

IMMANUEL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Organist: Karen Cain

Pastor: Rev. Dana Schindler

May 2, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter

“Extending God’s love with the work of our hands and hearts...”

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME

Welcome to worship today at Immanuel United Church of Christ in Hamel, IL. We are pleased that you have chosen to worship with us today. No matter who you are or where you are on life’s journey, you are welcome here!

Please leave a comment to let us know you are here. Also note any joys and concerns you may have and feel free to greet each other in Christian love.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Music used is covered under our CCLI livestreaming license # 4012842.

Today for our service, you will need your worship guide, paper, and a pen/pencil to take notes, and communion elements.

CONFIRMATION will meet today at 10:30 am. Parents are asked to be present.

BELL CHOIR will practice Tuesday night at 7 pm.

CHURCH COUNCIL will meet Wednesday night at 7 pm via Zoom.

BOOK STUDY will meet on Thursday, May 6th using the book Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death, by Thom Rainer. It is available through Amazon. All who are interested in helping our church to survive and thrive are urged to join us for this study.

WHY I LOVE MY CHURCH FAMILY We have had several volunteers who have filmed a clip for our worship service to talk about this. We need more volunteers. This is a great way to let visitors know our best qualities and to remind those of us who have been here for a while of things we may have overlooked or taken for granted. Please let Pastor Dana know if you are willing to do this.

PICTURES PLEASE! We request that all members send in a picture of you and your family for our 150th directory. Just take one with your phone if you don't have one to send in. We will also take pictures at church after worship service each week. Please also send your most current contact information. It will take time to assemble, so please send as soon as possible (no later than June 1st) to the office e-mail, officeiucc@gomadison.com, or rrklenke@schuetzfarms.com, or text it to 618-910-8999.

THE BREAD OF LIFE FOOD PANTRY in Hamel is open on Mondays from 9:00am till 10:30am. All who need assistance are welcome.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS

Corn	Green Beans	Peas
Carrots	Chef Boyardee Ravioli	Pie Filling
Pasta sauce	BBQ Sauce	Chili
Mashed Potatoes	Baked Beans	Rice
Evaporated Milk	Coffee	Shampoo
Bars of soap	Dish Detergent	

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

to help with youth activities—see Barb
to help with FaithQuest—see Pastor Dana

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Ruth: officeiucc@gomadison.com
Pastor Dana: pastoriucc@gomadison.com

CONCERNS

Maria S.	Harry S.	Lillie H.
Kathie R.	Hope S.	Carole G.
Tomiko J.	Wayne S.	Sherri R.
Rose O.	Roger W.	Kathleen L.
Michelle L.	Kristy K.	Dorothy D.
Jane B.	Mary Ann C.	Jake G.
Diane B.	Frank H.	Diane O.
Luella L.	Klenke Family	Merkle Family
Students/School Personnel	Hitz Home workers and residents	
Those affected by storms	Our country as we deal with pandemic	
Members of the Asian community	as they deal with a mass shooting	
Our Church Council	Pastor Dana, as she leads	

BIRTHDAYS

May 1—Suzie Lentz	May 4—Sherri Rose
May 9—Chloe Rigler	May 18—Frank Harbison
May 18—TJ Thiems	May 20—Aaron Klenke
May 21—Steve Towner	May 26—Larry Rose
May 27—Dan Kalish	May 29—Amy Gusewelle

ANNIVERSARIES

May 2—Steve & Ruth Gevers	May 20—Brian & Robyn Schmidt
May 24—Harvey & Jane Schoeber	May 29—Tom & Gladys Nelson
May 31—John & Jessica Rigler	

PRELUDE

Karen Cain

POINT TO PONDER

“Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.” *Corrie ten Boom*

CALL TO WORSHIP

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget his benefits.
 God forgives our sin and heals our diseases.
 God redeems us and crowns us with steadfast love and mercy forever. Amen.
Psalm 103:1-4

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Gracious God, it is a blessing to be here this morning to worship you. We pray that you will open our hearts and ears, eyes and minds to your never-ending grace, so that we may share that grace with all who need it. In Christ’s most holy name we pray. Amen.

OPENING HYMN

Wonderful Grace of Jesus

Handout

**Wonderful grace of Jesus,
 greater than all my sin;
 how shall my tongue describe it,
 where shall its praise begin?
 Taking away my burden,
 setting my spirit free,
 for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.**

Refrain:

**Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,
 deeper than the mighty rolling sea,
 higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain,
 all sufficient grace for even me;
 broader than the scope of my transgressions, sing it!
 greater far than all my sin and shame.
 O magnify the precious name of Jesus, praise his name!**

**Wonderful grace of Jesus,
 reaching to all the lost,
 by it I have been pardoned,
 saved to the uttermost.
 Chains have been torn asunder,**

**giving me liberty,
for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me. [Refrain]**

**Wonderful grace of Jesus,
reaching the most reviled,
by its transforming power
making me God's dear child,
purchasing peace and heaven
for all eternity,**

for the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me. [Refrain]

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

Today we are going to talk about asking for forgiveness. That means that when we say or do something wrong to someone, we tell them we are sorry and that we will not do it again. We hope that the other person will tell us it's ok and we can be friends. It is hard to say, "I'm sorry," because we have to admit that we are wrong—and nobody likes to have to do that.

