

Welcome to the Community Church of Richmond

United Church of Christ

Our Church at Worship on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 17, 2024

10:00 A.M.

*Our Mission: To be an inviting, caring faith community
connecting with Christ.*

Welcome, visitors!

Join us after worship for coffee and conversation in the lounge, the room right next to the sanctuary.

The Rev. Katherine Karch (Pastor Kathy) is a member of our congregation and an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. We're happy to have her share the good news with us today while Pastor Hope has the day off.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

PRELUDE

Penny Kraft

WORDS OF WELCOME

Rev. Kathy Karch

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

GATHERING SONG "All Creation"

Verse 1: **We come to You with a heart of thanks, for Your love,
to be a living sacrifice, brought with love.
We come to You with a heart of thanks, for Your love;
an offering of all we are, brought with love.**

Chorus: **All creation, looks to You.
All provision, comes from You.
In ev'ry sunrise, hope shines through.
For Your mercy, we thank You.**

Verse 2: **We come to You with a song of praise, for Your love,
the music of our soul's delight, brought with love.
We come to You with a song of praise, for Your love.
Sounds of joy and gratefulness, brought with love.**

Chorus

Tag: **We thank You, we thank You**

CALL TO WORSHIP & OPENING PRAYER

Cheryl Kazimier

One: As Hannah waited... Praying passionately
for a son to fulfill God's promise.

**All: We wait in hope for what we thought had been spoken
to us.**

One: As Moses waited... 40 years in the desert,
being prepared by God to lead his people.

**All: We wait for emptiness and humility;
for bravado to wither.**

One: As Israel waited... 40 years of wandering,
hungry, questioning, thirsting, unsure.

All: We wait for the right time to act.

One: As the Prophets waited... 1000 years of promises
that God would raise up a Savior.

All: We wait for the signs that God has not forgotten.

One: As John the Baptist waited...
Scanning the crowds for the one whose sandals
he would not be worthy to untie.

All: We long for an experience of the Divine.

One: As Jesus waited... 30 years of creeping time.
40 days in the desert of temptation.
3 years of misunderstanding.
3 days of death.

**All: So we wait for God's time:
Our turn to toil on leveling mountains
and straightening paths.
Our turn to watch the horizon.
Our turn to pass on the hope
that the One who promised is faithful and will return.**

One: With waiting hearts, let us pray.
Shepherding God,
guide us through this season of anticipation and hope.
Comfort our troubled minds, and strengthen our tired
bodies.

**All: Restore the hope this season offers,
so that we might lift our voices with strength and joy!
Straighten the crooked paths,
so that we might walk in your ways.
Level the rocky ground,
so that we might prepare for your arrival in our world.
In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

WE LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD

WORD FOR ALL AGES

George Zimmermann

*The children are invited to the front of the church at this time.**Afterward, they are dismissed to Sunday School for the remainder of worship. They will return upstairs at the end of worship.*

SONG RESPONSE “Thank God”

Thank God, thank God,**thanks in the morning, thanks in the noontime;****Thank God, thank God, thanks when the sun goes down.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

The Gospel according to Luke 3:15-17

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Prophet Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her

that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord;

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

A voice says, “Cry out!” And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All flesh is grass; their constancy is like the flower of the field.

The grass withers; the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

The grass withers; the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news;
lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom and
gently lead the mother sheep.

MESSAGE Comfort My People

WE RESPOND TO THE CALL OF GOD

HYMN "Blessed Assurance"

#473

TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayer

The 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 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.

