lao Tzu

Congregation: Bold print

*Please rise in body or in spirit.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the land upon which St. James UCC stands was originally the ancestral and unceded territory of the Haudenosaunee and Erie people. We celebrate and honor the contributions that Native Americans have made in the past and continue to make today in the Western New York area and the Americas. We embrace the Haudenosaunee philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. Additionally, we commit to supporting initiatives that empower the local, national, and international Indigenous communities and to listening, learning, and taking actions to address injustices past and present that have impacted these communities and all God's creation.

WORDS OF WELCOME

Welcome to St. James, an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ, where we strive to be more fully the body of Christ. We are committed to welcoming and celebrating all people and the uniqueness we each bring. As people of faith, we boldly proclaim: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

CONTEMPORARY READING / CONTINUING TESTAMENT

Rev. Paul Werner

INTROIT

"O Come to Me, the Master Said" Ralph Vaughan Williams

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Please rise in body or in spirit to greet your neighbor with Christ's peace.

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

Please return to your seat as we begin to sing the opening hymn.

One: Christ gives us a new commandment:

Many: "Love one another as I have loved you."

One: When we love one another as Christ has loved us, we will live joyful lives.

Many: We will live with God's love deep in our hearts.

One: Let us worship and celebrate the one who shows us how to love.

Many: Let us worship and celebrate with joy!

*PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Marie

Holy Love, you are the one who nourishes us and leads us on. You are the one who gave birth to creation and is birthing something new in us. You are the one who rose from death to bridge the gap between earth and heaven, to erase the dividing line of death, by love. May your love overcome all our shortcomings and faults. May your love burn bright in us, so that we might know one another by your love and not by our own human measurements. Holy Love, as we worship and celebrate today, be born in us again and again. Amen.

*RESPONSE

"I Come with Joy" (Verses 1 & 2)

W&R 706

I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved, and free, the life of Jesus to recall, in love laid down for me, in love laid down for me.

I come with Christians, far and near to find, as all are fed, the new community of love in Christ's communion bread, in Christ's communion bread.

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURE Marie

John 15:9-17 (The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation)

As in several other places in the Gospel of John, chapters 13-17 use a familiar literary device of the time, an extended and stylized discourse. Containing much of John's own thought about the relationship of Jesus to the church, this discourse includes some of Jesus' most incisive teachings remembered by the church 60 or more years after the resurrection event. As if quoting Jesus, the writer or writers of the Gospel of John take us to the heart of the Christian discipleship: love for others as God has loved us. John thus interprets the meaning of Jesus' death on the cross as his loving sacrifice of himself for us.

As the Creator has loved me, so have I loved you. Live on in my love. And you will live on in my love if you keep my commandments, just as I live on in God's love and have kept God's commandments. I tell you all this that my joy may be yours, and your joy may be complete.

(continued on the next page) \rightarrow

This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. And you are my friends, if you do what I command you. I no longer speak of you as subordinates, because a subordinate doesn't know a superior's business. Instead I call you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have learned from the Creator. It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit. Your fruit must endure, so that whatever you ask of God in my name God will give you. This command I give you: that you love one another.

*HYMN

"Where Charity and Love Prevail"

NCH 396

RESPONDING WITH OUR GENEROSITY

INVITATION

OFFERTORY / GIVING OF OUR GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

- Please place your gift in the offering plate by the altar. Many of our members and friends give online. To do so, you are invited to use the information located on the back cover of this bulletin.
- Our gifts help sustain this community of faith by maintaining our facilities, supporting our staff, and providing the materials that make our ministry available to all.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*DOXOLOGY NCH 780

(Sing the version of the Doxology that is closest to your own heart.)

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below; Praise God above, ye heavenly host: Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Loving God, we remember that one of Christ's most important commandments is loving one another. With these gifts, help us show this love in our words and actions, caring for the vulnerable and offering hope in times of despair. Amen.

MESSAGE "Love Is the Answer. What Was the Question?"

Rev. Paul

JOYS AND CONCERNS OF THE CONGREGATION

PASTORAL PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER / PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

Our ___*, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom** come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom**, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

*Use whatever language is closest to your own heart (Our Father, Our Creator, Our Father and Mother, etc.) **Or "kin-dom."

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

WORDS OF INVITATION

One: Jesus sets the table where we dine today. Jesus' welcome extends to all

of humanity.

