

* Indicates, please stand if able.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost July 16, 2023, 9 am
Liturgist: Chuck Devendorf

WELCOME, PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CALL TO WORSHIP** (Matthew 13, Psalm 119)

L: Come in from busy, summertime days to this place of worship.

P: We come to connect with God's word.

L: Come in from the stress of everyday life into the light of knowledge.

P: We come as seekers of truth.

L: Come into worship with offerings of praise.

P: We come to hear the word and respond!

***OPENING PRAYER** (Matthew 13, Psalm 119)

Loving God, gather us into this moment of reverence, celebration, and growth. As your sons and daughters, we long for renewed faith and meaning in our lives. Christ's Parable of the Sower lights our path, with its images of rocky ground, tangled thorns, and green shoots. May the light of your word illuminate our way and become the joy of our hearts! AMEN.

*OPENING HYMN	<i>Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah</i>	UMH #127
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CHILDREN'S TIME Roxie Hostrawser

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Matthew 13, Psalm 119)

Merciful One, we often feel the burden of living, as though we've been tossed on rocky soil and left to struggle on our own. Other days, we throw ourselves too quickly onto wrong paths. We are tested by hungry birds; we are choked by thorns, and wither in the beating sun. We are here to choose different paths, confirm new oaths, admit our afflictions, and ask you to give us life again. Perfect One, show us your ways and bless us with your sacraments, that we may not stray from your road. Help us hear your word, understand it, and bear your fruit for the world.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (Matthew 13, Psalm 119)

Be assured that it's never too late! The God of Love, and Christ the storyteller, remind us to listen, understand, and act. Prepare your hearts as garden beds for God's seeds of joy and hope. Receive God's grace today and every day.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Rev. Shon

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(In Unison)*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. AMEN.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As we receive our morning offering, remember all the ways in which God has entered your lives, and be grateful.

*DOXOLOGY *Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* UMH #95

*OFFERTORY PRAYER Rev. Shon

SCRIPTURE Revelation 2:1-7

“To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. ²I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. ³You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. 6 But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

⁷ Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

*HYMN OF PRAISE *O Love Divine, What Hast Thou Done* UMH #287

SERMON **Return to First Love** Rev. Shon

*CLOSING HYMN *Christ Loves the Church* UMH #590

*BENEDICTION Rev. Shon

POSTLUDE Kathy Peterson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRAYER REQUESTS: Please pray for people in need in our church, community, nation, and the World.

WWIS: Todays broadcast is offered by Sarah Shon in honor of her brother, David Shon’s White Coat Ceremony.

VBS: Saturday, Aug. 12, and Sunday, Aug. 13.

MISSION OUTREACH: The Mission Outreach Committee is looking to submit a grant proposal to the WI United Methodist Foundation for monies to help support and advance our outreach of the Wednesday night meals. We are looking for individuals that have an interest in this outreach program to join for a short term (wrap up by Jan. 1) task force to help develop the grant proposal. If you would like to be a part of this visionary group, please join us August 8 at 7:30pm after the Ad Council meeting. Please contact Pastor or Marcia Hagen.

BRF SUMMERFEST PICNIC: Sunday, Aug. 13th from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm at church

HOLY LAND TRIP: January 11-20, 2024, 10-Day Gold Select Journey in Israel, Palestine with Bishop Hee-Soo Jung & Rev. Scott Carlson, see Pastor for more information.

SCRIP CARDS: When you are thinking of ideas for gift-giving or personal use, consider Scrip cards. Stop at the gathering area on Sundays or call Marcia at 715-284-3346

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLE FARM: A few of the Youth go to this event to help set up the camp, on Sat. July 29, Sullivan, WI. If you are interested, please contact the Pastor.

PASTOR: Vacation from July 17 – 27.

FELLOWSHIP: Esther Shon

USHERS/GREETERS: Pat and Diane Moe

Bible Verse of the week: Jeremiah 32:17

“Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.”

Bible Trivia of the Week:

God told Abraham to leave which land to travel to the land of Canaan?

- A. Ur
- B. Egypt
- C. Haran
- D. Bethel

See: Genesis 11:31

Black River Falls
United Methodist Church



UMC Mission Statement:

"To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

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