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

August 30, 2026 • 10:30 a.m.
Fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: From different paths and daily lives, we gather. Jesus calls us to turn from our own way.

People: We come to hear His voice and reorient our hearts. Not seeking the fleeting applause of the world, but the grace of God.

Leader: Our Lord invites us: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

People: For those who try to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for His sake will find true life.

Leader: Come, let us worship the Savior who gave His all for us. Let us lift our hearts and praise the King of Glory!

All: Open our eyes to Your presence, Lord, and our spirits to Your call. In Jesus' name, we worship. Amen

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Gracious and Holy God, we come before You today humbled by Your heavy but life-giving words. You call us to a love that is fierce, selfless, and willing to sacrifice. Forgive us for the times we prioritize our own comfort over Your kingdom, and when we choose the easy path instead of the way of the cross. Set our minds today not on human things, but on divine things. Pour out Your

Holy Spirit upon this congregation as we worship. Strip away our distractions, renew our minds, and give us the courage to follow Jesus wherever He leads. We surrender this time to You, trusting that in losing our lives for Your sake, we will find true and everlasting life. In the powerful name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, we pray. **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Leader: Jesus calls us to deny ourselves and take up our cross, yet we often choose comfort over commitment. Let us confess our sins together.

All: Merciful God, we confess that we often set our minds on human things rather than divine things. We want the glory of Your kingdom, but we shrink back from the sacrifice it requires. We try to save our own lives by clinging to safety, control, and worldly success. We have failed to love others selflessly, and we have ignored Your call to serve. Forgive our fear and selfishness. Remind us that to lose our life for Your sake is the only way to truly find it. Turn our hearts back to You. Amen.

(A moment of silent confession)

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Leader: Hear the good news: Christ did not come to condemn the world, but to save it. He willingly took up His cross so that we might be set free from sin and death. In Jesus Christ, your sins are completely forgiven. Receive His peace, take up your cross, and follow Him in joy.
All: 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.

SCRIPTURE READING

Exodus 3: 1-15 (pg. 50)

Psalms 105: 1-6, 23-26, 45c (pg. 556)

Romans 12: 9-21 (pg. 161)

Matthew 16: 21-28 (pg. 17)

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

MESSAGE TITLE “Stories Behind Some of Our Favorite Hymns ”

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God – by Taylor Brantley
Blest Be the Tie that Binds – by Micah Hendry
For the Beauty of the Earth – by Hymncharts Team
How Great Thou Art – by Luke Powell
What a Friend We Have in Jesus – by Joseph Scriven

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION / LORD’S PRAYER

Leader: God of grace and power, You call us to follow Jesus on the way of the cross—a path of radical love, sacrificial service, and ultimate trust. We bring our prayers for the Church and the world to You today, confident that You hear us. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for Your global Church. Strengthen Christians worldwide who face persecution for taking up their cross. Grant courage to pastors, leaders, and everyday believers to preach the gospel boldly and to set their minds on divine things, even when it is costly. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for the nations and our leaders. Where there is a thirst for power and domination, bring the peace of Christ. Inspire leaders to deny selfish ambition and instead pursue justice, protect the vulnerable, and seek the common good of all people. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for those carrying heavy, invisible crosses today. Comfort the sick, the grieving, the anxious, and the lonely. Remind them that they do not walk this difficult road alone, but that the Savior walks right beside them, carrying their burdens. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: We pray for this congregation. Help us to lose our lives for Your sake by pouring ourselves out for our neighbors. Teach us to love without holding back, to give without counting the cost, and to find our true life and joy in serving You. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer.

Leader: Into Your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your abundant mercy and the promise of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, 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

Jesus asked, "What will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life?" The world tells us to hoard, to accumulate, and to measure our worth by what we possess. But Christ invites us to a different rhythm—one of

release, generosity, and trust. When we give, we practice denying ourselves. We declare that our security is not in our bank accounts, but in the God who provides all things. Let us give today not out of obligation, but out of joy. Let us invest in the kingdom of God, trusting that what we release for Christ's sake will bring true and lasting life.

