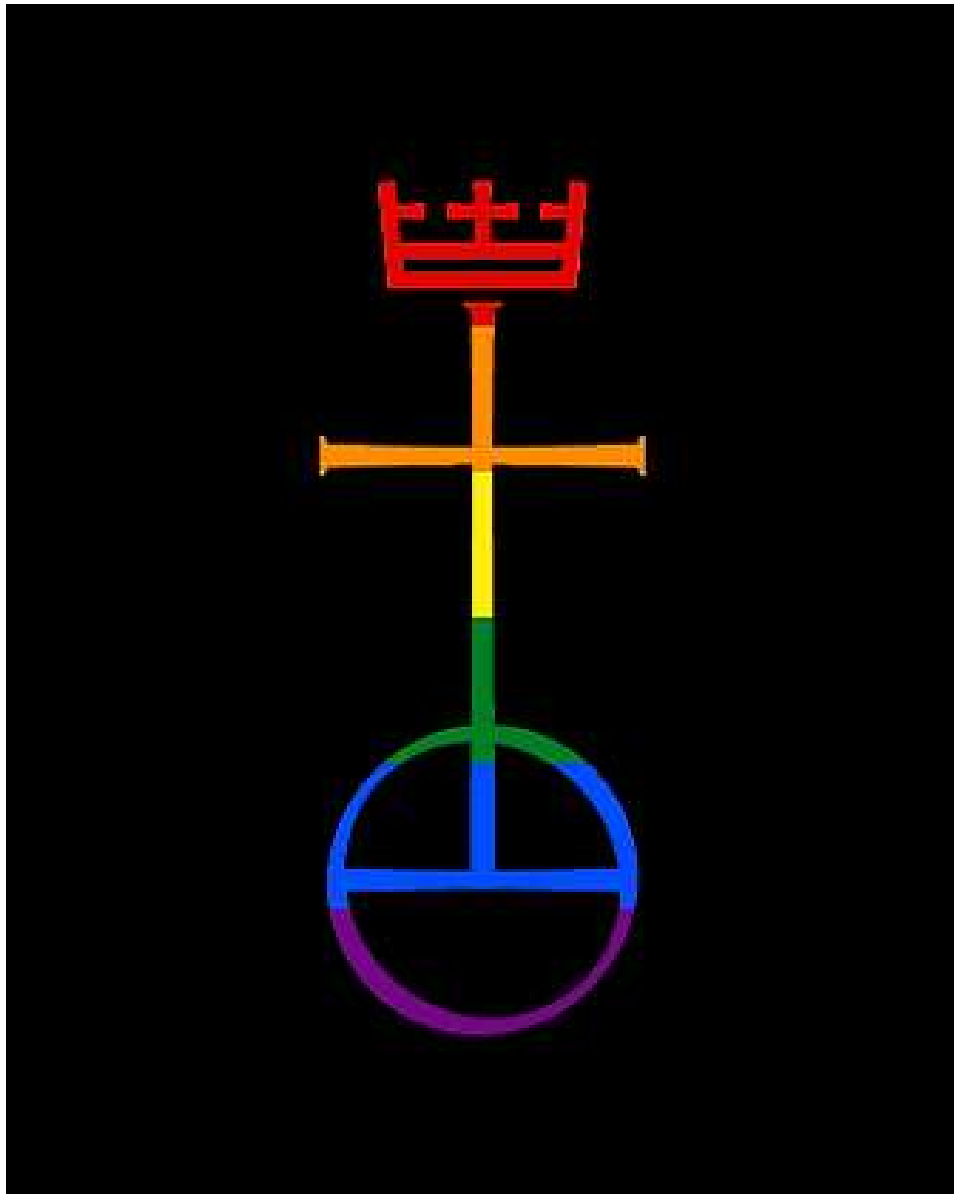


ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

May 29, 2022

Seventh Sunday of Easter

A Service of the Word



“That they may all be one” (John 17:21)

The symbol of the United Church of Christ in rainbow colors

“The symbol...comprises a crown, cross and orb enclosed within a double oval bearing the name of the church and the prayer of Jesus, “That they may all be one” (John 17:21). It is based on an ancient Christian symbol. The crown symbolizes the sovereignty of Christ.

