

# **Venice United Church of Christ**

**August 31, 2025**

**Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**

**Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC**

**Sermon: “A banquet of angels”**

**United in Christ’s love,**

**A just world for all**

**Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**August 31, 2025**

**Singing Prelude**

*This is the Day*

Garrett

**This is the day, this is the day  
that our God has made, that our God has made.  
We will rejoice, we will rejoice  
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.  
This is the day that our God has made;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day, this is the day that our God has made.**

**Welcome and Announcements**

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ. Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space this morning. I am Pastor Barb, and Rev. Charlene Raitt will be our liturgist today. Sara Stafford is our song leader.

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given in Celebration of Rev. Charlene Raitt's 50th Anniversary of Ordination in the United Church of Christ.

Here at Venice UCC, we welcome, affirm, and choose good trouble throughout the year, and also honor this special time of lifting up the unique and beautiful ways in which God has created us all.

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to share, please make sure that you let the office know, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have notated your presence at our welcome table. (Gift for you) We are excited to get to know you.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,  
as Venice United Church of Christ,  
we empower and invite everyone  
to join us in this divine place  
that we share on-line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,  
no matter who you are  
or where you are on life's journey,  
and no one is turned away.

Before we begin our worship I would like to lift up a few activities that are happening this week.

Following Worship, our Leadership Council is inviting everyone to gather to celebrate the anniversary of Rev. Charlene's

ordination across the lane in Naar Hall. Please join us for this special time of fellowship.

Tomorrow is Labor Day, a day that we remember everyone who has worked so hard to create healthy workforce practices over the centuries. In honor of their work, our office will be closed and SpiritFed, our Monday Noon Lunch Zoom, will not be meeting. We will resume the following week.

I encourage you all to check out events that are happening throughout the rest of the week in our app. Our Library is open on Wednesday for those who would like to check out our fabulous collection of the best reads, our Wednesday Bible study continues to meet, the Men's group is meeting from Breakfast at Panera on Friday, and the Knit Wits will also be gathering this week. Whether through worship, meetings, events, or fun activities, there are many ways to connect.

For We come to worship a generous, steadfastly loving God, who created and names each of us a beloved child of God.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

## **We Approach God's Presence**

### **Meditation/Bringing in the Light of Christ**

*Grace Alone*

Brown/Nelson/arr. Hayes

### **Responsive Call to Worship<sup>1</sup>**

Come and worship!

Let us lift our voices responsively as God calls us to our worship together.

Welcome to the banquet of hope,  
the open bar of prayer,  
the “anonymous” circle of acceptance.

**We come because we are invited.**

Welcome to a fiesta of joy  
or a mercy meal of tenderness,  
where every seat is a place of honor.

**We come because we are invited.**

Welcome to a party for God's love-reveal,  
where all seating is a circle,  
and karaoke is never necessary  
because we sing our own stories.

**We come because we have an invitation,  
not on paper, simply our names.**

Please rise in body or in spirit to sing ...

**\*Hymn**

*Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*

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<sup>1</sup>**Receive the Invitation: Service Prayers for the Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost** were written by Maren C. Tirabassi, a UCC pastor, author of fiction and non-fiction, and also lover of summer, the company of dogs, mystery novels and science fiction conventions. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/after-pentecost-c-august-28/>

## Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love

John 13:1-20; Gal. 5:13-14

Tom Colvin, 1969; rev. 1994

*Refrain Unison*

Je - su, Je - su, fill us with your love, show

us how to serve the neigh-bors we have from you.

1 Knelt at the feet of his friends, si - lent - ly wash - ing their

2 Neigh-bors are rich and poor, var - ied in col - or and

3 These are the ones we should serve, these are the ones we should

4 Lov - ing puts us on our knees, show - ing our faith by our

feet, Je - su, you act - ed as ser - vant to them.

race, neigh-bors are near and far a - way.

love; all these are neigh-bors to us and you.

deeds, serv - ing the neigh-bors we have from you.

*This African folk melody was presented to the Church at Chereponi, Northern Ghana, by Ghanaian musicologist, A. A. Mensah, when United Church of Christ missionaries, Al and Sue Krass were serving there. Like Tom Colvin, a Scottish missionary in neighboring Tamale, Al Krass was encouraging the making of hymns to indigenous melodies. Tom Colvin wrote these words to this adapted form of the melody in dedication to the Church at Chereponi.*

Tune: CHEREPONI Irr. with refrain  
Ghanaian folk song; adapt. Tom Colvin, 1969  
Arr. Jane Marshall, 1982

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## **\*Prayer for Transformation and New Life<sup>2</sup>**

Let us pray:

We cry out to you, O God,  
For money talks and power makes the world go around,  
or so they would have us believe;  
And we, whether forgetting or fearful,  
Come to feast in hopes that we may find a place  
among the rich and strong.

