The United Church of Christ of Robesonia

301 West Penn Avenue, Robesonia, PA 19551

610-621-5770 -- office@sprucc.org -- www.sprucc.org

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



Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.

- C.S. Lewis

Welcome to our Worship Service In-Person & Streaming Online

+ + +

Sunday, October 1, 2023 World Communion Sunday 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Welcome

May God's loving presence be very real to you, and may you receive strength and guidance today That will enable you to handle life's challenges.



Children's Bulletins

Crayons and activity bulletins are available in the narthex.

The activities match today's Bible readings and are designed for 3-6 & 7-12 year olds.

Biblias en Español

Biblias Bilingües en Español y Inglés están disponible en el vestíbulo narthex en la mesa de visitantes azul. (Bilingual Bibles in Spanish & English are available in the narthex hallway on the blue visitors' table).

Nursery

Persons of all ages (including children) are welcome to participate in the entire worship service. For an additional option, we have a supervised nursery for 0-8 year olds, located on the first floor. Please see Nursery Coordinators, Laurie Ostimchuk, Beth Miller & Geri Gammel if you are in need of the nursery.

Junior Worship

On the 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month, following the mini message, the option of "Junior Worship" is offered downstairs for elementary age children to learn more about today's scripture lessons with fellow youth.

Restrooms

Restrooms are located both on the first and second floors to the left of the elevator.

Changing Tables

All four of our restrooms have changing tables. Each restroom has two "child care protection seats" to keep toddlers safe and secure while their parents use the restroom.

Water Fountains

Water fountains are located on both the first and second floors to the left of the elevator.

Sunday School & Adult Faith Formation Classes

Classes for all ages are held at 9:00am.

Sunday Worship

Sunday Worship is held at 10:15am.

Youth Group

Our Youth Group, for those in grades 5-12 (or ages 12-20 years old), meets on the 2nd and Last Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:00pm. Members and visitors alike are welcome.

Young Children & Family Ministries

This ministry's focus is on children younger than youth group and their families, and most of the monthly activities are welcoming of children of all ages. Members and visitors alike are welcome.

Prayer and Care

If you would like to add yourself or someone else to the prayer list, or request a pastoral call, please call or email the church office. You are welcome to take home with you a copy of *Our Daily Bread* daily devotional booklet, located on a table in the narthex hallway.

Looking for a Church to Call Home

If you are looking for a new church family home, we would be happy for you to consider United Church of Christ of Robesonia. For more information about our church, we invite you to talk with our pastors, an usher, a greeter, or any member of our church.

More Information...

www.sprucc.org

Additional literature about our missions, ministries, and fellowship opportunities is located on the *Blue Visitor Table* in the narthex hallway, or contact us using the contact information on the front page of this bulletin.

Please let us know if we can be in prayer with you or if there is any way in which we can help make your worship experience more meaningful.

{Symbols used in this bulletin: *= if able please stand; ♪# = Red Hymnal Page; ♬# = Blue Hymnal Page}

Virtual Worship Service

Online: <u>Live Stream</u> at <u>spruce.org</u> - Live or Watch & Listen Later on <u>Our YouTube Channel</u>

Facebook Live at https://www.facebook.com/www.spruce.org/ - Live or Watch & Listen Later

Phone Stream at 1-888-649-5770 - Live or Listen Later

If you have any access problems, please let us know at 610-621-5770 or Office@sprucc.org



Free WiFi

ORDER FOR WORSHIP We Gather

We are coming together as a community of faith to worship our God, and provide for one another our love, support, and care.

A TIME OF GATHERING

RINGING OF THE BELL

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

{If you have not already done so, please sign and pass the pew welcome pad to the person next to you.}

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP [®] (Unison)

O God, we marvel at the thought that you care about us. We are amazed that the Creator of the universe would take on human flesh to draw near to us in ways we could begin to understand. As Jesus emptied himself to serve, modeling your love even in the face of death, we seek in these moments to lay aside self-interest that we might take direction from you. Help us to humble ourselves in order to obey you, to listen in order to hear, to care in order to serve. Lead us day and night through the dangers of the wilderness of our times. Lead us in these moments to honest and fervent worship. Amen.