The cross recalls the suffering of Christ, his arms outstretched, for the salvation of humanity.

The orb, divided into three parts, reminds us of Jesus’ command to be his witness to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).”

- Millis Church of Christ Congregational, Millis, MA. <https://www.millisucc.org>



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

a just world for all

May 29, 2022
Seventh Sunday of Easter
A Service of the Word

*“Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls
as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”*
The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

**please stand as you are able*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE – *Betty Funk*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We have been invited to know God
Many: Let us enter the knowledge of God

One: We have been invited to bear God’s justice
Many: Let us enter the justice of God

One: We have been invited to enter God’s truth
Many: Let us enter the truth of God

One: We have been invited to enter God’s unity
Many: Let us enter the unity of God

*GATHERING PRAYER

Holy Healing One, Righteous Restorer—
We come as standard-bearers of your love,
offering our disconnected lives
in return for your unity.
May we know you in this space,
not as lone individuals
but as faithful fragments
seeking to be made whole again.
Amen.

LITANY – A VOICE IS HEARD IN RAMAH

One: A voice is heard in Ramah,

Mann: And in Columbine, and Aurora, and Virginia Tech.

One: A voice is heard in Ramah,

Many: And in Las Vegas, and Orlando, and Fort Hood.

One: A voice is heard in Ramah,

Many: And in Sandy Hook, and Parkland, and Tucson.

ONE: A voice is heard in Ramah,

MANY: And in Chardon, and Washington D.C., and Sutherland Springs.

One: A voice is heard in Ramah,

Many: And in Boulder, and Pittsburgh, and Kansas City.

One: A voice is heard in Ramah

Many: And in Buffalo, and Laguna Woods, and Uvalde.

One: There is lamentation and bitter weeping.

Many: Parents weep for their children, families weep for their loved ones.

One: Law enforcement and medical professionals weep in their helplessness.

They refuse to be comforted,

Many: Because the children are no more.

- *Rev. R. Brooke Baker - adapted from Jeremiah 31:15*

REMEMBER THEIR NAMES

- Names of 19 children and 2 teachers killed in mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas
- Names of 10 adults killed in racist mass shooting in Buffalo, New York

*HYMN – O God, Our Words Cannot Express

(Sung to the Tune of NCH 25 - "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past")

O God, Our Words Cannot Express

Tune: Attributed to William Croft, 1708 ("Our God, Our Help in Ages Past")

ST. ANNE 8.6.8.6

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Copied from *Songs of Grace: New Hymns for God and Neighbor* by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Upper Room Books, 2009).

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1 O God, our words cannot express

The pain we feel this day.

Enraged, uncertain, we confess

Our need to bow and pray.

2 We grieve for all who lost their lives...

And for each injured one.

**We pray for children, husbands, wives
Whose grief has just begun.**

**3 O Lord, we're called to offer prayer
For all our leaders, too.
May they, amid such great despair,
Be wise in all they do.**

**4 We trust your mercy and your grace;
In you we will not fear!
May peace and justice now embrace!
Be with your people here!**

A READING OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 16:16-34

After Lydia's welcome and conversion in verses 11-15, Paul, Silas, and the author of Luke-Acts (and perhaps others) were on their way to "the place for prayer." It is not clear where this is—perhaps the same place where they met Lydia by the riverbank. While on their way, they met an enslaved young woman, who was being forced to tell fortunes to make a prophet for those who controlled her, because she was possessed by a spirit. She took notice of Paul and proclaimed that he and his companions were servants of the Most High God with a message of God's salvation. Paul was annoyed by her shouting and rebuked the spirit within her—it left her at that moment. The people enslaving and controlling the woman had Paul and Silas thrown into prison because of the disturbance they had caused. Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into the innermost cell of the prison, their feet chained up. However, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns, and around midnight an earthquake occurred, shaking the foundation of the prison and all the gates opened and chains came loose. The jailer, upon awakening, assumed everyone had escaped and was going to kill himself, but Paul stopped him, because no one had left. The jailer believed that God had done this, and asked Paul and Silas what he must do to be saved. The jailer and his household were then all baptized. They took care of Paul and Silas and fed them, for everyone had come to believe in God.