***OFFERING RESPONSE** "Doxology" (Hymnal, p. 625)

***DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS**

Generous God, we return to You a portion of what You have so freely given us. Bless these tithes and offerings. Use them to feed the hungry, comfort the broken, and spread the good news of Your kingdom. In giving these gifts, we surrender ourselves anew. Take our time, our talents, and our treasures. Use them—and use us—to show the world the life-giving way of the cross. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

***BENEDICTION**

Leader: Go out into the world with courage. Do not look for the easy path, but the faithful one. Deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow Christ. Remember that in losing your life for His sake, you will truly find it. And may the blessing of God Almighty—the Father who created you, the Son who redeemed you, and the Holy Spirit who sustains you—be with you now, and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.



Thank you to our Volunteers today:

Deacon of the Month: Randy Thomas

Lay Reader: Joe Ditzler

Worship Leader: Dean Eberhart



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!

MARIANNA’S SUB and PIZZA ORDERS DUE: Tuesday, September 1st. The orders will arrive here on Thursday, September 10th. Please make sure you give your order form to Joe Ditzler. Thank you!

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.

RALLY DAY is set for Sunday, September 13th, this year at Christ Church at 10:00 am. Special music will be provided by Vintage Brass Quintet. The worship service will be followed by a picnic. Please see the information on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall, and sign-up to join us in Annville that morning.

If you would like to send a note or card of encouragement to Rosie Gardner, her mailing address in rehab is:

Rose Marie Gardner
Penn State Rehabilitation Hospital
Room #1039
1135 Old West Chocolate Avenue
Hummelstown, PA 17036

UPCOMING EVENTS

August 31 st	6:30 pm	Consistory Meeting
September 6 th .	10:30 am	Worship Service
September 13 th .	10:00 am	Rally Day at Christ UCC Please sign up on the sheet in the Fellowship Hall



"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 • Cathy Rentschler • Rose Marie Gardner

HYMNS

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

1 A mighty fortress is our God,
a bulwark never failing;
our helper he, amid the flood
of mortal ills prevailing.
For still our ancient foe
does seek to work us woe;
his craft and power are great,
and armed with cruel hate,
on earth is not his equal.

2 Did we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing,
were not the right Man on our side,
the Man of God's own choosing.
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is he;
Lord Sabaoth his name,
from age to age the same;
and he must win the battle.

3 And though this world, with devils filled,
should threaten to undo us,
we will not fear, for God has willed
his truth to triumph through us.
The prince of darkness grim,
we tremble not for him;
his rage we can endure,
for lo! his doom is sure;
one little word shall fell him.

4 That Word above all earthly powers
no thanks to them abideth;
the Spirit and the gifts are ours
through him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
this mortal life also;
the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still;
his kingdom is forever!

Blest Be the Tie that Binds

1 Blest be the tie that binds
our hearts in Christian love;
the fellowship of kindred minds
is like to that above.

2 Before our Father's throne
we pour our ardent prayers;
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
our comforts and our cares.

3 We share our mutual woes,
our mutual burdens bear,
and often for each other flows
the sympathizing tear.

4 From sorrow, toil, and pain,
and sin, we shall be free;
and perfect love and friendship reign
through all eternity.

For the Beauty of the Earth

1 For the beauty of the earth,
for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth
over and around us lies.

Refrain:

Christ, our Lord, to you we raise
this, our hymn of grateful praise.

2 For the wonder of each hour
of the day and of the night,
hill and vale and tree and flower,
sun and moon and stars of light, [Refrain]

3 For the joy of human love,
brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth, and friends above,
for all gentle thoughts and mild, [Refrain]

4 For yourself, best gift divine,
to the world so freely given,
agent of God's grand design:
peace on earth and joy in heaven. [Refrain]

How Great Thou Art

1 O Lord my God,
When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works
Thy hands have made,
I see the stars,
I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy pow'r throughout
the universe displayed!

Refrain:

Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee;
How great Thou art,
How great Thou art!
Then sings my soul,
My Savior God, to Thee;
How great Thou art,
How great Thou art!

2 When thru the woods
And forest glades I wander
And hear the birds
Sing sweetly in the trees,
When I look down
From lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook
And feel the gentle breeze, [Refrain]

3 And when I think
That God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die,
I scarce can take it in –
That on the cross,
My burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died
To take away my sin! [Refrain]

4 When Christ shall come
With shout of acclamation
And take me home,
What joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow
In humble adoration
And there proclaim,
My God, how great Thou art! [Refrain]

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.