Many: No matter how old you are, no matter your gender, no matter your

culture, no matter whom you love, no matter your ability, no matter your race, no matter your faith journey, all are welcome at this

table.

One: No one can "earn" a place at this meal. Come of your own choice.

Many: Bring your hopes and your history. Bring your deliberations and

your doubts. Bring your cry for liberation. But what is most

important is that you come as your whole self.

One: We welcome all to this banquet table. This is a table of hospitality,

sharing, celebration, and relationship. All are welcome, no exceptions.

No one is turned away from this table. God is the host!

COMMUNION HYMN

"Come to the Table"

SPP 8

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE

One: Jesus invited all to the feast of peace and new life. We remember, long

ago, so our tradition says, that Jesus took bread, offered thanks for it,

and broke it, inviting his friends—and us—to eat:

Many: "This is my body broken for you. Take and eat. Do this in

remembrance of me."

One: We remember, long ago, so our tradition says, that Jesus took the cup of

the fruit of the vine, offered thanks for it, and gave it to his friends—and

us—to drink:

Many: "This is the blood of the new covenant poured out for the forgiveness

of sins. Take and drink. Do this in remembrance of me."

One: Bread, the bread of life. Fruit of the vine, the cup of blessing. When we

partake of the bread and drink of the cup, we are reminding ourselves of

the gift of life.

Many: We follow the example of Jesus. We are to pour out the gift of life in a

way that others might live.

WORDS OF OPENNESS

Holy God, may our hearts and minds be alive to what is sacred in these symbols of bread and cup. May they open us to your guidance and to your love for us. May they open us to your love for all humankind and our stewardship of your creation. This is our hope, our common will, and the expression of our love and trust in Jesus the Christ. Amen.

COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE

We receive communion by the ancient rite of intinction:

- 1. Please come forward by the center aisle.
- 2. Approach the Pastor and take a piece of communion bread.
- Go to the Communion Assistant and slightly dip your bread in the chalice, while avoiding touching the contents with your fingers.
- 4. After dipping your bread in the chalice, receive (consume) the elements. You need not wait to return to your seat to partake in communion.
- Please return to your seat by the side aisles.

All are welcome at God's table. No one is turned away. You do not have to be baptized or be a member of this or any church to partake in this meal. We invite you to receive these gifts of life and blessing given freely by a compassionate God.

A gluten-free bread option is available. The chalice contains grape juice rather than wine. (Sealed pre-filled plastic cups are available for those who may prefer them.)

We will bring the communion elements to those who wish to remain seated.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION

Amazing God, creator of us all, even in the expanse of your universe you know each of us. Thank you for uniting your people through this meal with the bread of life and the cup of blessing. Thank you for your presence in our lives today and every day. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN

"Called as Partners in Christ's Service"

NCH 495

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

You may remain in the sanctuary for contemplation and reflection, or you may make your way to the Horton Lounge (Hospitality Room) for refreshments and fellowship.



Come, My People

12



to God

a

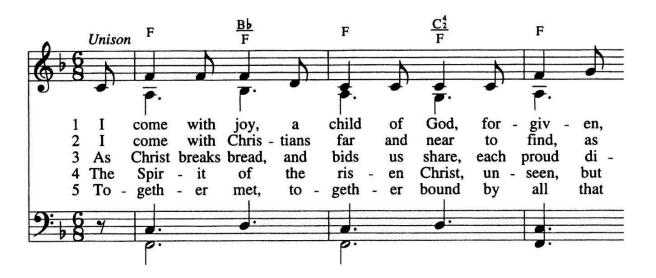
song_

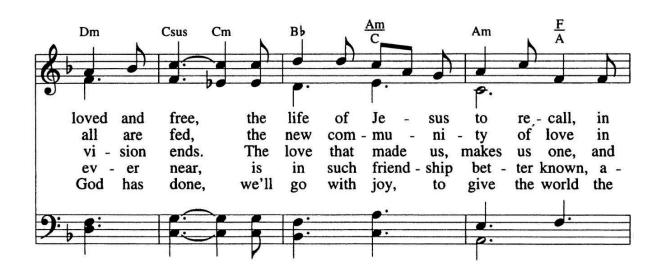
sing

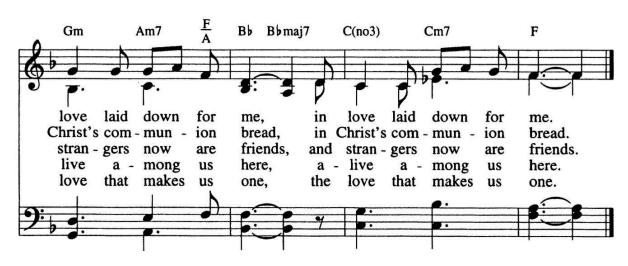
of praise!