16 16 Once when we were going to prayer, we met an enslaved young woman who was possessed with a spirit of divination and brought those who enslaved her a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17 She began to follow Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These are faithful followers of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation!" 18 She did this for many days.

Finally one day Paul lost his temper, and turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to leave this woman!" It left her that moment.

19 But when those who enslaved her saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities in the public square. 20 They brought them to the chief magistrates and said, "These people are Jews and are disturbing the peace 21 by advocating practices which are unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack on them, and the magistrates stripped them and ordered them to be flogged. 23 They were whipped many times and thrown into prison, and the jailer was told to keep a close watch on them. 24 So, following these instructions, the warden threw them into the innermost cell of the prison and chained their feet to a stake.

25 About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God as the other prisoners listened. 26 Suddenly a severe earthquake shook the place, rocking the prison to its foundation. Immediately all the doors flew open, and everyone's chains were pulled loose. 27 When the jailer woke up and found the doors wide open, he drew a sword and was about to commit suicide, presuming that the prisoners had escaped.

28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We're all still here."

29 The jailer called for a light, then rushed in and fell trembling at the feet of Paul and Silas, and, 30 after a brief interval, led them out and asked them, "What must I do to be saved?"

31 They answered, "Believe in Jesus the Savior, and you will be saved—you and everyone in your household."

32 They proceeded to preach the word of God to the jailer and his whole household. 33 At that late hour of the night he took them in and bathed their wounds; then he and the whole household were baptized. 34 He led them up into his house, spread a table before them, and the whole family joyfully celebrated their newfound faith in God.

A READING FROM THE PSALMS: Psalm 97 (Responsively)

Psalm 97 is a song of praise to God as the ruler of all, the one of power and might. Similar to descriptions of other gods in ancient times, God's power is witnessed in the might of thunder, lightning, and fire—symbols of judgment. However, those who worship images are put to shame, for God is not an idol, God is the One God above all other gods. God delivers those who are faithful from those who are wicked, and those who are righteous worship God.

97 1 God reigns!

Let the earth rejoice;

let the many coastlands be glad!

**2 Clouds and thick darkness surround you, God;
righteousness and justice
are the foundation of your judgment seat.**

3 Fire goes before you

and destroys your enemies on every side.

**4 Your lightning bolts light up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.**

5 The mountains melt like wax at your sight,
at the sight of the God of all the earth.

**6 The heavens proclaim your justice,
and all the peoples see your glory.**

7 All who worship images are put to shame,
who make their boast in worthless idols;
all gods bow down before you.

**8 Zion hears and is glad,
and the women of Judah rejoice
because of your judgments, God.**

9 For you, God, are Most High over all the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.

**10 God, you love those who hate evil;
preserve the lives of your faithful ones
and deliver them from the hands of those who are wicked.**

11 Light dawns for those who are just,
and joy for those who are upright in heart.

**12 Rejoice in God, you who are just,
and give praise to God's holy Name!**

SECOND READING – Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21

The Epistle (Christian Letter) readings in Easter have followed Revelation, and conclude with these verses in Revelation 22. The final vision is the completion of everything. The Spirit and the Betrothed (the church) invite all to join in the vision of God, and take the water of life for all who are thirsty. The beginning and the end, the bright morning star—Jesus invites us into this vision of eternity, and that it may come soon,

22 12 “Remember, I am coming soon!

I bring with me the reward
that will be given to all people
according to their conduct.

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega,
the First and the Last,
the Beginning and the End.

14 Happy are they who wash their robes
so as to have free access to the tree of life
and enter the city through its gates.

16 “It is I, Jesus, who has sent my angel to give you this testimony about the churches. I am the Root and Offspring of David, the Morning Star shining bright.”

17 The Spirit and the Betrothed say, “Come!”

Let the one who hears it answer, “Come!”

Let the thirsty come forward. Let all who desire it accept the gift of life-giving water.

