

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 2026

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**IF YOU CANNOT FEED A
HUNDRED PEOPLE, THEN
FEED JUST ONE.**

– MOTHER TERESA

St. John United Church of Christ

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Rev. Rosemary Captain

Organist – Sharon Banjavcic

Liturgy - Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

Ushers -

(NCH) New Century Hymnal - CCLI LICENSE #11164431

*Please stand if comfortably able.

Respond with words in bold print.

Bible translation – CEB Common English Bible

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYER CONCERNS

THE BELL IS RUNG

PRELUDE: “Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”

Tom Fettke

PENNIES FOR MISSION: Our Church’s Wider Missions

***RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (inspired by Psalm 17)**

One: The Holy One wondrously demonstrates steadfast love. Seek refuge at God’s right hand.

Many: Let God’s love meet us and flow through us.

One: The Holy One attentively hears the just cause. Seek justice and righteousness for God’s name sake.

Many: Let us be steady and vigilant for the kingdom of God.

One: The Holy One faithfully vindicates our lives. Seek the path God paves for us.

Many: Let us worship, honor and praise the God who delivers, redeems, and restores. Praise the Holy One!

***INVOCATION:**

Faithful and persistent God, we turn to you with who we are, with what we have, and with all we hope. We call upon you because you care and are attentive to our cries of concern and shouts of joy. We come to pray, sing, and wrestle with you, O God. We also come to receive clarity and discernment, to receive and give testimony of your persistent love, and to receive and affirm the beauty of

your path. Hold us securely by your Spirit and never let us go. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: 321 “Break Now the Bread of Life”**

***UNISON PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE:**

Holy One, we strive to be your people and reflect your goodness in the world. Yet, the way of wickedness is not far from us, and we have not passed every test. Fortify us in your word and drench us with your compassion so that we may find the courage to repent and repair. Help us acknowledge the harm we have allowed and the pain we have caused. Empower us to make things right with our neighbors and with ourselves. Let your grace and mercy liberate us to be agents of reconciliation and restoration in our families, communities, and world. Amen.

***WORDS OF GRACE:**

Blessed of God, receive God’s transformative and liberating grace. Be made new in Christ, and make a new way in mending broken relationships and forging new ones. Let the love of God be your guide and assurance that the One who is gracious and merciful, is good to all, and abundant in compassion has planted those seeds in you, upholds all who fall and remains near to you.

***GLORIA:**

**Glory to the Creator, and the Christ and the Spirit so near. As it was from the start so it shall be forever, One God always here. (repeat twice)
(end) One God always here. One God always here.**

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

OLD TESTAMENT: Genesis 32:22-31 “The Message”

²²⁻²³ But during the night he got up and took his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He got them safely across the brook along with all his possessions.

²⁴⁻²⁵ But Jacob stayed behind by himself, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he couldn’t get the best of Jacob as they wrestled, he deliberately threw Jacob’s hip out of joint.

²⁶ The man said, “Let me go; it’s daybreak.”

Jacob said, “I’m not letting you go ’til you bless me.”

²⁷ The man said, “What’s your name?”

He answered, “Jacob.”

²⁸ The man said, “But no longer. Your name is no longer Jacob. From now on it’s Israel (God-Wrestler); you’ve wrestled with God and you’ve come through.”

²⁹ Jacob asked, “And what’s your name?”

The man said, “Why do you want to know my name?” And then, right then and there, he blessed him.

³⁰ Jacob named the place Peniel (God's Face) because, he said, "I saw God face-to-face and lived to tell the story!"

