

***St. John's United Church of Christ  
Chambersburg, PA  
September 21, 2025***

## **JACOB'S DREAM**

\*Please stand in body or in spirit

### **GATHERING SONG**

*"This is the Day"*

### **UNISON WELCOME**

"No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here"

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

*"The peace of Christ be with you"*

*"And also with you"*

#### **CHIMING OF THE TRINITY**

### **PRELUDE**

#### **\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

*from Life in Liturgy*

We gather in the name of the living Christ to worship God.

**Surely, God is in this place and calls us to worship in spirit and in truth.**

God's love is for you and for all people everywhere.

**That we may share God's love and life, may we be renewed in the refreshing Spirit of the living Christ.**

The living Christ is with us.

**Praise the Lord!**

#### **\*HYMN #243**

*"Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart"*

#### **\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*written by Kimberly Leetch*

Loving God, like Jacob, who dreamed of your promises, you have filled us with dreams, too. Show us your promises in our dreams, and give us the ability to follow our dreams. Amen.

#### **\*PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION**

*posted on Re:Worship (adapted)*

God of our fathers and mothers – of all the generations who have come before us – holy is your name. Thank you for your faithful presence among us, even when we are not fully aware of it. Continue to reveal yourself to us. Open our eyes to see you here among us; open our ears to hear your Word. For surely, you are with us in this place. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

### **SCRIPTURE READING**

John 1:43-51

### **RESPONSIVE READING**

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 (The Inclusive Bible)

YHWH, you've searched me, and you know me.

**You know if I am standing or sitting, you read my thoughts from far away.**

Whether I walk or lie down, you are watching; you are intimate with all of my ways.

**A word is not even on my tongue, YHWH, before you know what it is:**  
you hem me in, before and behind, shielding me with your hand.

**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, a height my mind cannot reach!**  
Where could I run from your Spirit? Where could I flee from your presence?

**If I go up to the heavens, you're there; if I make my bed in Death, you're  
already there.**

I could fly away with wings made of dawn, or make my home on the far side of the sea,  
**but even there your hand will guide me, your mighty hand holding me fast.**

If I say, "The darkness will hide me, and night will be my only light,"  
**even darkness won't be dark to you; the night will shine like the day –  
darkness and light are the same to you.**

Examine me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts –  
**see if there is misdeed within me, and guide me in the way that is eternal.**

#### **CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**

Roxanne Davenport

*Children's Corner will be offered following the Children's Message*

#### **SCRIPTURE READING**

Genesis 27:1-4, 15-23; 28:10-17

#### **SERMON**

Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

#### **HYMN #501 (insert)**

*"We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle"*

#### **SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS**

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (DEBTS)**

#### **INVITATION TO GIVING**

#### **OFFERTORY**

#### **\*OFFERTORY RESPONSE #706**

*"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"*

#### **\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

*from Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*

**God of mystery and grace, you have met us and blessed us with abundant promise.**  
**In gratitude we offer what we carry in our hearts and our pockets. As we bring  
these worn and freighted offerings, we pray that you would use us, for we come in  
the name of Jesus and by the movement of your Spirit in this place. Amen.**

#### **\*HYMN #C-43**

*"Nearer, My God, to Thee"*

#### **\*COMMISSION & BENEDICTION**

#### **POSTLUDE (seated)**

*Following worship, we will hold a special congregational meeting  
to determine our direction in fixing our parking lots.*

The "Nursery Nook in the Narthex" quiet area and infant/toddler space in the Parlor are available for children and families to use during worship. Age-appropriate activity bags are also available.

**Birthdays this week:** 9/22 Hannah Herbert, Kyra Sollenberger, Matthew Strunk and James Wood.

<b>Worship Participants:</b>	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Deacon in Charge	N. Erin Hartman
Lector	Allen Frantz
Children's Corner	Roxanne Davenport
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz, Neath Ham, Heidi Ramos
Bulletin cover	"Dream of Jacob" © John August Swanson, from <b>Art in the Christian Tradition</b> , a project of Vanderbilt Divinity Library

**The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross** are given in honor of Connie and Bob Strunk's wedding anniversary by Lisa and Ray Fair.



### **St. John's Vision**

We are called to love, to learn, to worship and to witness in Christ  
as a congregation that welcomes everyone,  
and seeks service that will advance God's realm on earth.