PIANO PRELUDE

"His Eye is on the Sparrow"

arranged for piano by Cindy Berry

{Those who are able, please rise}

*Processional Hymn

"O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

▶ Red #181
Public Domain

*Invocation

Leader: We worship in the name of God the Father, and of God the Son, and of God

the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

*CALL TO WORSHIP ²

Leader: Come, let us remember God's presence with us.

Let us give ear to all that God would teach us.

People: We want to see God's larger picture.

We are here to broaden the scope of our concern.

Leader: In the wilderness of Sinai, God provided water.

Through the sea, God provided safe passage.

People: Yet the Israelites questioned God's presence.

We too come to seek assurance amid our own doubts.

We Repent

This is a time to confess our wrongdoings and neglects, ask for God's mercy, admit our need for God's forgiving grace, hear the assurance of our forgiveness, and then give God our thanks and praise.

*Call to Confession [®] (Leader)

Like the chief priests and scribes of Jesus' day, we are tempted to confuse our ways for God's way. We trust our own authority and defend the way we live as if we have earned all that we claim as our own. We see the sins of others more readily than we see our own. We too often make decisions based on our own fears and anxieties, rather than discerning the leading and will of the Holy Spirit. We need to pray and confess our sins to God.

*Confession of Sin [®] (Unison)

Holy God, we fear to approach you with our confession for you may require changes in us that are costly. You ask us to have the mind of Christ, a mind free of pretense and self-interest. You challenge us to lay aside our advantages to go where you send us. We fear loss of security if we are obedient. It is hard to see ourselves as exploiters when we pursue advantages for our families. It is difficult to consider the needs of others when we feel like victims. Even in the decisions we make for matters concerning this your church O Lord, we sometimes choose based on our human-made priorities more than the priorities of Christ and discerning your holy will. We confess our need for you and our desire to find your purpose for us. Lead us to follow the discernment of your gracious will more than our own personal or collective thoughts, fears, or desires. Amen.

*SILENT PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

{A time to silently offer our personal prayers of confession}

***SUNG PRAYER FOR MERCY**

"Search Me O God" Stanzas 1 & 3 W&R #385 Orr, Hopk ins Public Domain

Search me, O God, and know my heart today; try me, O Savior, know my thoughts, I pray. See if there be some wicked way in me; cleanse me from every sin and set me free.

Lord, take my life and make it wholly thine; fill my poor heart with thy great love divine. Take all my will, my passion, self, and pride; I now surrender, Lord - in me abide.

*Assurance of Pardon ² (Leader)

God accepts us in the midst of our struggles. There is encouragement in Christ, there is consolation from love, there is compassion, sympathy, and the opportunity to share in the Spirit. God blesses us as we gather in community, calling us to find our common mind in Christ Jesus. May we not only agree to do the work God places before us as a ministry of love, but let us do all we can to share our faith with a faithfulness stripped of pretense and conceit. May our lives praise God. **Amen.**

*CALL TO PRAISE

Leader: O Lord, open our lips

People: And our mouths shall show forth your praise.

*Sung Praise to God who Reigns Above"

Stanza 1

☐ Blue #97 Johann J. Schutz One License #A-728042

Sing praise to God who reigns above, The God of all creation, The God of pow'r, the God of love, The God of our salvation. With healing balm my soul He fills, And every faithless murmur stills: To God all praise and glory!

{please be seated}

We Hear the Word of God

We seek to learn more about God's love and grace, and how we are to live our lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Bible is our primary text on faith, which we consider to be scripture - sacred writings.

We believe the Bible to be the "inspired word of God."

Gospel (which means "Good News") refers to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which are Christians' most central books of the Bible.

