

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

July 23rd, 2023

8th Sunday After Pentecost

(Pentecost 8/Trinity 7/Ordinary 16-A)

A Service of the Word



Plant, Water, Harvest

by John August Swanson (1938-2021)

a spiritual and social justice artist, who lived in Los Angeles

John August Swanson Studio - <http://www.johnaugustswanson.com/>



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

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**"Life is like a field, where we must gather what we grow, weed or wheat.....
this is the law, we reap the crop we sow."**

**Patience Strong
www.idlehearts.com**

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

**please stand as you are able*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude - Keith Konet

***Call to Worship**

One: As we harvest our growing abundance in this time of mid-summer, may we relish in the fruit of our labor,

Many: As we harvest the fruitful seeds of nature and God's Garden, let us share in the bounty with our neighbors.

One: While we channel resources – water, light, fertile ground to the produce we desire in our gardens,

Many: May we also recognize that the weed, the rabbit, the caterpillar also has needs for sustenance.

One: We have enough, and an attitude of plentifulness increases through sharing.

Many: For what our land grows with our tending, is only ours for a moment in time, filling a short term and immediate need.

All: May we share the harvest by tithing back to nature, feeding the hungry among us, storing for the future without hoarding, and setting enough seed aside for the next season of planting.

***Invocation**

**God of many names,
mother of all creation, father of all that is,
womb of life, and wellspring of all that we can ever know,
we invite your presence here**

as we seek to embody your loving Spirit
and create your presence among us.
We are in need and we turn to you to be with us
as we practice creating
the kin-dom of heaven here on earth.
In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

***Hymn – We Praise You, God of All vv. 1, 2 & 4**

(sung to the tune of NCH 304 – All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name)

We Praise You, God of All

Author: Jim Burklo, 2006

Source: Musings by Jim Burklow, <https://tccpc.blogs.com/musings/>

Tune: CORONATION C.M.

Composer: Oliver Holden, 1793

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**1 We praise you, God, with rousing song,
we answer at your call.
Your Word creates the universe,
We praise you, God of all.
Your Word creates the universe,
We praise you, God of all.**

**2 Your Christ appears among us now
and gathers one and all
In one community of love,
We praise you, God of all.
In one community of love,
We praise you, God of all.**

**4 With all our breath and strength we sing
around this earthen ball.
To be at one with you again,
We praise you, God of all.
To be at one with you again,
We praise you, God of all.**

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 44:6-8

In this brief passage from the second section of the prophet Isaiah, sometimes called Second Isaiah, God declares through the prophet to the people that there is no other God. God is complete, who knows our beginnings and endings, speaking from the past of what is to come. There is no other god like God, whose presence is continually with them, and who brings the people comfort instead of fear.

44 6 This is what YHWH says—

Israel's Ruler and Redeemer, YHWH Omnipotent:
"I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God.

7 Who is like me?

Let them declare their proof
and set it out before me:
let them predict things long before they happen,
let them announce future events!

8 Have courage! Don't be afraid!

Didn't I proclaim and foretell this long ago?
You are my witnesses!
Is there any god apart from me?
Is there any other Rock?
I know of none!

Psalm Response: Psalm 86:11-17 (Responsively)

Psalm 86 is a prayer for help, and in vs. 11-17 the psalmist asks God for guidance, so they may be faithful to God's ways. They begin with gratitude for God's steadfast love and deliverance and ask for God's graciousness and mercy in the face of their enemies. The psalmist asks God for a sign of favor, but they know God is the one who brings them help and comfort.

86 11 Teach me your way, O God,
so that I may walk with you alone;
make me single-hearted in reverence for your Name.

**12 I will praise you with all my heart, God;
I will glorify your Name forever.**

13 How great is your constant love for me!
You have rescued me from the depths of Sheol.

**14 O God, the arrogant are coming against me;
a ruthless gang is trying to kill me—
they don't care that you are my Leader.**

15 But you, God, are a compassionate and merciful
God,
slow to anger, overflowing with love and fidelity.

**16 Turn to me and have mercy on me;
grant me strength, for I am faithful to you
just as my parents were.**

**17 Give me a sign of your favor,
then those who hate me will be frustrated
when they see that you, God,**

have given me comfort and help.

