

ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

July 30th, 2023

9th Sunday After Pentecost

(Pentecost 9/Trinity 8/Ordinary 17-A)

A Service of the Word



The Tree from a Mustard Seed

by Anne Brink (2007)

<https://www.annecbrink.com/galleries/visiblekingdom/Mark/fullsize/WIB02001TheTreeFromaMustardSeedfs.jpg>



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

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A Service of the Word

“ It is by serving God and others that we store up heavenly treasures. Everyone gains; no one loses.”
-Randy Alcorn

WE GATHER IN COMMUNITY

**please stand as you are able*

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude - Keith Konet

***Call to Worship**

One: O Creator of the Cosmos, who knows what the kin-dom of God is like, but also remembers what it was like before.

All: Before creation and kin-doms, before mustard seeds and fine pearls, before yeast and bakers to make bread.

One: So, you know what it is like to long for them, to imagine them into being,

All: And it is from this longing for your kin-dom and for you that we enter our worship.

One: Yes, come, let us praise and pray to our God of promise.

All: Let us rejoice in the Good News together—how nothing can separate us from the presence of God. Amen.

***Invocation**

O Spirit, who helps us in our struggles, and teaches us how to pray when we don't know what to say or how to feel, we call on you from a sigh too deep for words.

Within that sigh, we wonder, we question, and we hope that all things do, indeed, work together for your good.

And in this experience of being here together, in this time set apart to be side by side in community, we are reminded how connected we already are.

Let us open ourselves to your presence here. Let us seek first, the kin-dom of God, and in our searching, may we be found by you, Beloved, the One who searches for us first. Amen.

***Hymn – Come and Join the Celebration vv. 1, 2, & 3**
(sung to the tune of NCH 459 – Come, O Fount of Every Blessing)

Come and Join the Celebration

Author: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2010

Source: Included in I Sing to My Savior: New Hymns from the Stories in the Gospel of Luke, 2022

Carolyn's Hymns. <https://www.carolynshymns.com>

Tune: NETTLETON 8.7.8.7.D.

Composer: Anonymous

Source: John Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 1813

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**1 Come and join the celebration! Praise the Lord and gladly sing.
Hear the gospel proclamation: God in Christ changed everything!
Tell again the wondrous story; let your praises rise above.
God, we sing and give you glory for your everlasting love.**

**2 Sing with joy, for on a Sunday friends of Jesus went to grieve.
Soon they found his tomb was empty; telling others, they believed.
God of miracle and wonder, Jesus died and lives again.
Death has lost, for you are stronger; all creation sings, "Amen!"**

**3 God, we sing, for there is nothing that can keep your love away —
Not oppression, hardship, famine, things to come or things today.
Heights and depths cannot defeat us; death will never be the same.
Christ is risen! So you promise: we have life in Jesus's name.**

A READING OF THE WORD

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12

In this reading from the Hebrew Scriptures, King Solomon has a dream in which God asks him what it is he wants. God promises to grant Solomon whatever his request is. Solomon seeks wisdom, and God is delighted that what Solomon desires is to live into God's ways, to be wise in discernment with his authority, power, and privilege, and God promises Solomon that he will be granted wisdom like no one else.

3 5 At Gibeon God appeared in a dream to the ruler during in the night, saying, "Ask what you would like me to give you."

6 Solomon replied, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, David, who was faithful, righteous, and obedient to you. And you have generously maintained this constant love toward us and now you have appointed a successor to sit on the judgment seat this very day. 7 Now, YHWH my God, you have continued this kindness to David's successor to sit on the judgment seat this very day. 8 Here I am in the midst of your chosen people, a people so numerous they cannot be counted. 9 Give me, your servant, a discerning heart, so that I may distinguish good from evil and govern your people with wisdom."

10 YHWH was very pleased that Solomon requested what he said. 11 So God said to Solomon,

“Because this is what you asked for and not for a long life, or for wealth, or for the lives of your foes, but asked for discernment in administering justice, I grant your request. And I give you a heart so wise and so understanding that there has been no one like you before your time, nor will there be after your time.

Psalm Response: Psalm 119:129-136 (Responsively)

Psalm 119 is a long acrostic poem with each stanza starting with the next letter of the Hebrew alphabet. In vs. 129-136, the psalmist praises God for the law and commandments, all of God’s teaching. The psalmist seeks to live into God’s ways and prays for God to draw close. The singer seeks freedom from human oppression, so they may keep to God’s teachings. This section concludes with the psalmist mourning how God’s ways are not kept by all.

119 129 Quite wonderful are your decrees—
that is why I obey them.