But, you, O God, feel no shame,  
fear no harm  
as you walk among the poorest and weakest  
feeling completely at home.

**Thank you for the voice of your love  
that keeps singing of the power in weakness,  
the wealth in simplicity,  
and the freedom and safety that is found  
in walking your humble, serving way.**

Thank you for this gathering of community  
where there are no barriers,  
and all our abilities are celebrated as gifts.

**Thank you for this banquet of hospitality where we  
learn from you how to celebrate with everyone:  
stranger, friend, chosen family,  
those whose faces are unfamiliar to us,  
and the face who meets us in the mirror.**

**Amen.**

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<sup>2</sup>**Along the Road: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday after Pentecost** was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/after-pentecost-3c-june-29/>



## \*Words of Grace

Hear these words of Grace:

God loves, nudges, and embraces us all;  
inviting us to hold a balloon of joy  
and clap at the candles of another's cake.  
Our hubris and resistance are forgiven; a plate is set for us.

## \*Response

*Don't be Afraid*

...

**Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,  
my love is stronger than your fear.  
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,  
and I have promised, promised to be always near.**

*Gently*

The musical score is written for a single voice in 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. The first system contains the lyrics 'Don't be a-fraid. My love is strong-er, my love is strong-er than your'. The second system contains 'fear. Don't be a-fraid. My love is strong-er and'. The third system contains 'I have prom-ised, prom-ised to be al-ways near.' The melody is simple and gentle, with a mix of quarter, eighth, and half notes. The bass line is mostly whole and half notes, providing a steady accompaniment.

Don't be a-fraid. My love is strong-er, my love is strong-er than your

fear. Don't be a-fraid. My love is strong-er and

I have prom-ised, prom-ised to be al-ways near.



## **We Encounter God in the Word**

**First Reading**     Jeremiah 2:1-3a; Hebrews 13:1-2

— *The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation by Priests for Equality*

Hear these words of God's longing from Jeremiah 2:1-3a:

1-3 "The word of YHWH came to me, and said,

"Go! Proclaim this in the hearing of Jerusalem! Thus says YHWH: I remember the devotion of your youth, how you loved me as a spouse, how you accompanied me in the desert, through an unsown land. Israel was consecrated to YHWH, the first-fruits of God's harvest."

And these words to live by from Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16

1-2 Continue to love each other as sisters and brothers. Don't neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

3-6 Keep in mind those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them. And be mindful of those who are being treated badly, since you know what they are enduring.

[In every way consider marriage a precious thing; don't let the hubris of conquest destroy holy intimacy, for the covenant we keep with each other mirrors the covenant we have made with God.]<sup>3</sup>

Put the love of money out of your lives and be content with what you have, for God has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." Thus we may say with confidence, "God is my Helper, and I will not be afraid; what can mere humans do to me?"

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<sup>3</sup> a new paraphrase, based upon the paraphrase by Clarence Jordan from Koinonia Farms who offered a "radical model of strangers finding reconciliation in the segregated South."

7-8 Remember your leaders, who preached the Word of God to you, and as you reflect on the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever.

15-16 Through Jesus let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise—that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge God’s Name. Keep doing good works and sharing your resources. These are the sacrifices that please God.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

**Special Music**

*On the Wings of a Dove*

Ferguson

*Congregation is invited to sing the refrain.*

**On the wings of a snow...white...dove...**

**God sends down pure...sweet...love...**

**a sign from above.....on the wings of a dove.**

<sup>1</sup> On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

<sup>7-11</sup> When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host, and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

<sup>12-14</sup>. He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

May the Words of my mouth,  
And the meditation of all of our hearts  
Be acceptable in your sight, O Lord,  
Our rock and our sustainer.

Tortillas, hominy, pupusas, grits, popcorn, polenta, corn chowder, corn salad, corn salsa, corn pudding, succotash, canned corn, creamed corn, corn on the cob, corn bread, corn pone, corn dodgers, hoecakes, corn fritters...

So many recipes made from corn, one could almost serve a banquet just from dishes made from corn.

We thought we were serving cornbread on that cold January day. Pan-fried cornbread, along with greens and beans and protein — I think it may have been chicken. There were so many of us that I was behind the servers in the kitchen, taking my turn serving or running errands so that the food was served hot.