Second Reading: Roman 8:12-25

In these verses of Romans 8, the Apostle Paul writes of the life of the Spirit. “Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.” Paul makes it clear that neither Jew nor Greek nor anyone of any background can be kept out of God’s reign, because if the Holy Spirit is present, they are a child of God. The Jewish and Gentile Christian communities in Rome were at odds with each other after the Jewish population returned during Nero’s time, and the Gentile believers didn’t quite understand how to fit in with their Jewish neighbors. This part of the passage concludes with a message of hope, that it isn’t about what can be seen, but that God is birthing something new in creation that cannot be seen yet. The faithful wait with patience.

8 12 Therefore, we are under an obligation, my sisters and brothers—but not to the flesh or to live according to the flesh. 13 If you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if you live by the Spirit, you will put to death the evil deeds of the body and you will live.

14 Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. 15 For the Spirit that God has given you does not enslave you and trap you in fear; instead, through the Spirit God has adopted you as children, and by that Spirit we cry out, “Abba!” 16 God’s Spirit joins with our spirit to declare that we are God’s children. 17 And if we are children, we are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing in Christ’s suffering and sharing in Christ’s glory.

18 Indeed, I consider the sufferings of the present to be nothing compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. 19 All creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the children of God. 20 Creation was subjected to transience and futility, not of its own accord, but because of the One who subjected it—in the hope 21 that creation itself would be freed from its slavery to corruption and would come to share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. 22 We know that from the beginning until now, all of creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth. 23 And not only creation, but all of us who possess the first fruits of the Spirit—we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

24 In hope we were saved. But hope is not hope if its object is seen; why does one hope for what one sees? 25 And hoping for what we cannot see means awaiting it with patient endurance.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43

The Gospel lesson continues with Jesus teaching in parables in these verses of Matthew 13. Moving from last week and the Parable of the Sower, this week we read the Parable of the Weeds among the Wheat. Like last week’s lesson, this is one of the few parables in which an explanation is included. Usually, Jesus did not explain the parables. In this parable, someone sowed seeds in their field, but someone else that night deliberately sowed weeds among the wheat, so that when the wheat grew, weeds grew up with the wheat. However, the weeds could not be pulled without uprooting the wheat, so the weed removal would have to wait until harvest time. In the explanation, Jesus teaches that just as weeds are gathered up to be burned in fire, this will be the end of the age. However, fire in the Bible is often purifying. Jesus explains that what will be collected are the causes of sin and all who act lawlessly. But just like the image of the threshing floor and the harvester separating the wheat from the chaff with a winnowing fork that John the Baptizer uses in Matthew 3:12, we

might see human beings as containing both wheat and weed, not one person as wheat and another person as weed. Instead, God is the one working on us to remove sin from our lives and to uproot the systems of sin in our world.

13 24 Jesus presented another parable to those gathered: “The kingdom of heaven is like a farmer who sowed good seed in a field. 25 While everyone was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and then made off. 26 When the crop began to mature and yield grain, the weeds became evident as well.

27 “The farmer’s workers came and asked, ‘Did you not sow good seed in your field? Where are the weeds coming from?’

28 “The farmer replied, ‘I see an enemy’s hand in this.’ “They in turn asked, ‘Do you want us to go out and pull them up?’

29 “ ‘No,’ replied the farmer, ‘if you pull up the weeds, you might take the wheat along with them. 30 Let them grow together until the harvest, then at harvest time I will order the harvesters first to collect the weeds and bundle them up to burn, then to gather the wheat into my barn.’ ”

36 Then Jesus left the crowd and went into the house. The disciples also came in and said, “Explain the parable about the weeds in the field.”

37 Jesus answered, “The farmer sowing the good seed is the Chosen One, 38 the field is the world, and the good seed, the citizens of the kingdom. The weeds are the followers of the Evil One, 39 and the enemy who sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the world, while the harvesters are the angels. 40 Just as weeds are collected and burned, so it will be at the end of the age. 41 The Chosen One will send the angels who will weed out of the kingdom of everything that causes sin and all who act lawlessly. 42 The angels will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 43 But those who are just will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Abba God. Let those who have ears to hear, hear this!