20 The One who gives this testimony says, “Yes, I am coming soon!” Amen! Come, Jesus!

21 The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

GOSPEL READING – John 17:20-26

Jesus's final prayer with the disciples is found in these verses of John 17. Jesus prays not just for the disciples, but for all those who will believe through the words of the disciples, that all may become one. That the world may come to believe, as Jesus and God Above are one, so may we all be one. The world does not know Jesus, but will know Jesus through the disciples, and through us, by the love of God that we share with one another.

17 20 I don't pray for them alone.

I pray also for those

who will believe in me through their message,
21 that all may be one,
as you, Abba, are in me and I in you;
I pray that they may be one in us,
so that the world may believe that you sent me.
22 I have given them the glory you gave me
that they may be one, as we are one—
23 I in them, you in me—
that they may be made perfect in unity.
Then the world will know that you sent me,
and that you loved them as you loved me.
24 Abba, I ask that those you gave me
may be here with me,
so they can see this glory of mine
which is your gift to me,
because of the love you had for me
before the foundation of the world.
25 Righteous One, the world hasn't known you,
but I have;
and these people know
that you sent me.
26 To them I have revealed your Name,
and I will continue to reveal it
so that the love you have for me
may live in them,
just as I may live in them.”

CHORAL RESPONSE – He Is Lord

*Choir: Bob Bucklew, Keith Konet, & Barbara Rossington
Accompanist: Betty Funk*

REFLECTION – To Be One - The Rev. Michael Anthony Howard
Minister of Faith in Action for the Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast,
of the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ

WE RESPOND

***PRAYER OF RESPONSE**

**Almighty God,
by your Holy Spirit
you have made us one with your saints
in heaven and on earth:**

Help us to see your presence
burning in the hearts of others;
grant that we may be united
in a fellowship of love and prayer;
give us the courage to pick up our cross
and respond to the needs of the world,
give us the stamina to follow you,
to be your hands and heart in the world;
enable us to witness to your grace and mercy.

We pray all this
through the love of your Only Begotten, Jesus Christ. Amen.

***HYMN – God, Our Nation Feels the Loss**
(Sung to the Tune of NCH 441 – “Jesus, Savior Pilot Me”)

God, Our Nation Feels the Loss

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2022

Email: carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

A New Hymn (May 24) Lamenting Gun Violence

Tune: PILOT 7.7.7.7.7.

Composer: John Edgar Gould, 1871

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including for streaming online in worship services.

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**1 God, our nation feels the loss
as our children pay the cost
for the violence we accept,
for the silence we have kept.
Rachel weeps for children gone;
God of love, this can't go on!**

**2 Jesus, Lord, we hear you say,
“Don't turn little ones away!”
May we build a kinder land
where our children understand:
Every child here matters more
than the guns we clamor for.**

**3 Holy Spirit, wind and flame,
send us out in Jesus' name.
May we shout and say, “Enough!”
May we build a world of love—
till the sounds of weapons cease,
till our young can grow in peace.**

INVITATION TO SHARE OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

One: From the creation of the world, God has freely given.

We give, not as solitary givers, but in solidarity with all creation.

Many: **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

THE OFFERTORY – *Betty Funk*

***PRESENTATION OF OFFERINGS – 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. Amen.

***BLESSING OF THE GIFTS**

**May these gifts be used
to build the Beloved Community
through our unity,
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
and in the name of Jesus, our Messiah.
Amen.**

CHORAL HYMN – God Will Take Care of You (Be Not Dismayed What'er Betide)

Choir: Bob Bucklew, Keith Konet, & Barbara Rossington

Accompanist: Betty Funk

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER – using “debts” and “debtors”

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,

for ever and ever. Amen.

GOING FORTH

***PARTING HYMN – God, In Our Church's Teaching**
(Sung to the Tune of NCH 386 – “The Church’s One Foundation”)

God, In Our Church's Teaching

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2021

A Hymn Prayer in Response to Mass Killings in Buffalo

Tune: AURELIA 7.67.6.D.

Composer: Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1864

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including for streaming online in worship services.