But we were the only ones in line. The other half of our group was on the other side of the serving counter, filling orders and delivering meals to the tables filled with women and children.

Do we have extra corn fritters?

Any extra pone?

A few more hoecakes?

I went to find out from the staff.

I was new to the south at that point, and soon discovered that what we had was already on the line — the fried cornbread.

After all the guests were served, although in some ways we were more guest than many seated in that room, we filled our own

plates and went and joined them for the meal.

And I quickly discovered that there were as many ways to make fried cornbread as there were names to call it. And while the names and methods for preparing it differed, one thing remained the same: somehow, you have to boil it before you fry it.

And along with the names and recipes for that frybread, stories from childhood came flooding back:

“My mama used to”

“We would gather at my Auntie’s”

“We would serve it with greens to celebrate the new year.”

I was seated next to Puff [not her real name], who was a small, beautiful, woman whose lines of age were etched gently upon her face. As we ate that banquet of boiled fried cornbread, greens, beans, and chicken we just talked, and got to know each other.

I discovered that she had been coming to eat lunch at what was then known as the Urban Kitchen and what is now called the Women’s Community Kitchen and Outreach Center for over ten years. Living alone in the affordable housing units nearby, the meal not only provided a supplement to her income; it provided an interruption and company in her otherwise quiet day.

But life was not always quiet for her. When she finally discovered that not only were most of our group seminary students, but I was a pastor, she began to recite her spiritual background as if on cue. Raised in a charismatic church at her grandmother’s knee, she had learned her scripture, but she was rebellious. She hated the long skirts and the long hair. The restrictions attributed to Paul that said what women could and could not do. The additional prohibitions taught to her by her grandmother trying to keep her safe as a Black woman in a culture that showed little

regard for Black women.

So, in defiance, she joined the Black Panther Party for Self Defense, and was there when history happened. She was there when they helped to feed hungry children and provided access to medical clinics. She was there when they advocated protecting Black residents from police brutality. And, like so many others at that time, she was there when the government branded the Black Panthers a terrorist organization, and her compassion and convictions landed her in jail.

With limited income opportunities when she emerged, she cared for the women and the women's children. She made sure that they were safe, or at least as safe as they could be, when they had 'their appointments.'

Life was not easy for her. She heard God tell her that she would experience many years of suffering, and she paid attention. Finally, one day in the midst of her hunger and suffering at a bus stop there in Atlanta, she heard God tell her to follow a 'working' woman. It seemed odd to do so, but she did, and by following her she was led to her first meal at the Women' Community Kitchen. Since that first warm meal, and in conjunction with the outreach assistance available there, she was finally able to get off the streets. And while Puff had been coming for over ten years at the moment when we were able to sit and talk and share our life stories, she had not once seen that woman again. Yet here she was, with stable housing and stable meals, friend to so many who came to eat there, sharing with me the powerful presence of God in her life as I was able to catch glimpses of history through her eyes.

Now, when Puff and I sat down to talk, I will admit that one of my first responses was anger: anger that passages like our passage

from Hebrews today have been used against people over the centuries to keep them in their place rather than lifting them up. Anger that passages like this morning's scripture from Hebrews has been used to twist the blessing of mutual and consensual love into one of condemnation of some and elevation of others. Anger that passages from scripture like our text from Hebrews have been used to raise male leadership to the pedestal of deification. Anger that passages like this morning's passage from Hebrews have been used to regiment the subservience of some at the expense of their own health and wellness. I had to go back to the Greek translations this week in order to discover ways of sharing this passage that circumvented language that has been used in the last few hundred years as means of control and power rather than grace and the reminder to be a blessing.

And by the way she told me her story, inserting apologies where none were needed, it was this 'Biblical' language of control that Puff initially expected me to want to hear from her — her gratitude and God's power in her life even when she chose to be a Black Panther — in exchange for the good food she needed each day and the imposition of my company.

And I will admit, at that time, I didn't know as much about the Black Panthers as I should have. I didn't know that it was exactly because of their feeding programs and medical aid that our government deemed them dangerous... the government could counter armed rebellion with armed forces. But when the Black Panther's compassion and aid to families started changing the hearts and lives of those they served and protected, thus affecting the political landscape, it was then that they were vilified, infiltrated, and destroyed.