THE OFFERING

Invitation to Give

Rather than pass the offering plates, they are available at the front and back of the sanctuary before and after worship for you to place your gifts in. You may also give online at www.richmonducc.org/donate-now

Prayer of Dedication (we say together)

**God of comfort and challenge,
receive these offerings from the bounty you've given us.
May we use them to comfort the brokenness of the world,
and may they challenge us to be more generous beings.
Amen.**

NEWS OF THE CHURCH

DISMISSAL WITH BLESSING

Pastoral Benediction

Sending Song “Something Beautiful for God” chorus

**Today let us do something beautiful for God
Do something small, but do it with great love
Do what we can, where we are, with what we’ve got
Today let us do something beautiful for God**

Call to worship, Worship Trick No.67 on **Johnny Baker’s Worship Tricks**; opening prayer from the **Ministry Matters** website of the United Methodist Publishing House; Dedication by H. E.A. Molozaiy; Music shared under CCLI License #1908882

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP

TODAY

November 24

Liturgist	Cheryl Kazimier	George Zimmermann
Video Director	Nicki Carter	
Usher	Dick Strahs	
Greeter	Mike Karch	Cheryl Kazimier
Fellowship Hosts	Penny Kraft	
Sunday School	Gail C & Jean V	Gail C & Jean V

AT CHURCH THIS WEEK

- Wider Missions Meeting, Tuesday, 1:30pm
- ButterBraid pick up, Tuesday, 4:30-5:00pm
- Choir Practice, Wednesday, 7:00pm
- Worship & Spiritual Growth Meeting, next Sunday, 11:15am

CHURCH NEWS

FOR SERVICE:

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS are needed for November and December. Sign up in the lounge.

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to sponsor altar flowers on a particular Sunday in honor of a birthday, anniversary or other special day, please talk to Jonathan Kaman, 815-347-5035.

NEW SURVEY – Final Days to Complete

Our congregation has been asked to take part in the national Faith Communities Today (FACT) Attender Survey. This survey is a part of the Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations (EPIC) project and Faith Communities Today (FACT) research initiative in which the United Church of Christ participates. Since 2000, FACT has conducted research that provides religious leaders of all traditions with critical information about the changing nature of congregational life and how to respond effectively.

Any adult worship attendee is encouraged to complete the survey, which will take 10-15 minutes and simply asks questions about your worship attendance and spiritual practices. All answers are anonymous. When this national survey data has been compiled, we will receive a summary of our answers as well as the report explaining the national trends (and a \$200 Amazon gift card) - as long as at least 10 answers are submitted from our congregation.

The link to the survey itself is found here

https://covidreligionstudy.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9GYI89a3NMOwuFw?congregation=12653

If you would prefer a paper copy of the survey, just reach out to Pastor Hope or the office and we can provide one for you.

The survey is open through November 22.

If you have other questions or concerns, contact Pastor Hope. We appreciate you considering giving your time to this interesting project.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT REHEARSALS begin on November 10 during Sunday School time. Talk to Jean Valsa if you're interested in helping in any way. Our young people will offer the pageant in worship on December 15.

NATIVITY SETS WANTED

Our beautiful church is participating again this year in the Richmond Cocoa Walk on Saturday, December 7th from 10AM to 3PM, by offering a nativity scene tour inside the sanctuary in addition to warm drinks. Last year we had 197 visitors come through the church and the visitors marveled at the beauty and variety of the nativity scenes! It was a place of peace for them and many lingered, sipping cider and coloring the coloring sheets we had available. This year we will expand the coloring, crafting area because so many people loved it.

Do you have a nativity scene or two to share for this day? Please jot down some special notes about your nativity scene - like why it is special to you, where you got it, how old it is, your name, etc., any memories or comments about your set makes it more interesting. We'll set them up throughout the sanctuary. Contact Elise with questions or for details. We need the written descriptions by December 1st (you can email the descriptions any time before this) and the nativity scenes brought to church by December 5th. Please leave them in the Hollywood room with your name attached. We have museum putty to secure fragile figures to the tables and we will be as careful as possible!

We also invite you to share your musical talent during the cocoa walk - voice or instrumental, solo or group, and we would love any and all levels of expertise. You are welcome to perform for a single song or for a time. It will add so much beauty to the nativity scene display! Call/text or email Elise at 815-347-2807 or elise@eliselivingston.com .

