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The Reverend Tony Fields, Sr., Pastor • (223) 316-7453 • fieldstsr@gmail.com
Keith Gingrich, Consistory President, Rebekah Reece, Pianist

August 16, 2026 • 10:00 a.m.
Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

**You are invited to stand in body or in spirit*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

- Leader: Hear the word of the Lord: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes from the heart.
- **People: Search our hearts, O God, and create in us a clean spirit.**
- Leader: We come as people in need of grace, crying out, "Lord, help us".
- **People: Even when the road is long, we bring our persistent faith to the Healer.**
- Leader: Great is the faithfulness of our God! The table of grace is wide, and all are welcome to gather.
- **People: Let us worship the Lord with expectant hearts, for He hears our cries! Amen.**

***OPENING HYMN #43** "Great is Thy Faithfulness"

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

- Holy and merciful God, we gather today just as we are—some with bold faith, and others clinging to just a crumb of hope. We thank You that Your love breaks down human barriers, and that Your table is wide enough for all of us. Lord, we ask that You shift our focus from outward appearances to the condition of our hearts. Purify our minds, guard our lips, and align our desires with Your will. Cleanse us from anything that defiles our

witness, and fill us instead with Your compassion. We cry out to You today with the persistence of the Canaanite woman. Hear our prayers, heal our brokenness, and meet us in our deepest places of need. Send Your Holy Spirit to move among us, that our worship may be pleasing to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Healer, we pray. **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

- Leader: Let us confess our sins together:
- **People: Merciful God, we confess that we often worry more about outward appearances than the condition of our hearts. You have taught us that our words reveal what is truly inside us. We admit that we have allowed anger, judgment, and deceit to defile our speech and harm our neighbors. Forgive us for the times we have been like the disciples, wishing to send away those who inconvenience us or those who are different. Cleanse our hearts of prejudice, selfishness, and pride. Like the woman who pleaded for crumbs, we recognize our deep need for Your mercy. Forgive our lack of faith, break down the barriers we build, and transform us from the inside out. Hear now our prayers of confession. In the powerful name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.**

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

- Leader: Hear the good news! The table of God's grace is wide, and His mercy is abundant. Jesus looked upon a persistent outsider and declared, "Great is Your faith!" He looks upon You now with that same deep compassion. In Christ Jesus, Your sins are completely forgiven. Go in peace, with a clean heart.
- **People: Thanks be to God! Amen!**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into Hades; the third day, He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN #247 "Spirit of the Living God"

SCRIPTURE READING

Genesis 37: 1-4, 12-28 (Pg. 34)

Psalms 105: 1-6, 16-22, 45b (Pg. 556)

Romans 10: 5-15 (Pg. 160)

Matthew 14: 22-33 (Pg. 16)

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

MESSAGE

"The Heart of the Matter"

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION / LORD'S PRAYER

- Almighty God, like the mother who cried out on behalf of her suffering child, we come to You today bringing the pain, needs, and heartbreaks of our world. You are the great Healer, and we ask that You hear our persistent prayers.
- **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**
- We pray today for all children who are suffering from illness, trauma, neglect, or poverty. We lift up parents and caregivers who feel helpless, exhausted, or desperate for answers. Give them strength for the journey, resource them with community support, and grant Your miraculous healing power to those who are sick.
- **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**
- We pray for our world, which is so often divided by borders, culture, and prejudice. Forgive us for the walls we build to keep others out. We pray for refugees, immigrants, and those who feel like outsiders in the lands where they live. Teach Your Church to imitate the wide, inclusive hospitality of Jesus, ensuring that everyone has a seat at the table.
- **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**
- We pray for those in our own community who are crying out for a "crumb" of hope today. We remember the lonely, the grieving, the anxious, and those battling addictions. Reassure them that they are never overlooked or forgotten by You. Pour out Your peace that passes all understanding.
- **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**
- Finally, we pray for ourselves. When our faith feels small or tested, give us the holy persistence to keep seeking You. Guard our hearts from bitterness, and let the words of our mouths reflect Your deep love.
- We gather all these prayers and lift them to You in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, and who taught us to pray... **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. Lead us not into temptation**

but deliver us from evil for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