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**1 God, in our church's teaching, may we be bold and clear;
may it become our practice to counter hate and fear.
We've said that Jesus' message is one that's filled with love,
and yet our sweeping statements are clearly not enough.**

**2 Isaiah boldly told us you hate our worship ways
when we ignore injustice and simply offer praise.
And Jesus gave a warning: When we — in sin and pride —
refuse to welcome others, we turn our Lord aside.**

**3 May these be crucial lessons we teach the old and young:
that racist ways are evil, that sexist ways are wrong.
In Sunday schools and pulpits, may this be what we speak:
God made each person precious, beloved and unique.**

**4 O God, we grieve the violence, the shootings, and the hate;
we grieve our own indifference — our speaking out too late.
God, in our church's witness, may we say loud and clear:
We welcome every neighbor. We work for justice here.**

***COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

One: May the joy of our Healer go with us

Many: May we go out in the unity of God.

One: That we may know God and make God known.

Many: Let us go forth in the love of God. Amen.

POSTLUDE – Betty Funk

* * * * *

Credits

- (1) The Call to Worship, Gathering Prayer, Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings, Blessing of the Gifts, and the Commissioning and Benediction are adapted from *Know God: Service Prayers for Easter 7C*, written by the Rev. Michael Anthony Howard, who serves as Minister of Faith in Action for the Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, of the Heartland Conference, United Church of Christ. Copyright 2022 Justice and Local Church Ministries, Faith INFO Team, United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.
- (2) Litany – *A Voice is Heard in Ramah*, was written by the Rev. R. Brooke Baker, Senior Pastor of Church of the Redeemer UCC, Westlake, OH., and posted May 25, 2022.
- (3) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Prayer*, written by Terri, and posted on *RevGalBlogPals*. <http://revgalblogpals.blogspot.ca/2008/08/take-up-your-cross.html>. Reposted January, 2017 as *Prayer: You Have Made Us One* on the blog, re:Worship. <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>.
- (4) A Prayer from the national officers of the United Church of Christ following the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas is adapted from '*End the cycle of violence, UCC officers pray after deaths in Texas school shooting*', written by UCC Leadership, and posted May 24, 2022 on the website of the United Church of Christ. ucc.org
- (5) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License #A-736636. All rights reserved.

Ministers, *All of Us*
Scott Rosenstein, *Pastor*
Betty Funk, *Pianist and Music Director*
Keith Konet, *Council President*



NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

God is Still Speaking...

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

Tithes and Offerings - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and mailed to:

Zion United Church of Christ
c/o Keith Konet
1039 Bridlewood Drive
Copley, OH 44321
Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

Easter tide –Festival Season in the liturgical calendar of Christianity, celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ – and our new resurrected life in the realm of God. It begins on Easter Sunday, which initiates Easter Week in Western Christianity, and Bright Week in Eastern Christianity. Traditionally lasting 40 days to commemorate the time the resurrected Jesus remained on earth before departing (the period between Easter Day and the Ascension), 20th century liturgical revision has led some western churches to expand Eastertide to 50 days to conclude on Pentecost.



Special Guest this Sunday, May 29, 2022

Visiting us this Sunday and bringing the message is the Rev. Michael Howard, Minister of Faith in Action, Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, United Church of Christ.

330.940.2220 x 103 | michael.mfia@livingwaterone.org

Michael has been serving as the Minister of Faith in action since March 2019. From the wooded knobs of Kentucky countryside, Michael is a teacher, community organizer, and prophetic Christian leader. He has taught and served around the world, including Peru, Brazil, India, Ethiopia, Virginia, and New Jersey. In addition to traditional pastoral ministry, Michael has coached and co-founded a number of community organizations, nonprofits, and a media design consultancy. Michael is an ordained minister in the UCC and has an MPA from Morehead State University and an MDiv from Drew Theological Seminary.

Contact Michael for:

- All things related to Community engagement, outreach/mission, prophetic action
- Help with visioning and organizing community engagement ministries
- Prophetic witness and social justice issues
- MissionInsite questions and interpretation
- Wider church connections and issues
- Advocacy and community forums
- Interfaith relationships

Please join us in giving Rev. Michael Howard a warm Zion Chapel welcome!