From understandings of what was 'Good' and what was 'Bad'



gleaned at her grandmother's knee, Puff saw her time with the Black Panthers as a protest both against God and injustice, not realizing that whenever people show up and show compassion and grace to each other, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and lifting up the downtrodden, God is present there. And that day, that cold January day in downtown Atlanta, in that space filled with women and children gathered to share conversation and recipes and good food, her welcome and conversation was a blessing to me. For there, even as she kept expecting to see in me the white-haired God of her childhood fears and hopes (except, she kept marveling, I was a woman. Can pastors really be women?), there, at that table, I realized that I was feasting on hoe-cakes with an angel of God.

For just as God imagined and created me into being, So she was also imagined into being by God. And regardless of the words we have used to categorize, define, and control, the long and the short of it is that we all share a common ancestry. We may come from the east and the west, the north and the south to feast at the table of God, but we are all created of the same carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen molecules. We are, according to our scriptures, fashioned from the same dust of the ground into which our Creator breathed life, out of which the Spirit of God fashioned and animates us.

Which is why it is so important to look again and look more deeply into scriptures such as our passages from Hebrews this morning and our story from Luke. For when we arrive at the root and the heart of our passages this morning, we are reminded to treat each other in ways that honor God's creative Spirit in each of us. We are reminded to continue to practice loving each other in ways that demonstrate that we are siblings of each other and of our Messiah. We are reminded to not put on airs when we sit

down to eat together, to not ascribe more importance to some than others among us, for we are all, each and every one of us, members of the beloved community of God.

And sometimes, sometimes, when we show hospitality to strangers, we banquet with angels without knowing it. And at other times, angels, who have never seen themselves as such, feast with us, offering themselves and their life stories as a blessing without price.

So as we turn again to these passages in Hebrews, and our story from Luke, let's always remember to hear them through the lens of God's constant love and compassion for all of us.

And then, together, let's dive deeper.

Some among us have only been to a community feeding program to make or serve food, while some of us have found them to be a life-line. Who are these angels among us?

Some of us have only been to a food bank to drop off food, while some of us rely on them to stretch our budget the duration of the month. Who are these angels among us?

Some of us have volunteered or worked at outreach program, helping people access resources or training or job skills, while some of us have used the services of an outreach program to make it through a time of suffering or despair. Who are these angels among us?

Some of us stigmatize and avoid prisons and former prisoners, some of us have been to prison just to visit, and some of us have been guests or regular visitors to loved ones housed there. Who are these angels among us?

Some of us equate the provision of God to our power to

manipulate others to provide for us, while others choose to stand in solidarity with those who are hungry, going hungry themselves, while trusting and praising God even while lives around them are lost.

Now, some of you are aware that my mother-in-law grew up in the middle east. This week, she shared with us a letter from a Christian friend of hers who is in Gaza. A friend whose family knows the region of Gaza as their native land. A friend who has witnessed, and experienced, the devastating hunger, medical need, and loss of life within their multi-faith community.

And yet there they choose to remain. Choosing to continually offer to God “a sacrifice of praise—that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge God’s Name.” Choosing continually to “Keep doing good works and sharing their resources.” Choosing continually, each day, each moment, “the sacrifices that please God.”

Now, what that means for us here, in this place, may look different than what it looks like in downtown Atlanta or in the cities of Gaza, but it is no less urgent. For whether we are invited guests or hosts of the banquet, our responsibility is the same: to keep constructing together the beloved community of God. For as we banquet together, we may just find angels in our midst.

## **We Respond to God's Grace**

### **Congregational Prayers**

#### **Char's Anniversary Recognition**

Each week as we respond to God's grace, we start by celebrating our joys. This week, we are celebrating many good things: Each beautiful new day, friendship, safe travels, gathering together to study God's word, those who pitch in and help out, new members and friends, vacations, graduations, birthdays, and ... anniversaries.

And as we practice the spiritual discipline of joy through raising our praise and offering gratitude to God, I have also been made aware of several particular joys this summer. This morning we are celebrating a special anniversary: that of our beloved member and friend, Rev. Charlene Raitt's 50th anniversary of ordination in the United Church of Christ.

Reverend Charlene, would you join me here at the front?

Char was raised in a house where church was important, by a single mother. Her father died of a heart attack when I was nine months old. She attended Sunday School and church services every week. She was a member of the church choir and youth group. When she was old enough, she attended church camp was active in various programs in the Illinois South Conference of the United Church of Christ while she was in high school.

