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Keith Gingrich, Consistory President, Rebekah Reece, Pianist

**October 4, 2026 • 10:30 a.m.**  
**Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost**  
**World Communion Sunday**

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

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **PRELUDE**

## **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

**Leader:** From north and south, from east and west, we come.

**People:** **We gather at the table of our Lord.**

**Leader:** From every language, tribe, and nation, from every corner of the earth, we are called.

**People:** **Though we are many, in Christ we are one.**

**Leader:** God has prepared a rich banquet of grace, open to all who hunger and thirst.

**People:** **Come, let us share the bread of life and the cup of salvation together.**

**Leader:** Let us worship God in unity, joy, and praise.

**People:** **Amen. Let us worship God!**

**\*OPENING HYMN #275** "How Firm A Foundation"

### **\* PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Holy and Universal God,

We invoke your Holy Spirit to move among us today. As we gather in this place, we join our hearts with millions of your children across the globe—in vibrant cathedrals, quiet living rooms, underground chapels, and under the shade of trees. Though we speak different languages, live in different cultures, and face different struggles, you are the one Lord who binds us together.

Open our eyes to see your image in our global neighbors. Open our ears to hear your word. Open our hearts to receive the grace of your holy table. Transform this bread and cup into a living sign of our unity, so that we may taste your kingdom here on earth. Be present in our prayers, our songs, and our fellowship today. **Amen.**

### **\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Leader:** Christ's table is a place of welcome, yet we often build walls where God has broken them down. Trusting in the boundless mercy of the Creator, let us confess our sins together.

**People:** Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved your global family as you have loved us. We confess that we allow borders, language, and culture to divide us instead of unite us. We close our eyes to the hunger, poverty, and injustice faced by our brothers and sisters around the world. We protect our own comfort while ignoring the suffering of others. Forgive us for fracturing your body, the Church. Melt away our apathy, break down our walls of hostility, and fashion us into a true community of peace, justice, and love. **Amen.**

### **\*WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

**Leader:** Hear the good news: God's grace spans the entire globe and reaches into every human heart. In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, restored, and made whole.

**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 #4**     “How Great Thou Art”

**SCRIPTURE READING**

Exodus 20: 1-4, 7-9, 12-20 (pg.66)

Psalms 19: (pg.498)

Philippians 3:4b-14 (pg. 198)

Matthew 21: 33-46 (pg.24)

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

**SERMON**

“ Is God First in Your Life? “

**PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

**Leader:** Gracious and Global God, you are the creator of all people, nations, and lands. Today, as we join hearts with our brothers and sisters around the world, we bring our prayers for the earth and all who inhabit it.

We pray for your global Church. Empower your people to be agents of healing, peace, and justice in every corner of the world. Where there is division, grant unity. Where there is persecution, grant courage. Where there is exhaustion, grant renewal.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** We pray for the leaders of nations. Guide them in the ways of justice, humility, and peace. Turn hearts away from violence, war, and the pursuit of power, and direct them toward the care of the vulnerable, the refugee, and the poor.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** We pray for a world fractured by hunger, poverty, and systemic injustice. As we break bread today, remind us of those who have no bread. Inspire us to share our resources generously so that no one goes hungry, and every child of yours may live with dignity.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** We pray for our local community and those closest to our hearts. We lift up the sick, the grieving, the lonely, and those facing difficult transitions  
*(moment of silence for personal prayers)*

Wrap them in your comfort and let them feel the embrace of your community.

**People: Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Leader:** Gathering all our prayers into one, we thank you for the feast of grace that unites us across oceans, borders, and barriers. Keep us faithful until that day when all your children feast together at your heavenly table.

**All: Amen.**

**HYMN # 274**     “Break Thou the Bread of Life”

**HOLY COMMUNION** (See insert)

**INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

As we prepare to come to Christ's table from every corner of the earth, we are reminded that everything we have is a gift from God. Our giving today is an act of solidarity with our global family. It is a tangible way to say that we belong to one another, and that the hunger of our neighbor is our concern.

Let us give generously this morning—not out of obligation, but out of joy—so that the ministry of Christ's church may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and bring hope to a hurting world. Let us gather our tithes and offerings.

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

**\*DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS**

**Holy God, receive these gifts as tokens of our love and symbols of our unity with your global family. Multiply what we have given today so that it may become bread for the hungry, comfort for the broken, and hope for the oppressed. Use our money, our time, and our lives to build bridges where walls exist, and to proclaim your peace to the ends of the earth. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Host and Savior, we pray. Amen.**

**\*CLOSING HYMN #76** “O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing”

**\*BENEDICTION**

**Leader:** Go out into the world in peace.  
Have courage; hold fast to what is good;  
return no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the suffering; honor all people.  
Remember that you are part of a global family,  
bound together by the love of Jesus Christ.  
And may the blessing of God Almighty—  
the Creator who formed us,  
the Christ who feeds us,  
and the Holy Spirit who unites us—  
be with you, and remain with you, now and forevermore.

**All: Amen.**



**We welcome Pastor Larry Richard** once again here at St. John's.  
Thank you for leading us in worship and communion!

**Thank you to our Volunteers today:**

Deacon of the Month: Glenda Kohr  
Worship Helper: Keith Gingrich  
Lay Reader:



**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!

**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.

**Boscov's Friends Helping Friends** is just a few weeks away, Wednesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, from 8am-11pm. The pass is just \$5.00 and the money stays here at St. John's. Get your Christmas lists ready and shop til you drop! See Robin Gingrich for your pass.

The **Neighbors In Need** offering will be collected during our worship services today and next week. Look for the envelopes in your pew.

We will celebrate **Harvest Home** on October 18<sup>th</sup>, so we will push back our Joy Pantry Sunday to that date this month.

Hungry for some good St. John's pot pie? We will hold a **pot pie sale** on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Kitchen help is needed of the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> – mark your calendars!

Please make sure your **Operation Christmas Child** boxes are prepared and brought back to the church in time for our **October 25<sup>th</sup>** service. They will be blessed during that service and taken to the distribution center afterward.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

|                          |          |                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| October 11 <sup>th</sup> | 10:00 am | Joint Service with Christ Church, here at St. John's, Rev. Kevin McLemore, Conference Regional Minister, preaching Neighbors In Need |
| October 18 <sup>th</sup> | 10:30 am | Worship Service<br>Harvest Home Sunday / Joy Pantry Sunday                                                                           |

October 23<sup>rd</sup>

Pot Pie Sale  
Kitchen help needed on  
the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>

October 25<sup>th</sup>

10:30 am

Worship Service  
Blessing of our OCC  
Boxes



*"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 • Rose Marie Gardner • Betty Schriver, family and friends of Vernon Schriver, Sr.