PROCLAMATION OF SCRIPTURE

Old Testament Lesson: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32
New Testament Lesson: Philippians 2:1-13

Leader: This is the word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Gospel (Good News): Matthew 21:23-32

Leader: This is the gospel of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

HYMN "In Christ There is No East or West"

▶ Red #406
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MINI-MESSAGE

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

SERMON

We Respond with Thanks

We have heard God's call and have come and worshiped,
we have confessed our sins and been assured of our forgiveness, we have learned more
about God's grace and God's will. We now respond by
re-affirming our faith in God,
praying with and for one another, trusting in God's providence in our world, and giving of
ourselves for the sake of the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ.

WITNESSING/TESTIMONY

{Ushers, please assemble at rear of Sanctuary}

OFFERTORY INVITATION 20

Leader: Let us behold the wonders of creation. Let us marvel at the infinite artistry of

nature.

People: Let our sense take it all in: each tree, each flower, each blade of grass.

Leader: All around us are gifts that have been bestowed upon us by God. **People: Today, we renew our spirits and fill our hearts with gratitude.**

Leader: As Christ gave up selfish ambition and conceit for human beings like us,

People: may we offer our best for sisters and brothers who need the message of

the Good News of Jesus Christ

RETURNING GOD'S TITHES AND PRESENTING OUR OFFERINGS

Online Giving

{Today, we will be passing the offering plate in person. You may also offer your tithe and offering to God through our secure <u>Online Giving</u> option on our website at **sprucc.org** (<u>Click Here</u>), or you may mail your offering to United Church of Christ of Robesonia; 301 West Penn Ave; Robesonia, PA 19551}.

CHORAL OFFERTORY "Break the Bread" by Natalie Sleeth

{Those who are able, please rise}

*Offertory Response We Praise Thee, O God" Red #19
Stanza 1 Julia Cory

Julia Cory One License #A-728042

We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator, In grateful devotion our tribute we bring. We lay it before Thee, we kneel and adore Thee, We bless Thy holy Name, glad praises we sing.

*Offertory Prayer ** (Leader)

Dear God, Each day we behold the beauty and goodness of all that you have created. Each day we breathe in your air, drink your water, and enjoyr fields of harvest. We rejoice and give thanks for the gifts of your creation!

O God, trusting you, we empty our pockets, wallets, purses, and checkbooks. We empty our selfish ambitions, believing that the common good is of greater concern. We give because you have richly blessed us. We present ourselves in your service because you have gifted us in so many ways. We reach out helping hands because we care about all those you have called us to love. May every tongue confessing Christ as Savior share in that mind which so powerfully demonstrates your love. **Amen.**

Sacrament of Holy Communion (1)®

The Sacrament of Holy Communion is the central act of Christian worship, bringing us more fully together with one another and the Triune God, through the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-26, Luke 22:14-23, John 13:21-30)

*INVITATION

Leader:

Dearly beloved in the Lord: Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Communion of his Body and Blood, that it might be the abiding memorial of his atoning death; the seal of his perpetual presence in the Church through the Holy Spirit; the mystical representation of the sacrifice of himself on the cross; the pledge of his undying love for his people; and the bond of his living union and fellowship with them to the end of time.

ALL: The celebration of the Lord's Supper has ever been regarded by the Church as the innermost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship. What we do here is not merely with signs, but with the realities these signs represent. We seek to approach the Lord's Table rightly, striving to be devout and repentant, with a believing mind.

Leader: We cordially invite to partake of this Sacrament all who are truly grieved and penitent for their sins, who look to the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation, who abide in the fellowship of his Church, and who desire to possess his Spirit and walk in his ways. To all such the compassionate Redeemer himself says: Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

*COMMUNION PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you. **People: And also with you.**Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader:

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to you, O Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Everlasting God, who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who made humankind in your own image, and whose tender mercies are over all your works.

We bless you for the beauty and bounty of the earth and for the vision of the day when sharing by all will mean scarcity for none.

We remember the covenant you made with your people Israel, and we give you thanks for all our ancestors in faith. We rejoice that you call us to reconciliation with you and all people everywhere and that you remain faithful to your covenant even when we are faithless.