**130 The revelation of your words sheds light,
giving understanding to the guileless.**

131 I pant with open mouth
in my longing for your commands.

**132 Turn to me, have mercy on me,
as you turn to those who love your Name.**

133 Direct my footsteps as you promise,
and don’t let sin govern my life.

**134 Ransom me from all oppression,
that I can keep your precepts.**

135 Let your face shine upon your faithful one,
and teach me your statutes.

**136 Streams of tears flow from my eyes
because others do not obey your Law.**

Second Reading: Roman 8:26-39

The Epistle reading continues its series in the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Roman Christians, with these verses in Romans 8. 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, whether they were believers in Jesus, or not. There were struggles, even suffering, during that time, but the Spirit is the one who brings aid and comfort and intercedes when things seem impossible. “We know that God makes everything work together for the good of those who love God.” God has continually been working to bring all of God’s children together, no matter their background, no matter what struggles or suffering they have been through. There is nothing they have done and nothing anyone else could do that could separate themselves from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

8 26 The Spirit, too, comes to help us in our weakness. For we don’t know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit expresses our plea with groanings too deep for words. 27 And God, who knows

everything in our hearts, knows perfectly well what the Spirit is saying, because her intercessions for God's holy people are made according to the mind of God.

28 We know that God makes everything work together for the good of those who love God and have been called according to God's purpose. 29 They are the ones God chose long ago, predestined to share the image of the Only Begotten, in order that Christ might be the firstborn of many. 30 Those God predestined have likewise been called; those God called have also been justified; and those God justified have, in turn, been glorified.

31 What should be our response? Simply this: "If God is for us, who can be against us?" 32 Since God did not spare the Only Begotten, but gave Christ up for the sake of us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, that God will freely give us everything. 33 Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? Since God is the One who justifies, 34 who has the power to condemn? Only Christ Jesus, who died—or rather, was raised—and sits at the right hand of God, and who now intercedes for us!

35 What will separate us from the love of Christ? Trouble? Calamity? Persecution? Hunger? Nakedness? Danger? Violence? 36 As scripture says, "For your sake, we're being killed all day long; we're looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 Yet in all this we are more than conquerors because of God who has loved us. 38 For I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, 39 neither heights nor depths—nor anything else in all creation—will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Savior.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Jesus continues to teach in parables in the selections from Matthew 13. These are a series of very short parables of what the kingdom of heaven is like. The first two—the mustard seed sown deliberately in a field, becoming a home for birds, and the yeast mixed in with large amounts of flour—both of these show how God's reign is subversive and unstoppable. The treasure hidden in a field and the great pearl show that the reign of God is worth sacrificing everything else for. The last parable in vs. 47-50 is a bit longer and parallels the last parable Jesus tells in Matthew, in 25:31-46, separating out the good and bad fish. Vs. 51-52 contain one final parable in this section, after Jesus questions the disciples whether they have understood his teachings. In this parable, Jesus looks at the scribes (religious scholars) who study the law: if they have trained for the kingdom of heaven, they are like the head of a household who brings out of their treasure what is new and what is old. Both old and new are valued, but the wise ones know how to treasure both.

13 31 Jesus presented another parable to the crowds: "The kingdom of heaven is like the mustard seed which a farmer sowed in a field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the biggest shrub of all—it becomes a tree so that the birds of the air come to perch in its branches."

33 Jesus offered them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a baker took and mixed in with three measures of flour until it was leavened all through."

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a buried treasure found in a field. The ones who discovered it hid it again, and, rejoicing at the discovery, went and sold all their possessions and bought that field.

45 "Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant's search for fine pearls. 46 When one

pearl of great value was found, the merchant went back and sold everything else and bought it.

47 “Or again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net thrown into the sea, which collected all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the fishers hauled it ashore. Then, sitting down, they collected the good ones in a basket and threw away those that were of no use. 49 This is how it will be at the end of time. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the just 50 and throw the wicked into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

51 “Have you understood all this?”

“Yes,” they answered.

52 To this Jesus replied, “Every religious scholar who has become a student of the kingdom of heaven is like the head of a household who can bring from the storeroom both the new and the old.”

Choral Response – NCH 283 – Spirit of the Living God

Author and Composer: Daniel Iverson, 1926

IVERSON 7.5.7.5.8.7.5.

© 1935, 1963 Birdwing Music (A Div. of the Sparrow Corp.)

Choir: Keith Konet, Barbara Rossington, and Bob Bucklew

A Capella

Reflection – “The Kingdom of Heaven in Our Part of God’s Vineyard is Like...” - Rev. Scott Rosenstein

WE RESPOND

***Prayer of Response**

Come, You Wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh, to us the path of knowledge show, and cause us in Her ways to go.

Wisdom-Spirit, descend upon us so that we might live into your ways. Drive us far from the foolishness of this world and lead us into the life you have ordained for us, through the commandments and teachings, from the prophets and sages and ancestors to the ways that your creation continues to show us your magnificence, and through the love of Jesus Christ.

May we listen and learn and love. Amen.

*** Hymn – NCH 522 – I Love to Tell the Story vv. 1, 2, & 4 with refrain**

I Love to Tell the Story

Author: Katherine Hankey, 1866; alt.

