



First Central Congregational

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

AUTUMN THEME: GOSPEL ENCOUNTERS

November 15, 2020

Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Pentecost

Prelude

Berceuse

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Katie Miller

***Greeting and Passing of the Peace**

"The Peace of God be with you."

In Unison: **Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds is like to that above.**

** Let us rise in body or spirit.*

Call to Worship

Lyn Bouma, liturgist

There is abundance here –

abundance that greets and grows and holds and challenges and keeps.

There is abundance here –

abundance that surrounds and brings and delivers and gives.

The abundance holds us in our weakness and fills us in our hunger.

So here, richly blessed, we have come.

Let this time together inspire us in abundance and grace.

***Processional Hymn**

Now Thank We All Our God

THANKSGIVING

419

Nun danket alle Gott

(Now Thank We All Our God)

Sir. 50:20-24; 39:35; Ps. 67

Martin Rinkari, 1647; transl. Catherine Winkworth, 1858; alt.

1 Nun dank - et al - le Gott, mit Herz - en, Mund und Händ - en,
 1 Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voic - es,
 2 O may this boun-teous God through all our life be near us,
 3 All praise and thanks to God our Mak - er now be giv - en,

der gro - sse Ding - e tut an uns und al - len End - en;
 Who won - drous things has done, in whom this world re - joic - es,
 With ev - er joy - ful hearts and bless - ed peace to cheer us,
 To Christ, and Spir - it, too, our help in high - est heav - en,

der uns von Mut - ter - leib und Kind - es - bein - en an
 Who, from our par - ents' arms, has blessed us on our way
 And keep us still in grace, and guide us when per - plexed,
 The one e - ter - nal God, whom earth and heaven a - dore,

un - zäh - lig viel zu gut bis hier-her hat ge - tan.
 With count-less gifts of love, and still is ours to - day.
 And free us from all ills in this world and the next.
 For thus it was, is now, and shall be ev - er - more.

For much of his life, German Lutheran pastor and musician
 Martin Rinkart ministered to the walled city of Eisleben amidst

Tune: NUN DANKET 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6.
 Johann Crüeer. 1647

***Invocation**

Fill us, gracious God, with your abiding presence. Awaken our spirits. Turn us from the dullness of our fear and help us to live with trust in you. May faith and love enrich all our relationships as we enter into the joy of serving in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

***Gloria**

Black Hymnal, No. 759

Glory to the Creator, the Christ, the Holy Spirit, Three in One; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Conversation with the Children

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 25:14-30

For the Word of God in scripture,
For the Word of God within us,
For the Word of God among us,
Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Claiming the Future

Rev. Dr. Scott Jones

Musical Interlude

***Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Jim Harmon

Now is the time to consider just how we distrust God's abundance. Now is the time to begin something new. Now is the time to trust differently. We acknowledge and honor your endless and beautiful grace that enriches us with blessings.

***Words of Assurance**

There is an abundance that penetrates distrust and offers so much more. This richness both forgives and gives even more. We know this forgiveness, and we thank you, God. Amen.

Prayers

Pastoral Prayer

Lord's Prayer

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.

Neighbors in Need Focus

John Austin

Offertory

*Hymn of Dedication

LASST UNS ERFRÉUEN

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit,
Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

*Offertory Prayer

O God, we have come, and what a delight it has been! In the holiness of this space, inspired by your word, your gifts, your love, and encouraged by the presence and commitment of everyone else around us, we commit ourselves to you. We come to your table with gifts – gifts of ourselves, gifts of risk, gifts of newness, gifts of trust. We thank you for the chance to give, and pray that we and all whom our gifts bless will never be the same. Through the gift of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

*Recessional Hymn

We Praise You, O God

We Praise You, O God

Julia C. Cory, 1902; alt.

1 We praise you, O God, our Re - deem - er, Cre - a - tor;
 2 We wor - ship you, God of our moth - ers and fa - thers;
 3 With voic - es u - nit - ed our prais - es we of - fer,

in grate - ful de - vo - tion our trib - ute we bring.
 through life's storm and tem - pest our guide you have been.
 and glad - ly our song of thanks - giv - ing we raise.

We lay it be - fore you, we kneel and a - dore you;
 When per - ils o'er - take us, you nev - er will for - sake us,
 Our sins now con - fess - ing, we pray for your bless - ing;

we bless your ho - ly name, glad prais - es we sing.
 and with your help, O God, in life's strug - gles we win.
 to you, our great Re - deem - er, for - ev - er be praise!

Julia Bulkley Cady Cory wrote this hymn for Thanksgiving in 1902 at the invitation of the organist of New York's Brick

Tune: KREMSER 12.11.12.11.
 Valerius, Nederlandsch Gedenckclanck, 1626

***Benediction**

Benediction Response

Bouma

May you hear laughter in the wind. May you see hope in the light.
May you find courage in your faith. May you know joy in your God.

Postlude

Humoresque

Open & Affirming Statement

In our ongoing quest for hearts that open, minds that understand,
and lives that serve, we welcome into our fellowship, membership, leadership, and employment,
all people, regardless of abilities, race, gender, sexual orientation, or any God-given characteristic.

Announcements

November 15, 2020

Prayers: *Alma Jean Wotherspoon*, who died in Kearney last week; *Marlene Roberts*, recovering from knee surgery.

Chancel flowers and decorations: sponsored this month by *Steve & Susan Dolezal*, the *Wiseman-Gustafson family*, and *Elizabeth Wearin*.

Happy Birthday this week: to *Sophie Feng*, *Rachel Higginbotham*, *Brandon Polinsky*, *Jan Kensler*, and *Lisa Schneider*.

Neighbors in Need: donations welcomed this month. Please make your check out to First Central, with NIN in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom.

Activities for the Coming Week, November 16-November 21

Lectionary Readings: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Psalm 95:1-7a; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46.

Monday: Staff meeting, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday: Adult Education, 5:45 p.m., Zoom. Senior Minister Scott Jones serves on the Omaha Advisory Board for the Salvation Army. Hear about the Salvation Army Disaster Responses, particularly in response to the 2019 floods and the 2020 pandemic.

Vespers, 6 p.m. on FaceBook Live

Choir, 7 p.m., Zoom

Thursday: Evergreen Thrift Shop, *temporarily closed*.

Saturday: Evergreen Thrift Shop, *temporarily closed*.

Sunday, November 22

Worship: 10:30 a.m. on YouTube, or in-person.

Interfaith Community Thanksgiving Service: 5 p.m. online.

FirstYouth: 8 p.m., Zoom

Want to donate electronically? Please scan the QR code.