We rejoice that you call the entire human family to this table of sacrifice and victory. We come in remembrance and celebration of the gift of Jesus Christ, whom you sent, in the fullness of time, to be the good news. Born of Mary, our sister in faith, Christ lived among us to reveal the mystery of your Word, to suffer and die on the cross for us, to be raised from death on the third day, and then to live in glory.

We give thanks to you, gracious God, for the presence of your Holy Spirit in the church you have gathered. With your sons and daughters of faith in all places and times, we praise you with joy and sing....

*Sanctus "Holy, Holy, Holy" Seraphic Hymn
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{Sanctus is Latin for "Holy." Seraphic Hymn refers to the song of the Seraphim Angels. Sabaoth is a Hebrew name for God, referring to God as both creator and ruler of the world}.

Holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full, are full of the majesty of thy glory, Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

{Please be seated}

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Leader:

Lord, we remember that on the night of betrayal and desertion, and on the eve of death, Jesus gathered the disciples for the feast of Passover. Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to you, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying: "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

Leader: Therefore we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

ALL: Christ has died,

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Ordained Minister:

Eternal God, we unite in this covenant of faith, recalling Christ's suffering and death, rejoicing in Christ's resurrection, and awaiting Christ's return in victory. We offer you our gifts of the earth and of our labor. We present to you our very lives, committed to your service in behalf of all people.

Consecrate, therefore, by your Holy Spirit, these gifts of bread and grape juice, the fruit of the vine, both here at this table in this sanctuary and in the homes of those who are gathered as the church in Christ's name. Even though separated by physical distance, we are one in your Spirit, and bless us that as we receive them, we may offer you our faith and praise, we may be united in communion with Christ, with one another, and with Christians throughout the world, especially on this World Communion Sunday, even though from whom we are physically distant, through you we are united as one, and we may continue faithful in all things.

ALL: Be present with us as we share this meal, and throughout all our lives, that we may know you as the Holy One, who with Christ and the Holy Spirit, lives for ever. Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND RAISING CUP

LORD'S PRAYER (Unison)

Our Father, 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.

LAMB OF GOD

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: have mercy on us.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: have mercy on us.

Leader: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:

People: grant us peace.

CALL TO THE SUPPER

Leader: The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come, for all things are ready.

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

(This morning we will be partaking of communion in the pews.

The Elders will first distribute the bread,
Gluten free bread is in the center,
and regular bread is in the outer ring.
The Pastor will then instruct the congregation
to eat the bread at the same time.

The Elders will distribute the wine and grape juice.
The wine is red in the outer rings, and
the grape juice is white in the inner ring.
The Pastor will then instruct the congregation
to drink of the cup at the same time.}

{We invite <u>all</u> baptized Christians who profess a belief in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour to participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion. You do not need to be a member of this congregation

or of the UCC to participate in Communion.}

Youth & Children:

Children of Members who have not yet professed their Christian faith through the Rite of Confirmation are to participate in communion and refresher classes prior to communing, and follow the "Children & Communion Guide."

Children of Visitors - if you commune at your home church, you are welcome to commune here.

{Those who are able, please rise}

*PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: Bountiful God, we give you thanks that you have refreshed us at your table by

granting us the presence of Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing

in the power of the Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

We Are Sent Out

In response to God's love and grace, we go out into the world to share God's Good News through our words and actions.

*Commission ²

Leader: Go forth to serve in the spirit of Christ.

Dare to question false values that hold us captive.

People: We will seek the mind of Christ in all things.

We count it a privilege to serve in Christ's name.

Leader: Remember always that God is at work in you.

With God's help, amazing good can be accomplished.

People: May we do what we have so boldly declared.

May we follow and serve in joyous obedience.

ALL: Amen.

*BENEDICTION

*THREE FOLD SUNG AMEN

▶ Red #558
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*SENDING HYMN

"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

▶Red #184

One License #A-728042

{Acolyte carries the light back into the world, leading us, as we now go to carry God's light and love back into the world.}

Postlude

Join Us For Fellowship and Food in Miller Fellowship Hall

Free WiFi: StPaulsUCC-Guest & StPaulsUCC-5G-Guest **Password** (for both): iamheretoserve

The Flow of the Worship Service

Our worship service has an intentional order to it. The flow of worship is called the liturgical movement. The movement reminds us weekly of our journey in faith of moving from being separated from God by sin, to being restored by God's grace as disciples of Christ. It is based on the sixth chapter of the Biblical book of Isaiah.

