

**Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**February 12, 2023**

8:30 a.m.

11:00 a.m.

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***Prelude** - Fantasie (con moto) - Camille Saint-Saëns*

**Call to Worship** (Matthew 22; Psalm 119)

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”

**With my whole heart I seek you;**

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

**Do not let me stray from your commandments.**

**Opening Hymn No. 117\*\*** - *O God, Our Help in Ages Past*

*O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home.*

*Under the shadow of thy throne,  
still may we dwell secure;  
sufficient is thine arm alone,  
and our defense is sure.*

*Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received her frame,  
from everlasting, thou art God,  
to endless years the same.*

*A thousand ages, in thy sight,  
are like an evening gone;  
short as the watch that ends the night,  
before the rising sun.*

*Time, like an ever rolling stream,  
bears all who breathe away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the opening day.*

*O God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come;  
be thou our guide while life shall last,  
and our eternal home.*

**Invocation** (by Dr. Rubem Alves)

**Gracious God, make me sensitive to all the evidences of your goodness; and may I, trusting in you, free myself of the terror of death, and feel free to live intensely and happily the life you have given me. Amen.**

### **PROCLAMATION**

*The Word of God is read and proclaimed for all ages*

#### **Scripture Reading**

Psalm 119:1-10 (Old Testament page 566/535)

Happy are those whose way is blameless,  
who walk in the law of the LORD.

Happy are those who keep his decrees,  
who seek him with their whole heart,  
who also do no wrong,  
but walk in his ways.

You have commanded your precepts  
to be kept diligently.

O that my ways may be steadfast  
in keeping your statutes!

Then I shall not be put to shame,  
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

I will praise you with an upright heart,  
when I learn your righteous ordinances.

I will observe your statutes;  
do not utterly forsake me.

How can young people keep their way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

With my whole heart I seek you;

do not let me stray from your commandments.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

#### **Gloria Patri**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.**

#### **Anthem**

8:30 - *Clap Your Hands* - Mary Lynn Lightfoot

Clap, O clap your hands and sing. Lift up your voice in exultation. Clap, O clap your hands and sing. Sing a joyful jubilant song. Sing a new song, let the alleluias ring

11:00 - *Before the Throne of God* - Greer

Before the throne of God above I have a strong, and perfect plea; a great High Priest, whose name is Love, who ever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart; I know that while in heaven He stands no tongue can bid me thence depart. When Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within, upward I look, and see him there who made an end of all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free; for God the Just is satisfied to look on him and pardon me. Behold him there! the risen Lamb,

my perfect, spotless righteousness; the great unchangeable "I AM," the King of glory and of grace! One with himself, I cannot die, my soul is purchased by his blood; my life is hid with Christ on high, with Christ my Savior and my God.

**God's Word for Young Disciples**

(Those in grades K-4 may be excused for Children's worship during the 11:00 service. They may be picked up in Asbury Hall.)

**Baptism** (Hymnal p. 33)

...The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

...Their children you brought through the Jordan  
to the land which you promised.

**Sing to the Lord, all the earth.**

**Tell of God's mercy each day.**

...to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection  
and to make disciples of all nations.

**Declare his works to the nations,**

**His glory among all the people.**

...they may share in his final victory.

**All praise to you, Eternal Father,**

**Through your Son Jesus Christ,**

**who with you and the Holy Spirit  
lives and reigns for ever.**

**Amen.**

...Now it is our joy to welcome our new sisters and brothers in Christ.

**Through baptism**

**you are incorporated by the Holy Spirit**

**into God's new creation**

**and made to share in Christ's royal priesthood.**

**We are all one in Christ Jesus.**

**With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you**

**as members of the family of Christ.**

**Baptism Response Hymn No. 611 - Child of Blessing, Child of Promise**

*Child of blessing, child of promise,*

*baptised with the Spirit's sign;*

*with this water God has sealed you*

*unto love and grace divine.*

*Child of love, our love's expression,*

*love's creation, loved indeed!*

*Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,*

*into joy and laughter lead.*

*Child of joy, our deepest treasure,  
God's you are, from God you came;  
Back to God we humbly give you,  
live as one who bears Christ's name.*

*Child of God, the loving Parent,  
learn to know whose child you are.  
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,  
trust and love God more than all.*

### **Scripture Reading**

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 (Old Testament page 186/179)

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the LORD your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the LORD your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon** - *God's Promise of Freedom*

