

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
June 20, 2021 10:00 AM



**ST. JOHN UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**
An Open and Affirming Congregation

10207 Lincoln Trail Fairview Heights, IL
Office: 397-6323
Office Hours: Monday, Thursday 9-3
Pastor Rosemary Captain

Liturgy written by
Rev. Dr. Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi
Pianist – Nancy Eisenhauer

**PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE
IF YOU KNOW ANYONE**

IN EITHER MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

ALL SCRIPTURES FOR THIS SUNDAY:

1 Samuel 17: 1a, 4-11, 19-23, 32-49 Psalm 9:9-20
2 Corinthians 6:1-13 Mark 4:35-41

CALL TO WORSHIP:

It's awesome when all of the people live together in unity!
When waters are rough, we hold each other tightly. When
the sea begins to swallow us,
We hold each other tightly and call on God.
But we also need God and each other when there are no
looming waves.
We can splash and play in the shallow end
And venture into deeper waters with trusted friends.
Delighting in refreshing currents of community
And savoring each burst of laughter,
Let's invite others to join in the fun!

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

Ever-living God, you are like the sea:
Powerful and endless, yet soothing and constant.
Let us feel your refreshing presence
as we gather near your waters to wade in the possibilities
of life that you offer us this day.

GLORIA:

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit,
Three- in-One; as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 4:35-41 ³⁵ Later that day, when
evening came, Jesus said to them, "Let's cross over to the

other side of the lake.” ³⁶ They left the crowd and took him in the boat just as he was. Other boats followed along.

³⁷ Gale-force winds arose, and waves crashed against the boat so that the boat was swamped. ³⁸ But Jesus was in the rear of the boat, sleeping on a pillow. They woke him up and said, “Teacher, don’t you care that we’re drowning?”

³⁹ He got up and gave orders to the wind, and he said to the lake, “Silence! Be still!” The wind settled down and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰ Jesus asked them, “Why are you frightened? Don’t you have faith yet?”

⁴¹ Overcome with awe, they said to each other, “Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!”

This is the Word of God. It is true and can be trusted.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

MESSAGE: “And Suddenly . . .”

Mark 4: “³⁷ Gale-force winds arose, and waves crashed against the boat so that the boat was swamped.” The King James translation reads, “³⁷ And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.” The New Revised Standard Version reads, “³⁷ A great windstorm arose, . . .”

According to those who know these things, “The Lake of Galilee was notorious for its storms. They came literally out of the blue with shattering and terrifying suddenness.” Another writer describes them like this: “It is not unusual to see terrible squalls hurl themselves, even when the sky is perfectly clear, upon these waters which are ordinarily so calm.”

Several of the disciples on board that day were fisherman. You would think they would have been prepared when they set out in this boat. And I’m sure they had experienced these sudden squalls in the past. No matter how many storms they had experienced, it was still very frightening. Many a fisherman had been lost in this sea. Yet Jesus wanted to get to the other side of the sea. So, the disciples ventured out, hoping for the best.

I can’t help but notice how this story parallels our lives. We venture out and hope for the best. **And suddenly, something happens.** (Why do bad things always happen suddenly?) The car has a flat tire or breaks down, even though you just had it in the shop last week. You made a list of things to take but you forgot your medicine or you forgot your wallet or you forgot your cell phone. And suddenly someone in your party gets sick, or even worse, gets hurt. And even worse than that, someone you know dies.

“I just saw her yesterday and she was fine.” Now what? You have to get a new car. You have to turn around and go back to pick up what you forgot. You have to drive to the nearest hospital. You have to cancel your trip to attend a funeral.

We think we are very prepared for anything in our lives, yet **suddenly something happens** and we are surprised, shocked, frightened, terrified. We don’t know what to do. We don’t know how to handle all these storms in our lives. Why do bad things always happen suddenly? That may be a foolish question. Who would want bad things to happen every day? Of course, some people do. What we might

imagine is an “inconvenience”, others have life-changing, life threatening “storms”.

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“When the disciples realized the presence of Jesus with them, the storm calmed. Once they knew he was there, fearless peace entered their hearts. To voyage with Jesus was to voyage in peace even in a storm.” (William Barclay)

When we believe that Jesus is with us, we can take a deep breath and feel his calm presence; as if to say “I’m with you no matter what. We’ll face this and every storm together. The waves may be high and the going rough, but we are together, holding on to each other.” Together we can face all the “and suddenly” situations.

“Be still and know that I am God.” Amen.

PASTORAL PRAYER: Beginning with silent personal prayer.

“Precious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;
Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the
light: take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.”
(Thomas A. Dorsey 1899 – 1993)

Gracious and ever-loving God, we are so grateful for servants who can write beautiful words and hymns to help us when we are suddenly hit by storms. We must always remember, believe, and trust that you remain with us, no

matter what. We should be still and know that you are God. Nothing else compares and nothing else is needed.

We know you are with all those on our prayer list and all people who feel discouraged and afraid because their storm seems too great to conquer. Yet you remain with us, even if we ourselves have created that storm that threatens us.

Your love and compassion gives us strength, hope, and encouragement to remain with you always.

THE LORD’S PRAYER: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come; Your 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.

CALL FOR THE OFFERING:

O God, you have offered unique gifts to each one of us. Teach us to celebrate and share those gifts so that we may create communities of graciousness and love. Through Jesus, we are reminded of the difference that an individual contribution can make. Let us offer our gifts generously for the service of all.

DOXOLOGY:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One.

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION:

Bighearted God, we ask you to take these gifts, bless them, and use them to calm storms and create in our communities new, imaginative, and life-giving streams. Amen.

BENEDICTION:

We are the waters in which God swims!

Through the currents, crashing waves, and depths of the unknown, a Holy Presence remains.

May God continue charting new courses and ways of being in the world that unites creation in a collective call of "Peace! Be still!". Amen.

PRAYER LIST: We pray for the health and well-being of all affected by the pandemic and we especially pray for:

Urban Baum, Donna Isselhard, Nelson Libell, Joe Knapp, Jim Garrett, Ronald Bopp (husband of Pastor's friend), Agnes Doctolero, Julie Walker, Cathy Ganschinietz, Dave Seneczyn.