of thanks-giv - ing,

I Come with Joy





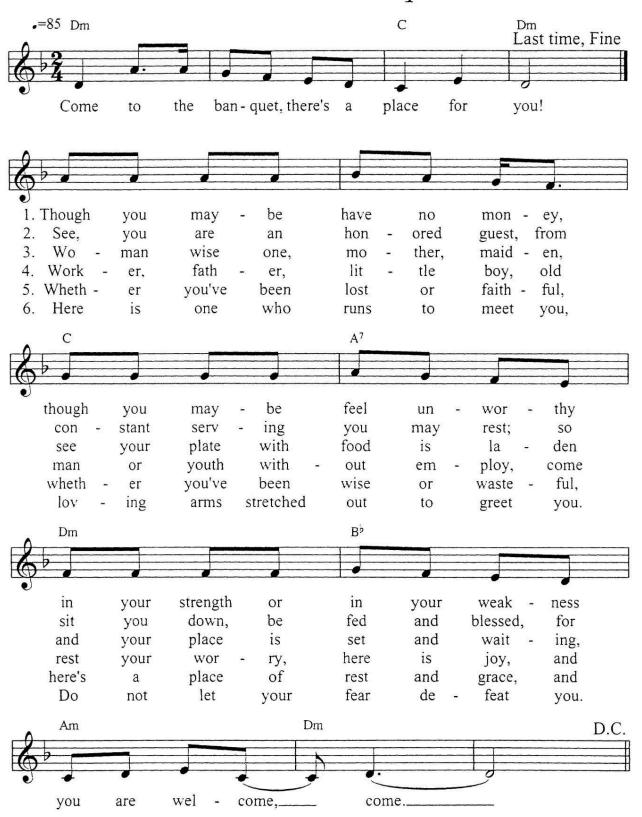


Latin hymn, "Ubi caritas et amor," 9th century Paraphr. by Omer Westendorf, 1961; alt. John 13:34–35; 15:9–12; 2 Cor. 5:17–20; 1 John 4:7–21



ONE LICENSE A-723905

Come to the Banquet



Jane Parker Huber, 1981 John 15:12-17; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 2:14-22 1 Called as part-ners in Christ's ser-vice, called to min-is-tries of grace, 2 Christ's ex - am - ple, Christ's in - spir-ing, Christ's clear call to work and worth, 3 Thus new pat-terns for Christ's mis-sion, in a small or glob-al sense, God grant us to - mor-row ways or - der hu - man life We re-spond with deep com-mit-ment fresh new lines of faith to trace. Let us fol - low, nev - er fal-tering, rec - on - cil - ing folk on earth. Help us bear each oth - er's bur-dens, break-ing down each wall or fence. That sur-round each per - son's sor-row with a calm that con - quers strife. May we learn the art of shar-ing, side by side and friend with friend, Men and wom-en, rich - er, poor-er, all God's peo - ple, young and old, vi-sion, words of chal-lenge, said with care, Words of com-fort, words of liv-ing, our com-pas-sion Make us part-ners in our in - crease, in E - qual part - ners our car-ing to ful - fill God's cho - sen end. Blend-ing hu - man skills to - geth-er gra-cious gifts from God un - fold. Bring new power and strength for ac-tion, make us col-leagues, free and fair. faith, thus giv-ing hope and con - fi - dence and peace. Mes - sen - gers of