When I was a teenager there was a tv show called Happy Days. There was a popular guy called Fonzie. Everyone liked him because he was good looking and usually a good person, just like we are generally good people. He could do anything except say "I was wrong." One time he spent the whole show trying to say, "I was wrong." He would start to do it, but he would get stuck.

He finally did say it, but it was really hard. It's hard for us too. But sometimes, we really have to do it. And then we have to try really hard NOT to do whatever it was that was wrong, or the person we said it to won't believe us anymore.

Sometimes, someone else has to tell us they were wrong, and we have to try to forgive them so we can be friends. That can be really hard too. But it helps to remember that when we pray to God and say "I'm sorry, I did the wrong thing"

God will forgive us. Just like God forgives us, we have to forgive each other.

PRAYER:

Forgiving God, thank you for giving us another chance when we make mistakes and do the wrong thing. Help us to say, "I'm sorry" when we do the wrong thing and help us to forgive other people when they say "I'm sorry." Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Karen Cain

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 18:21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

SERMON

“Who’s Sorry Now?”

Rev. Dana Schindler

I started teaching school back in the ‘70’s. The students I taught all had communication problems, so they came from different classrooms to mine for 30 minutes each day.

One day, two 7-year-old boys who had developmental delays came running into my room, which was against the rules. When they got into the room, Jamie was crying. I asked what the problem was. Jamie said that Danny had hit him. I asked Danny if that was true, and he readily admitted it. I told Danny that I was surprised he had hit Jamie because I thought they were best friends. Danny hung his head and said that yes, Jamie was his best friend.

I told Danny that he should apologize to Jamie, but as I said it, I realized Danny might not understand the word “apologize,” so I added “tell Jamie you’re sorry.”

Danny looked at Jamie and solemnly said “Jamie, I apologize for your sorriness.”

It was all I could do not to laugh at this poorly worded non-apology, but Jamie looked at his friend and said, “that’s ok.” And it was.

What a horrible apology! But I said nothing more because they were both satisfied. Jamie recognized Danny’s remorse, even if the words weren’t right. Their friendship was restored.

The lesson I learned that day, was that it isn’t the words that matter, it’s the attitude. It took one to admit that he did the wrong thing and another willing to accept the apology in the spirit it was given.

Our scripture this morning follows the scripture about handling church conflict that we talked about last week. It begins with Jesus telling Peter how many times he should forgive a church member. Peter had suggested 7 times. We are reminded that 7 is considered to be the number of perfection. It is mentioned frequently in the Bible.

But Jesus said to forgive 70 times.

Many of us “keep count” of the number of times someone says or does something that hurts us. Maybe not the actual number but think about arguments you’ve had with a loved one during which one starts with “You always do that—remember...” and there’s the perfect example of the last time the other person did something you didn’t like. Then it becomes a contest of who can remember the most things the other did.

Yes, we “keep count.” I suspect the reason we keep count is because the other person did not apologize at all, or we were unwilling to accept the apology and move on. But would we keep track of the number until we got to 70? I don’t think so. I think the point is to stop keeping count. At some point, we must decide whether it’s more important to be right or to maintain the relationship.

Please don’t get me wrong. There is a big difference between forgiving someone for a wrong and allowing them to keep doing whatever it was. If the person you are considering forgiving is physically or emotionally abusive, you can forgive them, but don’t stay close enough that they can do it again. In those cases, it isn’t about maintaining a relationship, it’s about maintaining your own peace of mind.

Now let’s talk about forgiveness that repairs relationships.

I would recommend that you google making amends. This is a part of 12 step programs like AA. Making amends includes sitting down and making a list of all the people you have hurt. You think about how you have damaged your relationship, every disagreement, every hurtful word, and situation, and you think about how to apologize and try to make it up to those you have hurt. Then you go to each person and offer a sincere apology and offer to do whatever you can to make the situation better.

Often as people do this, they begin to recognize patterns to their behavior. Perhaps there is a problem with anger management, or lack of understanding of the other person's point of view, or unwillingness to actually listen to the other person. Perhaps the other person has some blame they should admit to as well, but we must always remember that we cannot change other people, we can only change ourselves.

This step is difficult, but reaching out to someone we have hurt, is far more difficult. It takes humility, a willingness to admit our own shortcomings, and a true willingness to try to change.

In our parable, the first slave was forgiven a debt of 15 years' worth of wages, after pleading for mercy. Then that same slave saw a fellow slave who owed him about 15 days' worth of wages, but not only refused to forgive the debt, he had him thrown in prison until he paid.

The first slave was thankful to be forgiven for his debt, but not thankful enough to forgive a much smaller debt for someone in the same position. And so, the full payment was then demanded of the first slave.

How often do we expect God to forgive us when we cannot or will not forgive others? And how often do we simply expect others to forgive us without even bothering to apologize and stop treating them badly?