Choral Response – His Name is Wonderful

Music by Audrey Mieir, 1959
Choir: Keith Konet and Bob Bucklew
A capella

Reflection – “Learning to Love the In-Between and the Mystery” - Rev. Scott Rosenstein

WE RESPOND

***Prayer of Response**

**God of Wisdom and Insight,
help us to slow down
from the busy world around us.
Remind us to turn
off the notifications, silence all the alerts,**

and simply listen for You.
Listen to the wind in the leaves,
the rustle of grass, the call of birds
in the morning and evening.
Listen for the distant sounds of water,
the noises of critters underneath, the soft pants
of the deer and the creatures in the forest.

May we remember that in the busy-ness of the world
around us that humanity made with high-speed
internet and freeways and deadlines,
there is another world, the one you made, full of life.
May we catch hold of that sense of awe
and remember that we are fully embodied, living creatures
you shaped and breathed life into.
We are wondrous, full of light and love
that comes from You.

May we remember each day,
each moment, what a gift we are to
you and to one another.
We praise You,
for we are fearfully and wonderfully made.
Amen.

* Hymn – NCH 449 – Softly and Tenderly vv.1, 2 & 3

Softly and Tenderly

Author: Will L. Thompson, 1880; alt.

New Words: Jim Burklo, 2019

Source: Musings by Jim Burklow, <https://tcpc.blogs.com/musings/>

Tune: SOFTLY AND TENDERLY 11.7.11.7.with refrain

Composer: Will L. Thompson, 1880

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1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
Calling for you and for me
Walking his pathway toward joy and compassion
Calling for you and for me:

Refrain:

Come home, come home
You who are weary come home;
Earnestly, tenderly Jesus is calling,
Calling, "Dear searcher, come home."

2 Leave behind selfishness, fear, isolation
Leave behind hatred and greed -
Hear now the words of his kind invitation
Calling for you and for me:

[Refrain]

**3 Up on the mount you can hear him announcing
Mercy for you and for me,
Love without limits, forgiveness abounding,
Justice for you and for me
[Refrain]**

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

As recipients of the many ways in which God provides, let us share this generosity with others whose seeds have not yet taken root, whose plots need tending.

The Offertory - *Keith Konet*

***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**

Leader: We dedicate these resources to doing God's work among God's people.

All: May these gifts plant seeds of justice for God's children who seek it; may they remind us to love more mercifully; may all walk humbly as we learn to tread gently upon this earth. Amen.

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,
forever.
Amen.**

GOING FORTH

***Parting Hymn – Love Now Ascending vv. 1, 2, & 4**

(sung to the tune of NCH 277 – Holy, Holy, Holy)

Love Now Ascending

Author: Jim Burklo, 2006

Source: Musings by Jim Burklow, <https://tcpc.blogs.com/musings/>

Tune: NICAEA 11.12.12.10

Composer: John B. Dykes, 1861

Composer (Descant): David McK. Williams, 1948

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**1 Holy, holy, holy, love now ascending
Early in the morning our song shall rise to you.
Holy, holy, holy, joy that has no ending,
Giving, forgiving, breathing life anew.**

**2 Holy, holy, holy, love without a limit,
Care that binds creation in sacred unity.
Holy, holy, holy, birthing every minute,
Christ, Love's revealer, sets our spirits free.**

**4 Holy, holy, holy, raise your voice in singing,
Join the cosmic chorus in praise of Love divine,
Holy, holy, holy, God beyond all naming,
Echoes our song in harmony sublime.**

***Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Go forth as God's people.

All: We will greet everyone as one of the family.

One: Go forth as followers of Jesus.

**All: We will serve everyone we meet, especially those who have
been thrown aside by the world.**

One: Go forth with the gifts of the Spirit in you.

All: We will be that hope which everyone longs to see. Amen.