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

	Sun	5/5	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration		
	Mon	5/6	6:00 PM	Girl Scouts - Troop 34714 (Assembly Hall)		
	Tue	5/7		Connector weekly e-news articles are due (every Tuesday)		
	Tue	5/7	6:00 PM	Spring Sprucing - Indoor - pizza provided		
	Wed	5/8	7:00 PM	Cub Scouts - Pack 525 (Assembly Hall)		
	Thu	5/9	7:00 PM	Scouts BSA - Troops 525B & 509G (Assembly Hall)		
	Thu	5/9	8:00 PM	Alcoholics Anonymous (Horton Lounge)		
	Fri 5/10 - Tue 5/14			Rev. Paul on vacation		
	-	5/11	9:00 AM	Spring Sprucing - Outdoor - <i>pizza provided</i>		
	Sun	5/12	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration		
				,		
MARK YOUR CALENDAR						
	Tue	5/14	1:00 PM	Worship Team		
	Thu	5/16	11:00 AM	Mission and Social Action Team		
	Sat	5/18	11:00 AM	Celebration of Life: Barbara Reuter		
	Sun	•	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Pentecost Sunday		
	Sun	-	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Trinity Sunday		
Thu 5/30 - Sat 6/1				Rev. Paul at NY Conference Annual Meeting in Binghamton		
	Tue	6/4	6:30 PM	Rainbow Collective of WNY Interfaith Pride Service		
	Sun	-	11:00 AM	Pride in the Park (Hamburg Memorial Park)		
		6/16	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Juneteenth Sunday		
		6/18	7:00 PM	Garden Party		
	Sun	6/23	10:00 AM	Sunday Celebration - Open and Affirming Sunday		

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS (Christy) REV. PAUL'S SCHEDULE THIS WEEK

Monday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Monday:	Day off
Tuesday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Tuesday:	Office and by appointment
Wednesday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Wednesday:	Office and by appointment
Thursday:	9:00 AM - 2:00 PM	Thursday: ´	MORNING:
Friday:	Church Office closed	•	Sparks of Hope Faith
,			Community Notwork

Community Network

meeting AFTERNOON:

Office and by appointment

Friday: Vacation day Saturday: Vacation day

BE A SUNDAY VOLUNTEER!

Please use the links below to sign up for Sunday volunteer opportunities. Thank you!

Liturgists: https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccgreeters

Altar flowers: https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccflowers

After-church coffee and fellowship: https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccfellowship



What is the United Church of Christ?

The United Church of Christ traces its roots to the Protestant Reformation, the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower*, and traditions indigenous to the United States. There are five historic "streams" that formed the UCC: Congregational, Christian, Afro-Christian, Evangelical, and Reformed.

- In 1931, the Christian Church, along with the Afro-Christian Convention, joined with the Congregational Churches to form the Congregational Christian Churches. Then, in 1934, the Reformed Church in the United States and the Evangelical Synod of North America united to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Both of these denominations merged to form the United Church of Christ in 1957. We are a united and uniting church.
- The UCC weaves God's message of hope and extravagant welcome with social action for justice and peace, and our response to the demands of our faith is woven into the history of our country.
- We were the first historically white denomination to ordain an African American (1785) and the first in the modern era to ordain a woman (1853). We were the first mainline denomination to ordain an openly gay man (1972) and affirm marriage equality (2005). We were in the forefront of the anti-slavery movement, the Social Gospel movement, and the Civil Rights Movement, taking seriously Jesus' commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself."
- Learn more about the UCC's "firsts": https://www.hamburgucc.org/about-the-ucc

Welcome to St. James United Church of Christ

- We believe that faith is a matter of heart and mind.
- We believe that taking the Bible seriously does not mean taking it literally.
- We believe that God embraces all people equally.
- We believe that we are called to be nothing less than global citizens.
- We believe that the social expression of love is justice.
- We believe that every generation is called to discover new faith traditions.
- We believe that God continues to speak through the actions and words of people today, just as in times of old.



We are a **Just Peace** church. In the United Church of Christ, Just Peace churches promote peace with justice (a just peace) as an expression of God's love. We support peaceful opposition to intolerance, injustice, discrimination, and war, and we seek the ways of justice and peace in order to make a difference in our lives and the lives of all who experience injustice and violence.

We are an **Open and Affirming** church. In the United Church of Christ, Open and Affirming churches covenant to welcome and celebrate people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Likewise, we welcome and celebrate people of every faith experience, race, ethnicity, culture, ability, age, background, viewpoint, and life experience. If you struggle with addiction, are recovering from trauma, or have ever felt the pain of exclusion, you are embraced here.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here.

To receive our **weekly e-news**, *The St. James Connector*, scan the QR code or go to: https://tinyurl.com/stjamesuccnews



For **online giving**, scan the QR code or go to: https://www.hamburgucc.org/giving



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We recycle church bulletins! After you are finished using your bulletin, please share it with a friend or neighbor or place it in the recycling bins in the narthex or in front of the church.

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