Her call to the ministry came early. As her mother told Char, at Char's birth the doctor said, "No, she won't become a nun, there are too many masons in her family." When her Mom later asked

the doctor what he meant, he told her that since Char had been born with a veil, (a thin layer of skin) over her face the nun nurses saw it as a sign for her to become a nun.

Fortunately for us, you were not destined to be a nun. But your 'call' to serve God was with you from the very beginning, as it says in Jeremiah 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

On the 3rd anniversary of her father's death, when Char was almost four, she was baptized. Old enough to remember, the resonance of her pastor saying that she was special, calling her by name, and proclaiming that God would always be with her has stayed with her throughout her life and ministry journey.

It deeply impacted her during confirmation, as well, as her memory verse was from Matthew 28:20b, when, right after commissioning the disciples to go and preach to all the world Jesus says "I am with you always, to the close of the age." Throughout her young life she had been urged to be a Christian Educator, as that was the standard ministry route available to women at the time. During Confirmation, however she discovered and decided to take the path God set before her: that of an ordained minister. That was in 1963, and it was not until attending Eden Theological Seminary that she understood it was not a decision, but the answering of God's "call."

Her ministry has been a list of "Firsts". I was the first daughter of the Illinois South Conference to be ordained to serve in the conference. She was the first woman to serve in all of her ministerial positions which ranged from New Port, Kentucky to

Venice, Florida; Newton, Kansas to Beasley, Texas and Femme Osage, Missouri. She was even the first ordained woman to serve as chaplain where she spent the last 20 years of her ministry.

For while God called her to the ordained ministry, she discovered along the way that her ministry gifts became most fully alive during her rotations in the emergency room and intensive care units and during crisis at the hospital. It was there that she was able to show God's presence amid horrible situations.

Reverend Charlene, Raitt, your ministry has truly been a blessing for many. Are there words you would like to share?

[Over the years many people have have influenced and supported me. But I must say, the congregation here at Venice United Church of Christ truly assisted me in becoming the person in ministry I am today. The people here helped me to live out their dreams. There were women who had worked to get the vote for women. I will always remember the words of Camilla Lueke who told me the first time I wore a clerical shirt, "It about time you claim who and what you are." That was when I started wearing clerical collar all the time.

Since my mother was a particularly good seamstress, I had shirts in many different colors, so I was able to be feminine while still claiming my office.

In closing, I would like to quote Philippians 1: 3-5. "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, thankful for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."

Thank you for allowing me to reflect on my ordination and for celebrating with me.

God bless us all.

On behalf of Members and friends of all the places that God has inspired you to serve on God's behalf, we want to express our deepest thanks and gratitude for your faithful service for these 50 years. And, while you may now be officially retired, I know that God doesn't let some of us 'go' that easily, so whatever God has in store for you in the years ahead, may your warmth and grace continue to inspire the compassion of God with everyone you meet.

... gift you with this token of our appreciation...

### **Intercessions:**

Marlene                      Carol                      Jeannie  
Family and friends of Scott                      Helen  
(Continuing) Vicki, Jack, Pam, Marge, Clark, Pastor Attila

Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that choose violence and war instead of diplomacy; all essential workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted by recent hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, and flooding;

and

The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra Leone, Immokalee Farm Workers, black and brown fathers and their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and



depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's work in dangerous places.

(Fifth Sunday: debts)

## **Silent Prayer**

### **Pastoral Prayer and our Lord's Prayer**

God of all Creation, Uniting, Enlivening Spirit of all that is,

Our world overflows with stories,  
so many lives,  
so many ways of being human.

So why do we keep telling the same stories over and over,  
of the wealthy and powerful and beautiful?

God, forgive our narrow interests, and our lazy entertainments.

Make us biographers of the least:

Give us the curiosity and the restlessness

to search out the forgotten,  
the neglected, the unwanted,  
the discarded, and the worn out,

to learn their legends, and to acknowledge their place  
in Your epic story of humanity.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy.

We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth,  
in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as  
together we pray the prayer that you have taught 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 as we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Musical Response**

*The Gift of Love*

Hopson

**Come, Spirit, come...our hearts control,  
our spirits long...to be made whole.  
Let inward love...guide every deed;  
by this we wor...ship and are freed.**

## **We Go to Share God's Love**

### **Invitation to Generosity<sup>4</sup>**

We are invited to offer our resources, our time, our abilities, our compassion, on days when our lives are full and days when our lives feel empty. We are invited to offer what we have and accept what we need. Our practice is a profound “yes” to the invitation of God.