Pentecost painting by Jen Norton, Fine Art America. <https://fineartamerica.com>

PENTECOST – NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2022

The Christian holiday of Pentecost is celebrated on the 50th day from Easter Sunday. It commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1–31).

Pentecost is one of the Great feasts in the Eastern Orthodox Church, a Solemnity in the Roman Rite of the Catholic Church, a Festival in the Lutheran Churches and the United Church of Christ, and a Principal Feast in the Anglican Communion. Many Christian denominations provide a special liturgy for this holy celebration.

The term Pentecost comes from the Greek Πεντηκοστή (Pentēkostē) meaning "fiftieth". It refers to the Jewish harvest festival of Shavuot celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover. It is also known as the "Feast of Weeks" and the "Feast of 50 days" in rabbinic tradition.

The events of Acts Chapter 2 are set against the backdrop of the celebration of Pentecost in Jerusalem. The author begins by noting that the disciples of Jesus "were all together in one place" on the "day of Pentecost" (ἡμέρα τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς). [Acts 2:1] The verb used in Acts 2:1 to indicate the arrival of the day of Pentecost carries a connotation of fulfillment.

There is a "mighty rushing wind" (wind is a common symbol for the Holy Spirit)[24][25] and "tongues as of fire" appear.[Acts 2:3] The gathered disciples were "filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance".[Acts 2:4] Some scholars have interpreted the passage as a reference to the multitude of languages spoken by the gathered disciples, [Acts 2:6–11] while others have taken the reference to "tongues" (γλῶσσαι) to signify ecstatic speech [1 Corinthians 14]. In Christian tradition, this event represents fulfillment of the promise that Christ will baptize his followers with the Holy Spirit [Acts 1:5; John 14:16–17].

The main sign of Pentecost in the West is the color red. It symbolizes joy and the fire of the Holy Spirit. Clergy and choirs wear red vestments, and in modern times, the custom has extended to the lay people of the congregation wearing red clothing in celebration as well. Red banners are often hung from walls or ceilings to symbolize the blowing of the "mighty wind" and the free movement of the Spirit. Other congregations have incorporated the use of red balloons, signifying the "Birthday of the Church". These may be held by the congregants, decorate the sanctuary, or released all at once.



MEMORIAL DAY – MONDAY, MAY 30, 2022

On Monday May 30, Americans will observe the federal holiday of Memorial Day. It's a day to honor our military personnel, and to remember those who died while serving in the armed forces. It is observed on the last Monday of May. It was formerly observed on May 30 from 1868 to 1970.

At its best, Memorial Day is an important opportunity for memory and mourning. We dare not forget the tragic costs and consequences of war.

Some people visit cemeteries and memorials on Memorial Day to honor and mourn those who died while serving in the U.S. military. Many volunteers place an American flag on graves of military personnel in national cemeteries. Memorial Day is also considered the unofficial beginning of summer in the United States.

Many cities and people have claimed to have first celebrated the event. In 1868, General John A. Logan of the Grand Army of the Republic called for a "Decoration Day", which was widely celebrated. By 1890, every Northern state had adopted it as a holiday. The World Wars turned it into a generalized day of remembrance instead of just for the Civil War. In 1971, Congress standardized the holiday as "Memorial Day" and changed its observance to the last Monday in May.

Two other days celebrate those who have served or are serving in the U.S. military: **Armed Forces Day** (which is earlier in May), an unofficial U.S. holiday for honoring those currently serving in the armed forces, and **Veterans Day** (on November 11), which honors those who have served in the United States Armed Forces.

HELP FOR UKRAINE

Gifts made to UCC **Ukraine Emergency Appeal** will provide shelter, food, and other care to war refugees and internally displaced people.

Donate online with the link below:

<https://support.ucc.org/global-h-o-p-e/ukraine-emergency-appeal>

Or designate a check for Ukraine Relief and mail to:

United Church of Christ,
P.O. Box 71957
Cleveland, OH 44194.



Gifts made to **Sharing America's Resources Abroad (S.A.R.A)** provide food, clothing, and sanitary items for refugees fleeing to Hungary.