Pastor Jon Priebe

### **RESPONSE**

*The people of God respond to the Word*

**Hymn of Response No. 549\*\*** - *Where Charity and Love Prevail*

*Where charity and love prevail,  
there God is ever found;  
Brought here together by Christ's love,  
by love are we thus bound.*

*With grateful joy and holy fear  
His charity we learn;  
Let us with heart and mind and soul  
now love Christ in return.*

*Forgive we now each other's faults  
as we our faults confess;  
And let us love each other well  
in Christian holiness.*

*Let strife among us be unknown,  
let all contention cease;*

*Be Christ the glory that we seek,  
be ours His holy peace.*

*Let us recall that in our midst  
dwells God's begotten Son;  
As members of His body joined,  
we are in Him made one.*

*Love can exclude no race or creed  
if honored be God's name;  
our common life embraces all  
whose Maker is the same.*

### **Discipleship Moment**

**Offertory** - *Concerto in A minor: adagio* - Antonio Vivaldi  
(Please fill out the attendance sheet found in the pew pads.)

### **Doxology\*\***

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

### **Prayers of the People/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.**

### **SENDING FORTH**

*The people of God are sent forth to serve others and witness to their faith*

### **Closing Hymn No. 662\*\*** - *Stand Up and Bless the Lord*

*Stand up and bless the Lord,  
ye people of his choice;  
stand up and bless the Lord your God  
with heart and soul and voice.*

*Though high above all praise,  
above all blessing high,  
who would not fear his holy name,  
and laud and magnify?*

*O for the living flame  
from his own altar brought,  
to touch our lips, our minds inspire,  
and wing to heaven our thought!*

*God is our strength and song,*

*and his salvation ours;  
then be his love in Christ proclaimed  
with all our ransomed powers.*

*Stand up and bless the Lord;  
the Lord your God adore;  
stand up, and bless his glorious name,  
henceforth forevermore.*

***Benediction and Choral Response*** - (Hymn No. 438)

**Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go, my daily labor to pursue; Thee, only Thee, resolved to know  
in all I think or speak or do.**

***Postlude*** - *Fantasie (Allegro)* - Camille Sant-Saëns

**The flowers on the altar are dedicated to the glory of God and given**

in loving memory of Lynn Schrier, by Cynthia Schrier and family;  
in honor of Carol Lewis' 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, by Erin Orsine

**Service Music:** 8:30 Epworth Choir; 11:00 Chancel Choir

**Music:** One License A-731491

**Being Baptized Today: Noah Robert Cramer, Audrey Mae Cramer, and Lucy Eileen Cramer,**  
children of Tyson and Elizabeth (Monteith) Cramer and **Anthony James Besozzi,** son of Bryan  
and Morgan (Cain) Besozzi.

## CHURCH NOTES

**Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast:** Next Sunday, February 19, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. the scouts from Troop 152 will serve a delicious breakfast as a thank you to the church for its continued support. The meal will be free of charge, although donations would be gladly accepted. Join us for this much enjoyed and much missed tradition.

**Ushers:** We are looking for folks who would be willing to serve as ushers for the 11:00 service beginning the first Sunday in Lent (February 26.) It's an easy, but very necessary way of serving the church. It consists of passing out bulletins, helping folks to their seats if necessary, and passing the offering plates. Please contact Linda Demeter (740-334-9290) or the church office if you feel you'd like to serve in this way.

**Wednesday Men's Group:** Any men of the church and community are invited to attend the Wednesday Night Men's Group. It is modeled after John Wesley's "Class Meetings." They meet every other Wednesday from 7-8 pm in the parlor and **the next meeting will be on February 8.** Their purpose is to make themselves better disciples for Christ. They also have occasional group outings for their families. You may just come for the next meeting or if you would like more information you may contact Tom Hammonds at 330-322-8758.

**Lenten Studies:** We are offering two Lenten studies this year.

*The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence, will be the basis of the first study. We will use it to explore a life of worship. It will be led by Pastor Karol and done with the New Fellowship Sunday School class. It will begin on Sunday, February 26 at 9:45 a.m. and last for 6 weeks.

**A joint study** with our two neighboring churches will begin on Monday, February 27, at 7 p.m. It will take place at St. John's Episcopal and will be led by our 3 pastors and the pastors at the other 2 churches. It will last for 5 weeks.

We hope that you will join us for one or both of these studies. You may sign up on the pew pad. For questions, please contact Pastor Karol.

**Febru"wear"y Sock Mission:** In the month of Febru "wear"y, The Acts of Grace Circle invites you to donate new socks which will be distributed to the folks who come to our monthly First Church Feeds. You may put the socks in the bin beside the church library.