(1) God welcomes us and invites us

(2) We respond to God's call by worshiping Him

(3) We confess our need for God's forgiveness and grace

(4) We are assured of God's forgiveness and grace

(5) We learn more about God's will through scripture, song, and sermon

(6) We grow closer to God and one another through prayer

(7) We give God thanks by offering our time, talent, and treasure

(8) We experience greater oneness with God and each another through Communion

(9) God sends us into the world to share His love and grace with others



Worship Service Resource Credits

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• United Church of Christ Neighbors in Need (NIN) 2023 Resources.

Gathered By Love by Lavon Baylor. (1994). United Church Press; Cleveland, OH.
 Occasional Services; A Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. (1982).

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@ Edmonds, Robert Lee (Editor). (2008). In Our Own Way; Living a Scouting Life Through Faith; A Handbook of Prayer and Devotion. Dallas, TX: Red Honor Press

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9 Miller, Earl D. (1994). Consecrating Stewards. Ohio Conference, United Church of Christ.

10 The Rev. Dr. Benjamin Motz

The Rev. Mary Etta Mest

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Treasurer: Terry Pastor

Financial Secretary & Assistant Secretary: Geneva Aulenbach

Consistory President: Elsa Wertz Consistory Vice President: George McLain Consistory Secretary: Geri Gammel

About Today

Church Season: Pentecost -which is the season of the church in mission. It is the time between the ascension of Christ and his second coming, which is the time we are presently living in today, and as such is the longest season of the church year. The day of Pentecost is the birthday of the Christian church.

Color of the Paraments (cloths on the altar and pulpit):

Green - symbolizing the life God brings, especially through our mission work.

The suggested scripture lessons are from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which selects passages throughout the Bible over a three year cycle. The RCL is the most common lectionary used by Christian churches. We are in **Year A**, which emphasizes the Gospel of Matthew.

The Bible is in two sections: Old Testament - OT (scripture prior to Christ's birth), located in the first 2/3 of the Bible; and New Testament - NT (about Christ & early church).

This Sunday, October 1, 2023, Lectionary Reading for 18th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 17:1-7 *and* Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16 *or* Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32 *and* Psalm 25:1-9; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32

Ezekiel

The book of Ezekiel (OT), is attributed to the priest and prophet Ezekiel, who was born of the priestly family of Zadokite, married, then widowed, and prophesied from 593 to 571 B.C. Ezekiel proclaimed that the Israelites were defeated and exiled by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B.C. as a just punishment from God for their idolatrous behavior (i.e. not putting God first in their lives); they need to repent (change direction heart and mind towards God), for only God can breathe life back into their dry bones. A prophet is one who is divinely appointed by God to lead and instruct.

The Letter of Paul to the Philippians

This epistle (letter) (NT) was written by the Apostle Paul from prison in the 60s A.D. Paul and Timothy are sending this letter to the church in Philippi, thanking and rejoicing with them for their steadfast faithfulness, prayers, and support, cautioning them of missionaries who focus on physical wants and needs, and encouraging them to stay true and united to his and Timothy's teachings and example. Paul was a Christian, Jew, Pharisee, Roman citizen, and church leader, who had a direct encounter with Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus after Jesus' ascension into heaven. Paul wrote more of the NT than any other person.

The Gospel According to Matthew

Matthew's Gospel was written around 80-90 A.D. in Antioch, Syria by a Greek-speaking Jewish Christian. The first writing was probably by a Christian scribe who wrote in the name of Matthew. Matthew was a disciple who knew Jesus personally.

Next Sunday, October 8, 2023, Lectionary Reading for 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20 and Psalm 19 or Isaiah 5:1-7 and Psalm 80:7-15; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46