### **St. John's Mission**

To grow in love of God and neighbor

### **Worship Resources:**

Call to Worship from *Life in Liturgy*

Prayer of the Day written by Kimberly Leetch

Prayer for Illumination posted on Re:Worship (adapted)

*The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation*

Prayer of Dedication from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*

## 243 Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart

1. Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;  
 2. I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,  
 3. Teach me to feel that Thou art al - ways nigh;  
 4. Teach me to love Thee as Thine an - gels love,

wean it from earth; through all its puls - es move;  
 no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,  
 teach me the strug - gles of the soul to bear.  
 one ho - ly pas - sion fill - ing all my frame;

stoop to my weak - ness, might - y as Thou art,  
 no an - gel vis - i - tant, no o - pening skies;  
 To check the ris - ing doubt, the reb - el sigh;  
 the kin - dling of the heaven - de - scend - ed Dove,

and make me love Thee as I ought to love.  
 but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.  
 teach me the pa - tience of un - an - swered prayer.  
 my heart an al - tar, and Thy love the flame.

500

## We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder

Gen. 28:10-17

African-American spiritual

1 We are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der,  
 2 Ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er,  
 3 Rise, shine, give God glo-ry, rise, shine, give God glo-ry,

we are climb-ing Ja-cob's lad-der, bear-ers of the cross.  
 ev-ery round goes high-er, high-er, bear-ers of the cross.  
 rise, shine, give God glo-ry, bear-ers of the cross.

*Like many spirituals, this one uses a story from the Hebrew scriptures as its starting point and the element of the ladder as a creative device to draw us into the narrative. In like manner, the following twentieth-century adaption of the song by Carole Etzler employs the story of Sarah, the matriarch of the Hebrew people, and extends the direction of the pilgrimage from the upward climb of the ladder to the outward embrace of a circle.*

Tune: JACOB'S LADDER 8.8.8.5.  
 African-American spiritual

501

## We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle

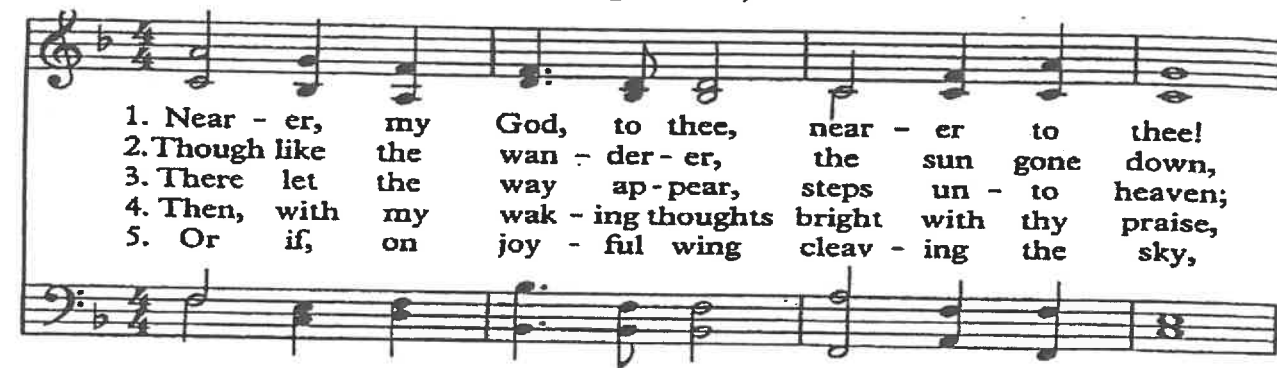
Gen. 17:15-19; 18:9-15

Carole A. Etzler, 1975

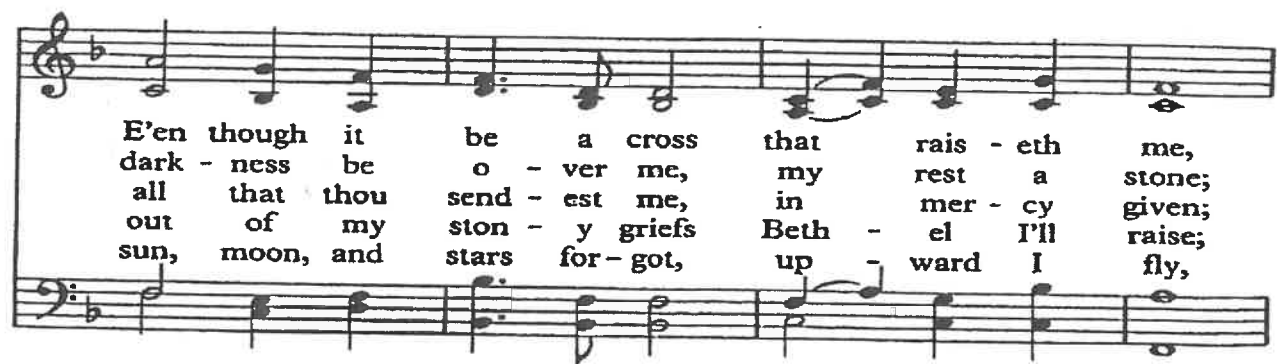
- 1 We are danc-ing Sar-ah's cir-cle, . . . sis-ters, broth-ers, all.
- 2 Here we seek and find our sto-ry, . . . sis-ters, broth-ers, all.
- 3 We will all do our own nam-ing, . . . sis-ters, broth-ers, all.
- 4 Ev-ery round a gen-er-a-tion; . . . sis-ters, broth-ers, all.
- 5 On and on the cir-cle's mov-ing, . . . sis-ters, broth-ers, all.