**First Church Feeds Needs:** At our monthly distribution, we are often able to get items like soap, paper towels, and pet food from the Food Bank. However, personal hygiene items, especially bladder control products for men and women (such as Poise pads or disposable underwear) are frequently requested by our clients but are rarely available from the Food Bank. We would love to be able to offer these products on a regular basis, so we are requesting donations. Please drop off items in the bin marked First Church Feeds behind the Welcome Center. And as always, monetary donations are appreciated as well.

**Heart4theCity:** Heart4theCity is a mission church of the East Ohio Conference located in the Goodyear Heights neighborhood. They are currently asking for small electric kitchen appliances, bedding, and gloves (work style NOT cotton as they have enough of these currently) to be sold in the store they operate. Donations may be placed in the bin located outside the church library.

**Walk to Emmaus:** Have you taken part in the Walk to Emmaus, either locally or in a different state or country? We would like to put together a participant list of people who have. Please send Pastor Mike the following information: name, phone number, email address, and your Walk information.

**Weekday Christian Preschool:** Registration has begun for the 2023-2024 school year. We offer a Christian preschool program for children who will be 3, 4, or 5 years old by September 30, 2023. The program is state licensed and staffed with degreed lead teachers and trained teachers' assistants. We believe that

learning takes place through discovery and play. Each classroom environment is child led and teacher facilitated. Our main objective is to foster a positive self-image in each child while nourishing their social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.

**Vacation Bible School:** We are starting to plan for our Vacation Bible School this summer and are looking for people who are interested in spending time with our children either as a teacher or helper. We have a wide variety of different activities and opportunities for you to use your talents in this service. Please contact Donna Curfman for more information or to volunteer. VBS will take place from June 19 - 23 and there are morning sessions for preschool through 4th grade, a SERVE program of field trips and mission projects for 5th and 6th graders, and an afternoon extension program with activities and field trips called EXTREME. Complete details are coming soon.

**Teacher Appreciation Brunch...** We would like to offer our thanks and appreciation to all those who have served in our Discipleship ministries this past year with our adults, youth and children as teachers, leaders and helpers by inviting you to Brunch reception on February 12 in the parlor from 9:15am to 11:15am. have set the time so that those who attend or teach a class on Sunday can come before or after. who teach or lead at other times are welcome toduring the Sunday School hour. will have light refreshments and share about the gift that is being made in your honor to ZOE ministries to help empower childrenof households to be able to provide for their siblings in Africa and India.



## Next Steps

### Yay or Nay

Much of modern society demands firmly drawn dividing lines

vs. 15 – Why isn't more of life broadcast in black and white?

But so many of our choices aren't so simple to grasp or easy to accomplish

### God's Promise of Freedom

vs. 19 – God's promise of freedom presents a daily choice

vs. 20 – this promise gives us the space to truly love God back

“Where charity and love prevail, there God is ever found”

Questions for Reflection: So many of life's choices can be difficult, especially when we feel like we have two good options or no good options. What if I give permission to make choices based on the greatest two commandments rather than what I perceive to be the most “right”?

Question for Discussion: How comfortable are you with allowing others the space to live and love God differently than you do? What are the central points that you need to agree on in order to accept someone else as part of your church family? How might God be pushing those boundary lines outward for you?

Memory Verse: **Deuteronomy 30:19a** – *“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have*

*set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life...”*

Readings for this Week: 1 Cor 10:23-33, Matthew 17:1-9, 1 John 4:13-19

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH –  
PRAYER BULLETIN  
FEBRUARY 12, 2023**



**MINISTERS & STAFF:**

Forrest Waller & John Fox

**HOSPITALIZED:**

**MEMBERS TO BE REMEMBERED IN PRAYER:**

Scott Adie Bob Ahonen Debbie Amundsen Shirley Asher Mary Ellen Atwood Jim Bailey Behrman family Mark & Cindy Blaser Robert & Patsy Boyd	Larry Brimlow Don Corbett Jim Evans Jean Finnegan Rose Gregory Mary Griest Joyce Haberkost Jim Henes Phil Hennen	Jane Krejci Gerald Lewis Pat Park Kathi Sawyer Cynthia Schrier David Townsend Mary & Ken Tunstall Marilyn Waller
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**DEEPEST SYMPATHY & PRAYERS:**

Nancy Yeager & family on the death of her father, member George Kirk on 1/21.

Marlene Mercurio & family on the death of her husband, member Gus Mercurio on 1/22.