**ST. JOHN’S UCC AND ST. PAUL’S UCC**

 **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**May 5, 2024**

RINGING OF THE BELL

 THE PRELUDE

 GREETINGS & WELCOME (UCC Identity Statement)

 ONE: Whoever you are, and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

 **ALL: Praise be to God!**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Psalm 98) – written by St. John’s Confirmands & Mentors

 ONE: Sing to the Lord a new song for the Lord has done marvelous things;

 **ALL: The Lord’s right hand and holy arm have worked salvation for him.**

 ONE: Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;

 **ALL: Make music to the Lord with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing.**

 ONE: Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;

 **ALL: Let them sing before the Lord, for the Lord comes to judge the earth.**

\*UNISON PRAYER OF APPROACH

 **Loving God, we remember Jesus’ commandment to love one another as he has loved us. May this time of worship remind us of the love we have in Jesus. As we leave this sacred space, may we be filled with joy as we share his love with others. Amen.**

SONG (on TVs) – *Lean in Toward the Light* by Carrie Newcomer

 UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION – written by St. John’s Confirmands & Mentors

 **Our spirits are restless with pain and anguish.  We have followed our own will and way, straying far from you.  We think we live best by living our own way. Make all our moments calm and bright.  Chase the darkness of sin and self will away. Shed your holy light on us.  Amen.**

 ASSURANCE OF GOD’S GRACE

 ONE: Jesus no longer calls us servants but friends. Each relationship is a new opportunity to abide in Christ’s love and a reminder that we can start again.
 **ALL: We are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.**

 THE READING OF SCRIPTURE (St. John’s – Charlotte & Jerrison Werdeo; St. Paul’s – Mary Sattler)

JOHN 15:9-17 (NRSVUE)

 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

 FOR THE CHILD IN ALL OF US

 THE MESSAGE – *BFF (Best Friends Forever)*

 SONG #397 – *Thank Our God for Sisters, Brothers*

 PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (*Joys and Concerns*)

 THE LORD’S PRAYER (St. John’s: *debts/debtors;* St. Paul’s: sins/sin against us)

**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*/sins), as we forgive (*our debtors*/those who sin 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.**

 BRINGING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

 UCC SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING VIDEO (on TVs) – *Strengthen the Church*

 #785 (*While the offering is brought to the altar*)

 **We give you but your own, what-e’er the gift may be;**

 **All that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.**

 UNISON OFFERTORY PRAYER

 **Loving God, we remember that one of Christ’s most important commandments is loving one another. With these gifts, help us show this love in our words and actions, caring for the vulnerable and offering hope in times of despair. Amen.**

COMMUNION SONG #349 – *I Come with Joy*

THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION (Liturgy adapted from *UCC Worship Ways*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\*THE BLESSING (From *UCC Worship Ways*)

 ONE: And now, sisters and brothers, go from this place knowing that the God who made you also sustains you. The God who calls you also goes with you. The God who loved you before you were born still loves you today, and into all the tomorrows.

 **ALL: Amen.**

**\***THE POSTLUDE