Tune: JACOB'S LADDER 8.8.8.5.  
 African-American spiritual

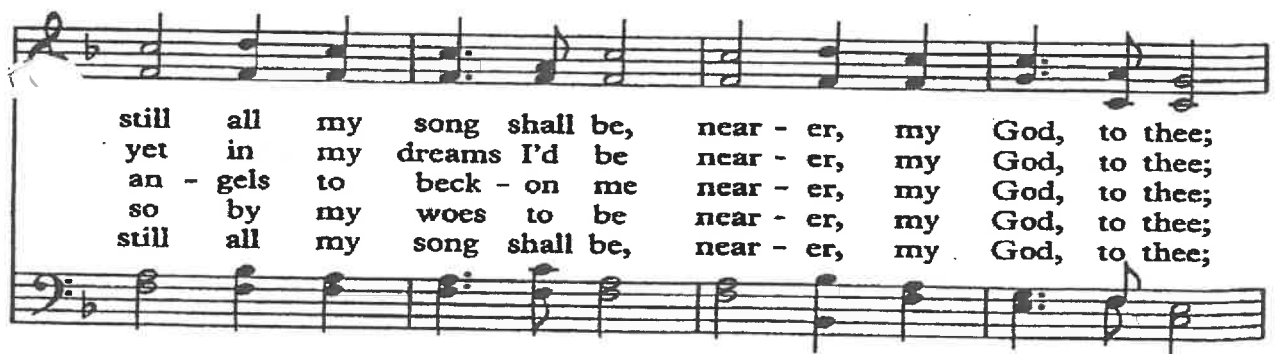
## Nearer, My God, to Thee



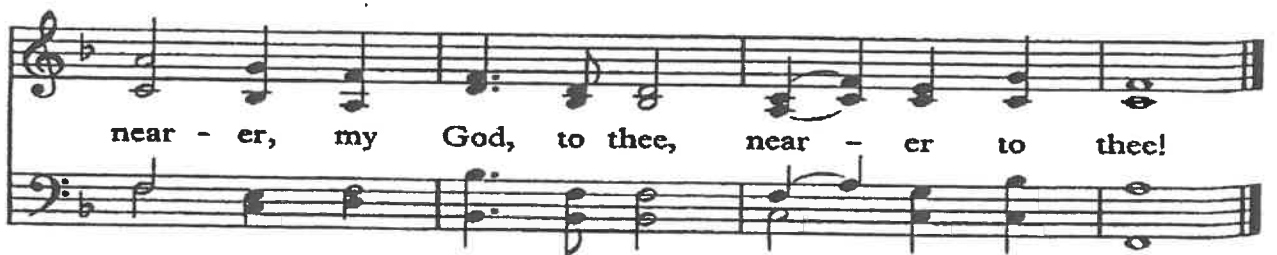
1. Near - er, my God, to thee, near - er to thee!  
 2. Though like the wan - der - er, the sun gone down,  
 3. There let the way ap - pear, steps un - to heaven;  
 4. Then, with my wak - ing thoughts bright with thy praise,  
 5. Or if, on joy - ful wing cleav - ing the sky,



E'en though it be a cross that rais - eth me,  
 dark - ness be o - ver me, my rest a stone;  
 all that thou send - est me, in mer - cy given;  
 out of my ston - y griefs Beth - el I'll raise;  
 sun, moon, and stars for - got, up - ward I fly,



still all my song shall be, near - er, my God, to thee;  
 yet in my dreams I'd be near - er, my God, to thee;  
 an - gels to beck - on me near - er, my God, to thee;  
 so by my woes to be near - er, my God, to thee;  
 still all my song shall be, near - er, my God, to thee;



near - er, my God, to thee, near - er to thee!