We should forgive each other when we behave badly, yes. But we should also apologize and work to do better. It is really hard to forgive someone who hurts us, but even harder when they don't bother to apologize, and almost impossible when they continue to hurt us.

In the church we are called to do better. I would like to encourage each of us to make our own list of people we have behaved badly to and then to reach out to each one and make sincere apologies and work to heal those relationships. It is hard work, but it is necessary for the health of our church family and for our own peace of mind. I pray that you will join me in this important work. In thankfulness for God's forgiveness of our sins, may we do the hard work of apologizing to those we have hurt, and offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us. Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we confess our sins expecting to receive forgiveness. But all too often, we deny that same forgiveness to others. We hold on to grudges and plot revenge. Help us Lord, to live the words "forgive us our debts as we forgive others." Remind us that we should not expect to receive what we are unwilling to give ourselves. Help us to find love and forgiveness for others within our hearts, that we may live in your peace. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

PRAYER RESPONSE**Change My Heart, O God # 2152 (TFWS)****Change my heart O God****Make it ever true****Change my heart O God****May I be like You****You are the potter****I am the clay****Mold me and make me****This is what I pray****Change my heart O God****Make it ever true****Change my heart O God****May I be like You****GIVING OUR GIFTS**

With thankful, loving hearts let us give of our time, talent, and treasure for God's glory and the work of God's kingdom of peace, hope, love, and joy. Offerings may be placed in the offering plates outside the sanctuary or mailed to Immanuel United Church of Christ at 5838 Staunton Road, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Please help us to meet our financial responsibilities and continue our ministries in this community.

DOXOLOGY**God is So Good****# 2056 (TFWS)**

**God is so good, God is so good,
God is so good, he's so good to me.**

**I praise God's name, I praise God's name,
I praise God's name, he's so good to me.**

PASTORAL PRAYER

Gracious God, we give thanks for your willingness to forgive us when we fail so often to do your will. Your endless grace and love for us are so undeserved, but so needed. Help us to do the things we should do and avoid doing those things we should not do. Help us to apologize and make amends to those we have hurt and enable us to stop patterns of bad behavior toward others. Help us to love and forgive as freely as you love and forgive us, without keeping count. We offer special prayers this day for our church as we work to renew our relationships with each other and seek your guidance in helping our community. We pray for those on our prayer list and for those whose names are in our hearts, that their needs may be met. We pray for our community, our state, our country, and our world. May we all learn to work together in the struggle for justice, hope, and love, that we may achieve peace. All these things we pray in the

name of your son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying: **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, the power, the glory forever Amen.**

COMMUNION HYMN Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face #336 (NCH) 2 vs
Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
here would I touch and handle things unseen;
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon you lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
here share the cup, the gracious gift of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

HOLY COMMUNION
INVITATION

Jesus said: I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger; you who believe in me shall never thirst.

In company with all who hunger for spiritual food, we come to this table to know the risen Christ in the sharing of this life-giving bread. May God be with us as we lift our hearts in thanks and praise.

COMMUNION PRAYER

Holy God, our loving Creator, close to us as breathing and distant as the farthest star, we thank you for your constant love for all you have made. We thank you for all that sustains life, for all people of faith in every generation who have given themselves to your will, and especially for Jesus Christ, whom you have sent from your own being as our Savior. We praise you for Christ's birth, life, death, and resurrection, and for the calling forth of your church for its mission in the world. Gifted by the presence of your Holy Spirit, we offer ourselves to you as we unite our voices with the entire family of your faithful people everywhere:

Holy, holy, holy God of love and majesty,
the whole universe speaks of your glory, O God Most High.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God! Hosanna in the highest!

PRAYER

Merciful God, as siblings in faith, we recall anew these words and acts of Jesus Christ. Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to

The disciples and said: "Take, eat: This is my body." Jesus took a cup, and after giving thanks, gave it to the disciples and said: "Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." We remember Christ's promise not to drink of the fruit of the vine again until the heavenly banquet at the close of history, and we say boldly what we believe:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Come, Holy Spirit, come. Bless this bread, and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking at this table that our eyes may be opened, and we may recognize the risen Christ in our midst, in each other, and in all for whom Christ died.

Amen.

BREAKING BREAD AND POURING WINE

RESURRECTION ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! Christ said "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one."
"I died, and behold I am alive for evermore." Alleluia!

SHARING THE ELEMENTS

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us at your table by granting us the presence of Jesus Christ. Strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and send us forth into the world in courage and peace, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

Dear God, Embracing Human-kind

#502 (NCH) 3 vs

**Dear God, embracing human-kind,
 forgive our foolish ways;
 Reclothe us in our rightful mind,
 in purer lives your service find,
 in deeper reverence, praise.**

**In simple trust like theirs who heard,
 beside the Syrian sea,
 The gracious calling of your word,
 let us, like them, be spirit stirred,
 rise up and followers be.**

**Drop your still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of your peace.**

BENEDICTION

**And now, until we meet again, may each one be held safely
in the palm of God's hand.**

POSTLUDE