***Postlude - Keith Konet**

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Credits

- (1) The Call to Worship, Invocation, Invitation to Share our Tithes and Offerings, and the Blessing of the Gifts are adapted from *The Seed: Service Prayers for the Eighth Sunday after Pentecost*, was written by Dr. Sherry Warren who serves as Minister of Women's and Gender Justice for the National Ministries of the UCC. She loves to garden and grow things. Permission granted to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All publishing rights reserved.
- (2) The Prayer of Response is adapted from - *Worship Resources for July 23rd, 2023*, written by Rev. Mindi Welton Thomas, and posted July 13th on her blog , *Rev-O-lution*. <http://revo-o-lution.org/>
- (3) The Commissioning and Benediction adapted from *Alternate Liturgy with Communion from July 23rd, 2023, (Pentecost 8/Trinity 7/ Proper 11/ Ordinary 16-A)* written by Thom M. Shuman, posted July 16th, 2023, Lectionary Liturgies. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
- (4) The words/lyrics for our Hymns today are written by Jim Burklo, the Senior Associate Dean of Religious and Spiritual Life at the University of Southern California. He is an ordained United Church of Christ Pastor and is the author of 6 published books on Progressive Christianity. Burklo is an honorary advisor for ProgressiveChristianity.org and a member of the Board of Directors of ProgressiveChristiansUniting.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
Keith Konet, Council President
Beverly Wurm, Administrative Assistant



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 placed in the offering basket or 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

Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm

Beverly began a part-time position with us. She is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W. 14th)/home. The days and hours are:

New Summer Schedule:

Tuesday– 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: zionchurchtremont@gmail.com or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile).



Season after Pentecost A, Part 1 (Year A, June 4 – August 27, 2023) Embracing the Kin-dom: 2023

“As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.” (John 17:18 CEB)

The longest season of the liturgical calendar are filled with Sundays called “Ordinary Time.” It begins with Trinity Sunday and ends with the Reign of Christ. We move from concentrating on the event of Christ in the world and shift to the impact of being in Christ in the world. A life in the unity of the Trinity is one of being shaped and sent daily in the image and in the purpose of Holy Love.

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://tinyurl.com/yc6aesk4>

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://shorturl.at/efijp>

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
- 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.
- 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 Turkey and Syria: more than 50,000 people have died following two devastating earthquakes. At least 44,374 deaths have been reported in Turkey, while 5,800 951 people have died in Syria. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of loved ones, homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- The people of Quebec and Ontario Canada profoundly impacted by ongoing mass wildfires, Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- We pray as well for the people of Vermont and upstate New York affected by catastrophic flooding. Be with all who grieve and mourn the loss of homes, businesses, and infrastructure. Please help the survivors to process and move through the trauma, and to rebuild their lives and communities.
- Residents of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, the SE United State,s and Florida experiencing many days of very high temperatures and heat.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 392mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of July 19th, 2023. In 2022 a total of 648 mass shootings. In 2021 a total

of 693 mass shooting incident 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 and various variant surges: 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.
- 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 (visiting her son, Noah and his wife Kate, and her grandchildren, Max and Lucy). Patti's brother Dave is recovering from recent open-heart surgery.
 - Robert O. Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing at Mapleridge Senior Living Willoughby, OH. Prayers for his children, Bob and Jeanne, and their Father, Bob Sr.
 - Betty Funk (*our recently departed Minister of Music*) Betty passed from us on July 5th, 2023. We give thanks to God for Betty's Christian faith and evangelism, her friendship and hospitality, her music ministry as musician and choir director. We commend her spirit to God's eternal being. Our sympathy and condolences to her family and loved ones, her longtime partner, Keith Konet and her friends.
 - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob; friend of Elaine – health concerns*)
 - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, Barbara Reed, Nancy Moore's sister, has passed away.
 - Jocelyn Paulette and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui Konet - *prayers for recovery.*
 - Keith Konet and family.
 - Marcia Leslie (*neighbor and friend – health concerns*)
 - The family and loved ones of Elaine Lukacs.
 - Patricia Matheny and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*).
 - Barbara Rossington (*on Summer vacation now*). Prayers for Barb's cousin Robert for tests and procedures.
 - Henry Senyak (*resident community leader – cancer*)
 - Debbie Webb (*continued prayers*)
 - Beverly Wurm (*prayers for family*)