MANY THANKS to everyone who helped make the 9th annual Trivia Night a great success! All together, we raised just under \$5000, and we had a great time as always!

THANKSGIVING WORSHIP OPPORTUNITY

Everyone is invited to Faith First Congregational UCC at 624 Park St. in Genoa City at 6pm on Thanksgiving Eve (Nov. 27) for a service of thanks and praise led by their pastor, Nicole Werth.

PRAYERS for the WEEK OF November 17, 2024

If you have prayer updates or announcements to share, please send them to BOTH Pastor Hope (pastorhope@richmonducc.org) AND our office manager, Kathy Smietana (office@richmonducc.org). THANKS! *We will leave a person on our list for four weeks, unless asked to leave them on longer.*

JOYS: Birthdays: Theresa Kaman (11/17)

PRAYERS FOR:

Theresa Kaman's mother, Janis Voge
Sheryl Vezina
Carol Sligting's daughter and family

Ongoing Prayers:

Betty Waspi's son-in-law, Wayne Japp
Robert Richardson
Rev. Ruth Costello
Mike Karch
Bill Haase
Henry Eickelberg
Louise Strah's niece, Amy Lenik
Melissa Jones

Our Congregational Prayer Partner this week is Betty Waspi.

In the Wider Church: We pray for our neighbors in Christ at Ivanhoe Congregational U.C.C. in Mundelein as they are in the search process for a new pastor.

Members and Friends who are Homebound: Betty Waspi

Nun danket alle Gott

(Now Thank We All Our God)

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

Martin Rinkart, 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 the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. This hymn has become one of the most widely used hymns of the church.

Tune: NUN DANKET 6.7.6.7.6.6.6.6.
 Johann Cräger, 1647
 Harm. Felix Mendelssohn, 1840

Acts 17:30-31; Rev. 7:9-14

Fanny Crosby, 1873; alt.

1 Bless-ed as - sur - ance, Je - sus is mine! O what a
 2 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, per - fect de - light! Vi - sions of
 3 Per - fect sub - mis - sion, all is at rest, I in my

fore - taste of glo - ry di - vine! Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of
 rap - ture now burst on my sight; An - gels de - scend - ing, bring from a -
 Sav - ior am hap - py and blessed; Watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a -

God, born of the Spir - it, washed in Christ's blood.
 bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.
 bove, filled with God's good - ness, lost in Christ's love.

Refrain

This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long;

After hearing Phoebe Knapp play this tune on the piano, Fanny Crosby composed the poem on the spot. In her almost 95 years, Crosby wrote more than 8,500 gospel hymns and songs.

Tune: ASSURANCE Irr.
 Phoebe P. Knapp, 1873

This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais-ing my Sav-ior all the day long.

*Isa. 40:3-11; Ps. 103:15-17**J. Lewis Milligan, 1925; alt.*

1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a
 2 O Zi - on, who of - fers good tid - ings, to the
 3 But the word of our God is for - ev - er, our De -

call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a
 height of the moun - tains dare! Lift your voice to the cit - ies of
 fend - er's will is strong; God stands in the midst of

high - way, a high - way for our God! The
 Ju - dah: "Be - hold your God!" de - clare. Like the
 na - tions, to ren - der right the wrong. Then

Before moving to Canada, J. Lewis Milligan was a successful British journalist and poet. This text was written in 1925 to celebrate the union of three churches into The United Church of Canada, a body he served as public relations director.

Tune: ASCENSION Irr.
 H. Hugh Bancroft, 1938

val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the loft - y hills brought
 flowers of the field we per - ish, our hu - man works de -
 God shall be as a shep-herd, the lambs gath-ered to God's

low: make straight all the crook - ed pla - ces
 cay, the power and pomp of na - tions
 breast; and pas - tures of peace shall greet them,

where Em - man - u - el may go!
 shall pass like a dream a - way.
 to give to the wea - ry rest.