³¹⁻³² The sun came up as he left Peniel, limping because of his hip. (This is why Israelites to this day don't eat the hip muscle; because Jacob's hip was thrown out of joint.)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 17:1-7, 15 Page 629

EPISTLE LESSON: Romans 9:1-5

The tragedy of Israel's unbelief

9 I'm speaking the truth in Christ—I'm not lying, as my conscience assures me with the Holy Spirit: ² I have great sadness and constant pain in my heart. ³ I wish I could be cursed, cut off from Christ if it helped my brothers and sisters, who are my flesh-and-blood relatives. ⁴ They are Israelites. The adoption as God's children, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the worship, and the promises belong to them. ⁵ The Jewish ancestors are theirs, and the Christ descended from those ancestors. He is the one who rules over all things, who is God, and who is blessed forever. Amen.

***GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 14:13-21**

Feeding the five thousand

¹³ When Jesus heard about John, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. When the crowds learned this, they followed him on foot from the cities. ¹⁴ When Jesus arrived and saw a large crowd, he had compassion

for them and healed those who were sick. ¹⁵ That evening his disciples came and said to him, "This is an isolated place and it's getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

¹⁶ But Jesus said to them, "There's no need to send them away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷ They replied, "We have nothing here except five loaves of bread and two fish."

¹⁸ He said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹ He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves of bread and the two fish, looked up to heaven, blessed them and broke the loaves apart and gave them to his disciples. Then the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰ Everyone ate until they were full, and they filled twelve baskets with the leftovers. ²¹ About five thousand men plus women and children had eaten.

MESSAGE:

Fortunately, the people who passed along their memories of Jesus were better at storytelling than they were at counting. It sounds like someone wasn't trying hard when they included this line: "Those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children". So let's rename this story to "The Feeding of Many More than 5000."

Matthew's account goes beyond preserving details of the event. This passage tells us a good deal about Jesus, the priorities of his ministry, his reputation and appeal, his connections to John the Baptizer, and the sociopolitical climate of his time and place. This passage tells us, beyond simply marveling over a miracle of abundant sustenance, that we can get a much fuller, and better sense of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Matthew points out that, fulfilling his commission to promote obedience to God requires us to make mercy, healing, empowering, and feeding as central to our efforts as they were to Jesus's.

When Jesus learns of the execution of his beloved John, he launches his public ministry. Jesus is no longer in the background as a colleague of John's. Now Jesus is the number one enemy of Herod Antipas and High Priests, Pharisees, and anyone else who feels threatened by the message Jesus was openly bringing.

Now it is time for Jesus to lay low for a while, or at least to tend to his own spirit in solitude. After all, he is in mourning for his friend so he feels the need to go somewhere alone to talk to his Father, the only one who can understand his situation.

Perhaps Jesus needed a time to "getaway" from it all. I think of mothers with many noisy, needy children who are waiting for their spouses to come home so they can flee to their bubble bath and lock the bathroom door for

just 20 or 30 minutes. Unfortunately, whatever Jesus had planned, the plan failed. Crowds pursued him.

Maybe some who followed Jesus meant to protect him from the authorities by their presence. Others, it appears, followed Jesus to be healed of a range of sicknesses. The sheer volume of human need always outweighed other concerns that Jesus might have had. Compassion for others was Jesus' number one priority. Not only did Jesus heal the sick and bring love to all in the crowd, he fed them. Actually, he told the disciples to feed them. You might say Jesus called the church to action.

Things haven't changed much in all these years. There are always people in need. We see the needs and pray to have compassion as Jesus had. A church is not a place to hide from the outside world. We come here to learn how we can best help all those crowds of needy people and then we pray for strength from the Holy Spirit to take action. As Mother Teresa says, "if you can not feed a hundred, or 5000, feed one." Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Come Share the Lord" Video

PASTORAL PRAYER:

OUR FATHER'S PRAYER:

PRAYER RESPONSE:

**Remember me, Remember me,
O Jesus, remember me.**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY:

OFFERTORY: “Fill My Cup” Richard Blanchard

***DOXOLOGY:**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above you heavenly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

***UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING:**

Creator, thank you for the opportunity to share in your abundant and renewing work. Use these gifts for the kingdom. Sow wisdom and discernment as we support the ministry of this church in your name. Amen.

