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October 25, 2026 • 10:30 a.m.
Twenty-Second Sunday After Pentecost
CONTEMPORARY MUSIC SUNDAY

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

PREPARING FOR WORSHIP "In the Name of the Lord" by Sandi Patty

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Hey everyone, welcome! Let's lean in together today. The religious experts of the day asked Jesus a massive question: "Of everything God asks of us, what matters most?"

People: And Jesus didn't hesitate. He said, "Love the Lord your God with passion and prayer and intelligence."

Leader: Loving God with everything we've got. That's why we're here. But he didn't stop there. He said a second requirement is just like it: "Love others as well as you love yourself."

People: All of God's truth, all of His law, is anchored in this kind of love.

Leader: So let's hit pause on the noise of the week. Let's focus our hearts, minds, and energy on the One who first loved us.

All: God, we're here for You. Teach us how to love You completely and love our neighbors deeply. Let's worship together!

***OPENING HYMN** "El Saddai" by Amy Grant

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

God, we are so grateful to be here in Your presence today. Thank You for cutting through all the noise, the rules, and the distractions of our week to remind us of what truly matters: loving You completely and loving the people around us. Holy Spirit, we invite You into this room right now. Ignite our hearts, open our minds, and fill our spirits. Take our worship—our singing, our prayers, our listening, and our community—and use it to transform us. Teach us how to love You with everything we've got, and show us how to naturally pour that love out into our neighborhoods and families this week. We lock our focus onto You today. In Jesus' name,

All: Amen.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God, we come to You today admitting that loving You completely and loving our neighbors deeply is a lot easier to talk about than it is to actually live out. We confess that our hearts are often divided, cluttered with our own ambitions, anxieties, and distractions. We give You our leftovers instead of our everything. We confess that we struggle to love our neighbors as ourselves. We hold onto grudges, we pass judgment, and we look away when it is inconvenient to care. Forgive us for the times this week we chose self-interest over sacrificial love. Cleanse our hearts and realign our minds. By Your grace, break our bad habits and fill us with a love that is generous, authentic, and active. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who showed us what perfect love looks like. Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Hear the good news: God's love for us isn't based on how perfectly we perform, but on how perfectly He forgives.

Through Jesus Christ, the burden of our failures, our half-hearted love, and our mistakes has been completely washed away. You are fully known, deeply loved, and entirely forgiven.

Receive His grace today, drop the weight of your past, and step forward into the freedom of a fresh start. **All: Amen.**

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH A New Creed (*United Church of Canada, 1980*)**

Leader: We are not alone, we live in God's world

All: **We believe in God, who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh to reconcile and make new, who works in us and other by the Spirit. We trust in God.**

We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Deuteronomy 34:1-12 (pg. 191)

Psalms 90:1-6, 13-17 (pg. 547)

Acts 10:44-48 (pg. 130)

Matthew 22:34-46 (pg. 25)

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

Message – “More Stories Behind Some of Our Favorite Contemporary Christian Songs”

- “Revelation Song” by Guy Penrod
- “You Say” by Lauren Daigle
- “Above All” by Michael W. Smith
- “I Can Only Imagine” by MercyMe

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION / LORD’S PRAYER

God, because You love this world completely, we bring the needs of our world, our community, and our lives to You today.

We pray for our world and its leaders. In places torn apart by conflict, systemic injustice, and division, let Your love cut through the noise. Bring peace where there is violence, and open doors for reconciliation. Give our leaders the wisdom to make decisions that prioritize the vulnerable and promote the common good. We pray for our local community. Help us to be neighbors who truly see one another. We lift up those right around us who are struggling with illness, loneliness, financial stress, or anxiety. Wrap them in Your comfort, and use our hands and feet to provide tangible support and care.

We pray for Your Church, both here and across the globe. Keep us anchored in what matters most. Strip away our petty arguments and distractions, and fuel us with a passion to serve. May our community be known by how deeply we love You and how fiercely we love the people around us.

We bring You the quiet requests heavy on our hearts right now...

(Brief pause for silent prayer)

Thank You for hearing us, for holding us, and for constantly moving in our lives.