*(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. Online/ qr code)*

### **\*Doxology**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise God all creatures here below,  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,  
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

### **\*Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication<sup>5</sup>**

**God, we bring these gifts, our response to your invitation. In this giving, we find ourselves not lessened, but newly joyful, truly honored, and deeply fed by your blessing. Amen.**

### **\*Hymn      *I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry***

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<sup>4</sup> **Along the Road: Service Prayers for the Third Sunday after Pentecost** was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ. <https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/after-pentecost-3c-june-29/>

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## Unison

JOHN YLVISAKER, 1955, III

1 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be  
 2 When you found the won - der of the Word, I was  
 3 In the mid - dle a - ges of your life, not too  
 4 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be

there when you are old. I re - joiced the day you  
 there to cheer you on; You were raised to praise the  
 old, no long - er young, I'll be there to guide you  
 there when you are old. I re - joiced the day you

were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold.  
 liv - ing God, to whom you now be - long.  
 through the night, com - plete what I've be - gun.  
 were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold. *St. 4, end*

I was there when you were but a child, with a  
 Should you find some-one to share your time and you  
 When the eve - ning gent - ly clos - es in and you

faith to suit you well; I'll be there in case you  
 join your hearts as one, I'll be there to make your  
 shut your wea - ry eyes, I'll be there as I have

wan - der off and find where de - mons dwell.  
 vers - es rhyme from dusk till ris - ing sun.  
 al - ways been with just one more sur - prise. *to beginning*

John Ylvisaker is the composer of a number of collections of music in the "contemporary" or "folk" idiom, as well as soundtracks for various media productions. This is perhaps his best-known song.

Tune: BORNING CRY 9.7.9.6.D.  
 John Ylvisaker, 1985

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## **\*Blessing and Benediction**

May you be blessed when you sit at fine tables of welcome  
and when you spread the picnic blanket of justice and peace.  
May you be blessed when you share with each other the  
stories and songs from the deepest part of your heart.  
May you be blessed in giving and receiving,  
not repaid, but your hearts repaired.

Go, and be a blessing. Amen.

**\*Sending Blessing**                      *God Be With You*                      Dorsey

God be with you, God be with you,  
God be with you till we meet again. (repeat)

**\*Postlude**                                      *Triumphal March*                      Stickles

Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the  
Light of Christ is carried into the world.  
The worship has ended; our service begins.

### **Supporting Our Service Today**

**Liturgist:** Rev. Charlene Raitt                      **Song Leader:** Sara Stafford  
**Welcome Table:** Sandie Barrie                      **Greeter:** Rex and Ruth Ingerick  
**Acolyte:** Allison Rowe                      **Usher:** Rob Dickason  
**Usher Team:** Victoria Augustine, George Ikeda,  
Barbara Zittel, Bob Zittel

### **Technology Team**

*(Live Streaming, Camera, and Sound Technicians)*  
Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely, Maria Groody,  
David Jack, Linda Newton, Wally Davis, Patty Fjetland  
**The Lord's Table** was decorated by Victoria Augustine

**The Sanctuary Flowers** are given in Celebration of Rev. Charlene Raitt's 50th Anniversary of the United Church of Christ

**The Church Sign** was changed by Faye Newton  
and Lisa Sclafani

**Sunday Librarian:** Marcia Murphy

**Fellowship Time:** Leadership Council

Venice United Church of Christ  
620 Shamrock Blvd. Venice, FL 34293  
Office: (941) 493-6741 · email: [veniceucc@gmail.com](mailto:veniceucc@gmail.com) web:  
[www.veniceucc.org](http://www.veniceucc.org)

**Senior Minister**

**Rev. Barbara Dickason**

**Other Staff**

**Gary Leidheiser:** *Custodian*

**Barb Quinn:** *Office Assistant*

**Music Staff**

**Barbara Quinn:** *Music Director*

**Lynda Weston:** *Bella Handbell Director*

**This Week at a Glance**

**Monday, September 1**

Office Closed

Join us for SpiritFed again next week!

**Tuesday, September 2**

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

### **Wednesday, September 3**

9:00 AM - Noon Library Hours

10:00 AM Bible Study—CR

1:00 PM Cut-Ups — CR

7:00 PM NAMI — CR

### **Thursday, September 4**

10:00 Human Resources—P

### **Friday, September 5**

8:30 AM Men's Weekly Coffee—Panera

### **Sunday, September 7**

9:00-9:45 AM Library Hour

10:00 AM Worship in situ and online

11:00-11:15 AM Library Time

11:00 AM Fellowship Time

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