Donate online with the link:

https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=QC5P9F6Z9LT32

Or designate a check for **S.A.R.A. - Donations for Ukraine Emergency Fund** and mail to:

SARA
c/o Heartland Conference UCC
P.O. Box 1230
Worthington, OH 43085.

Please know that your gifts of any size make a difference in this critical time.

Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community,
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement
- Our 155th Anniversary as a community of faith of Zion Church on May 15th, 2022.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.
- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For children separated from their parents at detention camps along our southern border.
- The families of Ruth Whitfield, 86; Roberta Drury, 32; Aaron Salter, 55; Heyward Patterson, 67; Pearl Young, 77; Geraldine Talley, 62; Celestine Chaney, 65; Katherine Massey, 72; Margus Morrison, 52; and Andre Mackneil, 53 killed last week in a racist-inspired mass shooting at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York. Three injured: Zaire Goodman, 20 (treated and released from ECMC); Jennifer Warrington, 50 (treated and released from ECMC); and Christopher Braden, 55.
- The families and friends of the 19 children (3rd & 4th graders) and two teachers murdered in the massacre at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas: Alexandria Aniyah Rubio, 10; Alithia Ramirez, 10; Amerie Jo Garza, 10; Annabell Guadalupe Rodriguez, 10; Eliahana Cruz Torres, 10; Eliana "Ellie" Garcia, 9; Eva Mireles, 44 (fourth grade teacher); Irma Garcia (fourth grade teacher); Jackie Cazares, 10; Jailah Nicole Silguero, 10; Jayce Luevanos, 10; Jose Flores, 10; Layla Salazar, 10; Makenna Lee Elrod, 10; Maite Rodriguez; Miranda Mathis, 11; Nevaeh Bravo; Rojelio Torres, 10; Tess Marie Mata; Uziyah Garcia, 10; and Xavier Lopez, 10.
May God be revealed in their stories and the tears of all who mourn. May their memory be a blessing and their life in your good care last forever.
15 people, including 11 children were injured - four of those children were transferred to other hospitals in San Antonio and seven were discharged - out of the four adults who were treated, one was transferred and three were discharged.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.

- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and the United States.
- The people of Afghanistan, Venezuela, Syria, Yemen, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Kurdish people and the Christians of northern Syria - for peace, nutrition, and justice.
- The people of Tonga affected by the eruption of an undersea volcano and tsunami flooding.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive, a total of 216 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of May 27, 2022. In 2021 a total of 693 mass shooting incidents occurred across the US, in 2020 a total of 611, in 2019 a total of 417, with 337 incidents in 2018. While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit – and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States - We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.
- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the omicron variant surge: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.
- For those affected by recent wildfires around Boulder, Colorado, in California, and in the panhandle of Florida.
- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
 - Patti Augustine and family
 - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) in Alliance, Ohio
 - Betty Funk (*our Minister of Music*)
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob; friend of Elaine – health concerns*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara, and Michael Reed.
 - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet
 - Keith Konet
 - Elaine Lukacs (*fell at home and injured her knee and leg, presently at O'Neill Healthcare, Room 103, 7250 Old Oak Blvd., Middleburg Heights, Ohio 44130 – 440.863.5624*)
 - Linda and James Mortach (*Elaine Lukacs' sister & brother-in-law*) & Linda's daughter
 - Patricia Matheny (prayers also for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray)
 - Lee Matsos and family
 - Barbara Rossington (*move to a new senior housing community*)
 - Henry Senyak (*resident community leader – cancer*)
 - The family of Michael O'Brien particularly his wife, Debbie Webb (*following Michael's death last Fall. Our love and sympathy to Debbie and Michael's family*).
 - Beverly Wurm (*recovering*)
 - Kim (*friend of Bev Wurm – cancer*)

MAY 25, 2022

IS THERE NO WAY BEYOND THIS?

From Michael Howard, Minister of Faith in Action, Living Water Association, Ohio NorthEast, UCC



I love the Church. I am so proud of the work of our congregations. The span of our gifts is breathtaking. I often catch myself fantasizing about what we could do if we found a way to weave our gifts together. There are moments, however, when our unwillingness to collaborate makes the challenges of the world even more gut-wrenching. Just when the world needs the Church the most, the polarization of America's partisan politics paralyzes us.