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray:

All: 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 made it clear that true faith isn't about checking off legalistic boxes—it's about giving our whole heart, soul, and mind to God, and letting that love spill over into how we care for our neighbors.

The offering we give today is a tangible expression of that love. It is our chance to put our resources where our faith is. When we give, we are saying that everything we own belongs to God first, and we want to use what we have to bless our community and support those in need.
Let us give out of gratitude for the radical love God has shown us.

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

***DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS**

God, everything we have is a gift from You. We pray that You take these financial gifts and multiply them. Use them to fuel the work of Your church, to bring comfort to the hurting, and to show real, tangible love to our neighbors right here in our community. We dedicate our resources, and our lives, to Your mission. In Jesus' name, Amen.

***THE BLESSING OF THE SHOEBOXES**

Leader: Bountiful God, you are the giver of every good and perfect gift. Today, we bring before you these shoeboxes, packed with care, overflowing with joy, and sent forth in love.

People: Lord, use these simple gifts to share your extraordinary love.

Leader: We pray for the children who will open these boxes. For those who have never received a gift, those living in poverty, and those affected by war, hardship, or disaster.

People: May these boxes bring them comfort, hope, and a reminder that they are never forgotten.

Leader: We pray for the hands that packed these gifts. For the generosity of this community, the intentionality behind every item chosen, and the prayers tucked into every corner of these boxes.

People: Multiply our giving, Lord, and grow our hearts in generosity.

Leader: We pray for the journey these boxes will take. Protect every truck, plane, ship, and volunteer that will carry them across borders, over oceans, and into remote villages.

People: Guide them safely to their destinations, breaking down every barrier.

Leader: Most of all, we pray that as these boxes are opened, your Holy Spirit will open hearts to the Good News of Jesus Christ. May the tangible items inside point to the greatest gift of all: your grace and salvation.

People: To the children, to their families, and to their communities, let your light shine.

Leader: Loving God, we dedicate these boxes to your glory. Bless the toys to bring smiles, the school supplies to bring opportunities, and the personal care items to bring comfort.

All: We send these gifts out in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, praying that your kingdom come and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN**

“It is Well” featuring Kristene DiMarco

***BENEDICTION**

As we step back into the rhythm of our week, remember the one thing that changes everything: love God with all you've got, and love your neighbor as yourself.

Go out into your schools, your workplaces, and your neighborhoods with a clear focus. Let your intelligence, your passion, and your daily choices reflect the radical love of Christ.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unfiltered love of God, and the constant presence of the Holy Spirit be with you today and every single day. Go in peace to love and serve. **All: Amen.**

POSTLUDE



to our Volunteers today:

Deacon of the Month: Glenda Kohr

Worship Leader: Dena Eberhart

Lay Reader: Charlene Ziegler

Everyone who packed items to share for in our shoeboxes.

The **altar flowers and bulletins today** are sponsored by Glenda Kohr with appreciation for the service of all of our armed forces. Thank you, Glenda!



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

Lumens of Hope – for the month of October, we will continue to have votive candles at the front of the Sanctuary. Whether prior to the service, or during the passing of the peace, we invite you to **light a candle** as an outward sign of love, care, and support to those individuals you know may need an extra blessing during the upcoming week.

A total of **130.2 pounds of food** was donated from our Harvest Home celebration last week to the **Joy Pantry**. Way to go, St. John's!

Thanks to all who helped make a **St. John's pot pie dinner** a reality once more! A community favorite is back!!

We will observe **All Saints Sunday on Sunday, November 1st**. If you have someone you would like to have recognized, please speak to Robin Gingrich, Louise Walmer, or Dena Eberhart as soon as possible.

Look through your crockpot recipes and choose one to prepare for our **Golden Ladle Contest on Sunday, November 8th**. Any kind of slow cooker dish is welcome, and will be served and voted on during a covered dish meal after worship.

UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1 st	11:00 am	Worship Service All Saints Sunday
November 8 th	11:00 am	Worship Service Golden Ladle Covered Dish And Contest



"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 • Rose Marie Gardner • Mike Kachurak