- In our scripture today, we encounter a woman who knew she was an outsider, yet she approached Jesus with bold, persistent faith, willing to receive even the crumbs from the table. But our Savior showed her—and he shows us—that His grace is not limited to crumbs. God prepares a feast of love, mercy, and abundance for all people.
- We now have the opportunity to respond to that abundance. Giving our tithes and offerings is not an outward ritual to make us look good; it is a spiritual practice that reflects a heart transformed by grace. Let us give generously today, so that our resources can break down barriers, feed the hungry, heal the hurting, and welcome everyone to God's table.
- Let us gather our tithes and offerings.

***OFFERING RESPONSE** “Doxology” (Hymnal, p. 625)

***DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS**

- **Generous God, You do not deal out Your blessings in crumbs, but pour them out in abundance. We offer these gifts to You today from thankful hearts. Bless and multiply what we bring. Use these offerings to extend Your healing, to provide for those in need, and to show Your inclusive love to our community and the world. Transform our hearts as we give, that we may live as signs of Your kingdom. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.**

***CLOSING HYMN #97** “All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name”

***BENEDICTION**

- Go forth into the world with a bold and persistent faith! Guard your hearts, so that the words of your mouth bring life and healing to others. Remember that the table of God's grace is wide, and there is a place for everyone. And now, may the blessing of God Almighty—the Father who creates you, the Son who heals and welcomes you, and the Holy Spirit who purifies your heart—be with you and remain with you always. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.**



Thank you to our Volunteers today:

Deacon of the Month: Randy Thomas

Worship Helper: Keith Gingrich

Message Reader: Louise Walmer, Linda Wampler and Glenda Kohr



SPONSORS NEEDED for flowers and bulletins. Please see the sign-up sheet in the Karen Light Fellowship Hall.

PASTORAL CARE: If anyone is in need of “pastoral care” during Pastor Tony’s sabbatical, they should reach out to either Robin Gingrich, Dena Eberhart, or any other member of Consistory.

We are looking for members who are willing to serve as **Worship Helpers**, as well as provide our Sunday Message throughout Pastor Tony’s Sabbatical. If you would be interested in helping, please see Julie Ditzler, Keith Gingrich, or Dena Eberhart. Thank you!

Joy Pantry: We will take a break from collecting food next month because of our irregular schedule, and will take it up again in October.

On **August 30th**, we will plan to have our worship service and a picnic lunch at the “middle pavilion” at memorial Lake State Park. The service will start at 10:00 am, with lunch to be served afterwards. There is plenty of parking! Bring your lawn chair and plan to join us! If you need directions, please ask anyone from Consistory. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board.

We are selling Marianna's **Subs and Pizzas** as an early fall fundraiser. The orders will arrive here on Thursday, September 10th. Orders are due on Tuesday, September 1st. Check out the poster and pick up an order form in the vestibule. Let's work together to make this an effective fundraiser!

Operation Christmas Child season is upon us! Take advantage of sales in the stores to gather items to pack in your box. A supply of boxes and lists of suggested gift items from Samaritan's Purse are available in the Fellowship Hall for you to get started.

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 23 rd	10:00 am	Worship Service
August 30 th	10:00 am	Worship Service at Memorial Lake – Lunch to follow
August 31 st	6:30 pm	Consistory Meeting



"In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me, deliver me speedily: Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me. For you are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name's sake, lead me and guide me."

(Psalm 31: 1-3 NKJV)

Please keep the following members and friends of St. John's in your prayers this week: Pat Ziegler • Millie Schriver • Randy Sweigart • Gerald Rudy Cortney Smith • Tom Graby • Steve Clark • Bruce R. Shepps • Jon Olesh • Callum Quinn Frank Shepler • Emily Rentschler • Jean Ann and Neal Grimes • Karen Metz Harford Overton • Jodi Checket • Mike Large • Reverend Tony and Jodie Fields