At least 21 people were murdered by a teenager this Tuesday in Uvalde, Texas, and at least 19 were children. This was barely 10 days after a racist massacre that left 10 dead in Buffalo, New York.

Last night, I held my daughter extra close as I tried to help her fall asleep. She asked me what was wrong, and all I could say was, "I'm so proud of you. You're growing up so fast." Next week she will graduate from kindergarten, but my mind was filled with the image of the dead bodies of elementary school children.

I find myself praying Psalm 13, "How long, Oh Lord?"

When I was in school we had fire drills and tornado drills. In the early 50s, schools across the US were training students to "duck and cover" in case of an atomic attack. Today's children, beginning as early as pre-school, have active shooter or intruder drills. Our children learn to hide quietly in classroom closets and barricade doors. Their teachers seek ways to keep anxiety at bay, but that's no easy task. Research underlines what should otherwise be obvious, that active shooter drills are

associated with increased depression, anxiety, and physiological health problems. When lawmakers cannot reach resolutions regarding gun-safety policies, we place the burden of school safety on our children. Is there no way beyond this? Is it really true, that in America we value our guns more than the lives of our children?

In our grief and anguish, we bear a pain which reveals the truth of the way the world is. Time and time again, we say, "never again," and yet these shootings become more common and more expected. The number of active shooter incidents in schools continues to rise. According to the Center for Homeland Defense and Security, since 1970, when current records began, "there have been 2,052 school shooting incidents in America which have left 661 dead." The shooting in Texas was one of the deadliest shootings in U.S. history. We risk becoming numb to the senseless loss of life.

Fantasizing about what the Church can be in a moment like this feels disingenuous. Is paralysis all we have left?

Today, even with the psalms on my lips, I find it hard to pray in the name of Jesus without thinking about the bodies of our nation's crucified children.

I love the Church. I am proud of the work we continue to do.

Can we weave our gifts together in ways that bring healing in the midst of such tragedy?

Whatever our response is, we cannot become numb to it.

A PRAYER

**From the national officers of the United Church of Christ after the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas,
May 24, 2022**

In utter and irrepressible grief we offer these words, giving collective voice to the anguish we all feel.

God, hear our prayer:

For the nineteen children now dead;

For the two teachers now dead;

For the parents, family, and friends who will spend the rest of their lives aching every night from the weight of this;

For a schoolhouse rendered trauma-laden and grief-stricken in a matter of minutes, whose students will suffer PTSD in the wake of this tragedy;

For the caregivers in Uvalde now burdened with the task of managing the shared and collective grief of a traumatized community who love their children;

For those who feel the new burden of useless guilt in the aftermath of this, wondering what else they could have done to prevent this;

For the nation, so in love with our weapons that we continue to tolerate these mass shootings and the grief they inflict without ever building the collective will needed to address it fully;

For the world, suffering a massive and collective grief of its own and witnessing acts of cruelty daily too numerous to fully process.

Heal our gaping wounds.

Restore our sense of compassion.

Quiet the restlessness within us.

Settle the building righteous anger.

Quicken the desire for peace.

Remove the chasm that sees race and religion and political persuasion as the marks of a person's worth and value.

End the cycle of violence that begets more violence.

Silence the voices that broker in fear and division and create the hatred we see mounting everywhere between us.

Quiet the troubled soul thinking of grabbing the next gun and ending innocent lives.

Empower us all to act now, refusing to wait for the next horror show before we change the laws that

make guns and their discharge so accessible.

Turn anguish to action; our rage to restoration; our hatred to love; our grief to hope.

Let it never happen again. Ever. How much more can we bear, O Lord? How much more can we endure.

Be our rock of refuge.

Be our light of inspiration.

Be our beacon of hope.

Be the arms of love that hold us until the pain recedes.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Amen.

The National Officers of the United Church of Christ:

The Rev. Dr. John C. Dorhauer

General Minister and President

The Rev. Traci Blackmon

The Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson

Associate General Ministers