### **NEWS IN THE PEWS September 21, 2025**

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton, [pastor@sjucc1811.org](mailto:pastor@sjucc1811.org) (641) 260-1868 (cell)  
Tonya Schwartz, Office Administrator, [manager@sjucc1811.org](mailto:manager@sjucc1811.org) (717) 263-8593 (office)  
Gary Crum, Music Director | Barbara Motichka, Organist  
Roxanne Davenport, Director of Children & Youth  
The Rev. Stephen W. Hoffman, Pastor Emeritus

### **THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S**

**TODAY:** Special Congregational Meeting to vote on fixing our parking lots (right after worship)  
St. John's Nursery School mum sale pick up today in the front lobby after church  
Bible Study on the Book of Acts, 8 pm, Zoom (link in Friday e-blast)

#### **Monday, September 22**

10:00 am Chi Gong/Zazen silent body energy and soulful meditation – Parlor Room 104  
1:30 pm Monday Afternoon Book Study – Conference Room 111

#### **Tuesday, September 23**

6:00 pm Ladies' Bible - Zoom

#### **Wednesday, September 24**

6:30 pm Council Meeting – Conference Room 111

#### **Thursday, September 25**

11:00 am NETwork Ministries Meal Prep – Kitchen  
6:00 pm Dance Class – Fellowship Hall  
7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal – Choir Room 103

#### **Sunday, September 28**

8:45 am Godly Play Class – Room 119  
8:45 am SPARK! Elementary Church School Class – Room 115  
8:45 am Teen Discussion Class – Room 206  
8:45 am Wired Word Church School Class – Room 116  
10:00 am Sunday Worship - Sanctuary  
11:30 am Family Fun Day!

**Fall Harvest Tea** Thank you so much for all the wonderful help with the *St. John's Harvest Tea!* We appreciate all who advertised, invited friends and attended the event. We also thank the set-up team (men & ladies), the prep workers, the kitchen help, the charming waiters, the busy dishwashers, the clean-up/tear down volunteers, and tablecloth washing ladies! Thanks to Pastor Caroline for her support and assistance. A special thanks goes to Tonya who expertly and kindly handled the ticket sales and table chart! **Save the date for St. John's Blueberry Bliss Tea April 25, 2026** - Sue, Connie S. & Renee



**Family Fun Day** is coming up on Sunday, September 28, after worship from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Join us for food, music, games, a bounce house, and a petting zoo! Invite your friends and neighbors for this FREE fun event. Rain or shine, we'll have a good time.

**Presentations on Personal Safety and Scams** Join PA State Trooper Angela Laviena at 2:30 or 6:30 pm on Thursday, October 2 in Room 116 or via Zoom for a presentation on how to recognize and avoid scams. See the September Spirit for more information and Zoom access.

**Chili Cook Off Fundraiser** will be on Sunday, October 5, after worship. Sign-ups to provide chili, rice, cornbread, and/or dessert are posted on the bulletin boards and at the Welcome Center. Proceeds from this event will benefit South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP).

**Immunization Clinic** for Flu and COVID shots will be after worship on Sunday, October 12. Walk-ins are welcome for Flu shots; contact Chambers' Apothecary to reserve a COVID vaccine.

**Franklin County Pride Festival** is Sunday, October 12, 12-5 pm at Wilson College. We are a sponsor of this wonderful event and will have a booth/table. Make sure to stop by and see us!

**CROP Hunger Walk: October 19** Meet at First United Methodist, 225 S. Second Street, at 1:30 pm to register; the walk starts at 2 pm. Checks can be made possible to CWS/CROP. We hope to have good representation from St. John's UCC! Contact Pastor Caroline with questions.

**Bible and a Beer** is an opportunity to talk about our faith in public. Join us on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at the Trojan Diner at 6:30 pm. Our next gathering will be October 20.

**Birthday Balloons** All are invited to share in a special coffee hour the last Sunday of the month to honor all who celebrated a birthday that month. September birthdays will be honored on Sunday, **September 28**. We hope you'll join us!

**Monday Afternoon Book Study** meets at 1:30 pm in the Conference Room. We are currently reading "A People's History of Christianity: The Other Side of the Story" by Diana Butler Bass. We'll read Chapter 2 for our session on 9/22. Pick up a copy from your favorite retailer & join in!

**Sunday Night Bible Study** Join Pastor Caroline on Sunday evenings at **8 pm via Zoom** for a Bible study on the book of Acts. Our session on **September 21** will focus on Acts Chapter 13. Zoom Meeting ID: 836 0593 5961 and Passcode 277938. A hyperlink for this opportunity is included in the weekly e-blast. We encourage you to read from a variety of translations.

**September First Fruits** go to support South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP). You can learn more about SCCAP's programs in the September Spirit or by visiting their website.

**September/October Upper Room** devotionals are currently available at the Welcome Center. We suggest a donation of \$1 for small print/\$2 for large print copies. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, please contact the church office.

**Save the Dates** for our Habitat for Humanity Used Book Sale: October 24, 25, and 26! Donations are rolling in; sorting days will be on Mondays at 9 am in the Book Room at Mobile Works. Contact Harold Collier for more details and how you can be involved.