Tune: HANKEY 7.6.7.6.D. with refrain

Composer: William G. Fischer, 1869

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**1 I love to tell the story
of unseen things above,
of Jesus’ radiant glory,**

of Jesus' endless love.
I love to tell the story,
because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings
as nothing else can do.

Refrain:

I love to tell the story;
and when I am in glory
I'll tell the old, old story
of Jesus' endless love.

2 I love to tell the story;
more wonderful it seems
than all the golden visions
of all our golden dreams.
I love to tell the story,
I tell it now to you
because I want to share it,
because I know it's true. [Refrain]

4 I love to tell the story,
for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting
to hear it like the rest.
And when I sing in glory,
I know the new, new song
will be the old, old story
that I have loved so long. [Refrain]

Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings

Our scripture today says that the kin-dom of heaven is like a treasure. Jesus' parable describes it as hidden, and it does feel like that sometimes. But it can also feel like earth is "crammed" with it too. May we take a moment to remember the ways in which this church has made the kin-dom come alive for us. Let us take this time to give thanks by considering how we can give of our time, money, skills, and unique gifts to this beloved community. Amen.

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**

Like the net that was thrown into the sea and brought in fish of every kind, we celebrate the multitude and diversity of gifts that have been shared here today. May God bless these treasures with the abundance of Christ's love and passion to embody justice in our world. Amen.

Prayer 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 – NCH 451 – Be Now My Vision vv. 1, 2, & 3**

Be Now My Vision

Versifier: Eleanor H. Hull, 1912; alt.

Translator: Mary E. Byrne, 1905

Source: Ancient Irish text, c. 8th century

Word alterations © 1992 The Pilgrim Press

Tune: SLANE 10.10.9.10.

Composer: David Evans, 1927

Harmonization © 1927 Oxford University Press. From THE REVISED CHURCH HYMNARY, 1927.

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**1 Be now my vision, O God of my heart;
nothing surpasses the love you impart—
You my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

**2 Be now my wisdom, and be my true word;
ever within me, my soul is assured;
Mother and Father, you are both to me,
now and forever your child I will be.**

**3 Riches I heed not, nor life's empty praise,
you, my inheritance now and always;
You and you only are first in my heart,
great God, my treasure, may we never part.**

***Commissioning and Benediction**

One: Go forth to proclaim God's constant love.

All: We will live out that love for everyone we meet.

One: Go forth to unfold God's Word to the world.

**All: We will gather up the tears of those around us,
as we offer the healing grace of Jesus.**

One: Go forth to tell stories of hope and peace.

All: We will spread the Spirit of life all around us. 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 *For Righteousness: Service Prayers for the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost*, written by The Rev. Dr. Elyse Berry serves as the Associate for Advocacy and Leadership Development for the Council of Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ. Learn more at chsm.org. 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 30th, 2023*, written by Rev. Mindi Welton Thomas, posted July 20th, 2023 on her blog, *Rev-o-lution*. <http://revo-o-lution.org/>
- (3) The Commissioning and Benediction adapted from *Alternate Liturgy with Communion from July 30th, 2023, (Pentecost 9/Trinity 8/ Proper 12/ Ordinary 17-A)* written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted July 23rd, 2023, to his blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>
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**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. Hopes of finding people alive have dimmed and experts fear the toll could rise sharply. Turkish authorities say some 13.5 million people have been affected in an area spanning roughly 280 miles from Adana in the west to Diyarbakir in the east, and 186 miles from Malatya in the north to Hatay in the south. 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.
- We pray as well for the people of Vermont, upstate New York, and the Canadian province of Nova Scotia 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 States and Florida experiencing many days of very high temperatures and heat.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 409 mass shooting incidents have occurred in the US as of July 26th, 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 (health concerns) and family. 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. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
 - Betty Funk (*our 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 - *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*)

ARTS IN AUGUST 2023

IN TREMONT'S
LINCOLN PARK

bring a blanket or a chair!

AUGUST 5TH 7pm

CLEVELAND PUBLIC THEATRE'S STEP

AUGUST 6TH 4pm

CLEVELAND SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

AUGUST 10TH 7pm

REFLECTIONS DANCE THEATER

MOJUBA DANCE COLLECTIVE

SHRI KALAA MANDIR - CENTER
FOR INDIAN PERFORMING ARTS

AUGUST 11TH 7pm

INLET DANCE THEATRE

AUGUST 12TH 7pm

VERB: OHIO CONTEMPORARY BALLET

DANCE RAIN DATE : AUGUST 13TH 7PM

AUGUST 18TH 7pm

THE CHURCH OF STARRY WISDOM

CREATING LEWIS WITH
EMERGENCE ENSEMBLE

AUGUST 25TH 7pm

PAPO RUIZ Y LA DULZURA DE LA SALSA

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



cleveland
PUBLIC
theatre

L | A | N | D studio

Stay up to date on our website: experiencetremont.com