***HOLY COMMUNION: Written by Phiwa Langeni**

Invitation:

Whether there are 13 people gathered on one side of one long table,

Or 56 grouped around tables in the fellowship room,

The invitation remains.

We are called and welcomed to satisfy our hunger.

Whether there are 5,000 people on a hillside eating from their laps,

Or 1 on a couch in the living room eating from a TV table,

The invitation remains:

We are called and welcomed to satisfy our thirst.

Whether there are 20 people bumping elbows in a dining hall,

Or 6 squatting hip-to-hip around a shared bowl,

The invitation remains:

We are called and welcomed to satisfy our need for the Bread.

Whether we find ourselves at literal tables of various shapes,

Or at some of the many other ways we gather to eat,

The invitation remains:

We are called and welcomed to satisfy our need for the Cup.

Remembrance:

We are invited, once again, to come feast at this sacred table. And as we do, we remember that final gathering at that familiar table with Jesus and his friends.

That night started out like many others before as they shared stories along with the bread and cup, filling their spirits and bodies with a communal meal. But this night was different. Aware of the betrayal that would lead to his death, Jesus drew meaning from their meal-sharing so that they – and we! – would always remember, even after he was gone.

He took that basic bread, blessed and broke it, saying, "This is my body, shared with you. Every time you do this, remember."

And after they supped, Jesus blessed and poured that common cup, saying, "This is the cup of the new covenant, poured for you. Every time you do this remember."

In this very hour, we remember: Jesus invites everyone, table or not.

In this very hour, we remember: the Church has bread, table or not.

In this very hour, we remember: all we need is to need the Bread and Cup, table or not.

Invocation of the Spirit:

Let us invite the Spirit to visit this meal.

Infuse yourself into each element, Holy one, so that we can encounter you wholly as one.

When we eat and drink, give us the wisdom to celebrate and the courage to embody the diverse grains and droplets that form this sacred meal.

Make us grateful for all we are about to receive and unite us in love, now and always. Amen.

Invitation: Come and eat. Table or not, all things have been made ready.

Sharing the elements:

Let us pray.

Thank you, Maker and Breaker of Tables, for inviting me – and us all! – to partake in this sacred meal. Even as we have gotten our fill today, keep our hungers unsatisfied and our thirsts unquenched so that we might do and be the Church, always in remembrance of you. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN: "Standing on the Promises of God"**

1. Standing on the promises of Christ my King!

Thro' eternal ages let God's praises ring!

"Glory in the highest" I will shout and sing,

Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain **Standing, standing,**

Standing on the promises of God, my savior.

Standing, standing,

I'm standing on the promises of God.

2. Standing on the promises that can-not fail,

When the howling storms of doubt and fear assail,

By the living Word of God I shall prevail,

Standing on the promises of God.

Refrain

**3. Standing on the promises of Christ, the Lord,
Bound to him eternally by Love's strong cord,
Overcoming daily with the Spirit's sword,
Standing on the promises of God.**

Refrain

**4. Standing on the promises, I can-not fall,
List'ning every moment to the Spirit's call,
Resting in my Savior as my All in All,
Standing on the promises of God.**

Refrain

***BENEDICTION:**

Hold fast to the persistent, abiding, and enduring love of
God May it surround and fill you
With hope, courage, compassion, and strength
To bless the world with the blessings you receive
As a tangible testimony and demonstration
That Love prevails.

BENEDICTION RESPONSE: 571

**O God of Love, O God of Peace
Make wars throughout the world to cease.
The wrath of human wrong restrain;
Give peace, O God, give peace again!**

**THE BELL IS RUNG: POSTLUDE: "All Hail the Power of
Jesus' Name" Benton Price**

PRAYER LIST: Becky Ballard, Russ Hartmann, Marilyn
Paul, Mary Lou and Urban Baum, Pam and Syd Safriet,
Yvonne Weber, Jackie Canterbury, Amber Forrester,
Wayne Huss, our Beloved Country.