



***St. John's United Church of Christ
Chambersburg, PA
July 5, 2026***

ESTHER: FOR A MOMENT LIKE THIS

*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 & OPENING SONG

"Open The Eyes of My Heart"

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

from Illustrated Ministry

Calling all citizens of heaven: exiled dreamers and disciples of love,

God is close to the outcast and faithful to all.

Calling all pilgrims of the Spirit, carried by the winds of hope,

God is everywhere at all times, compassionate to all.

Calling all travelers between worlds, who translate compassion into peace,

God makes neighbors of strangers and kin of the forgotten.

Come to worship and be renewed for this long journey.

Strangers in a strange land, we have come to worship the creator of all.

***HYMN #638**

"Lift Every Voice and Sing"

RESPONSIVE PRAYER OF CONFESSION

from Illustrated Ministry

Gracious One, where do we begin? You call us to do justice,

and we explain that justice is complicated.

You ask us to love mercy,

and we counter that a show of strength is necessary.

You invite us to walk humbly with you,

and we struggle to recognize you in our neighbors, in the dispossessed, in the poor and hungry places of our own hearts.

We confess we have failed to summon the courage and compassion required by your call.

We have treated hospitality as an option, kinship as a choice, instead of as the center of our life together.

We have claimed your name, yet rejected your way.

Forgive us, we pray.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

from Illustrated Ministry

Friends, hear this good news: God's gift is love that liberates, hope that inspires, grace that transforms. Each of us alone and all of us together are forgiven and set free. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 9:23-27

RESPONSIVE READING

"Check In" (a remix of Psalm 1) by Julia Seymour

Compassionate God, I just wanted to check in with you on the schedule for the wicked perishing. Your timing is excellent, as always; I do not doubt it.

Yet I see a lot of wickedness and very little perishing. There is so much suffering, division, and pain all around; hope doesn't exactly flourish in this rocky ground.

I have meditated on your laws and reflected on your words.

I am trying to love, trying to see the best in others, trying to do what is right in your eyes.

It sure would be easier to do all those things if the chaff were blown away (as promised).

I do have one concern: what if your patience and mercy turn out to be necessary for me?

I hate to think it, but it may be that my deeds are chaff to someone.

In which case, please carry on. I'll see myself out. And I will remember my own flourishing due to your mercy.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Roxanne Davenport

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

SCRIPTURE READING

Esther 4:1-17

SERMON

Rev. Caroline E. Saxton

UCC STATEMENT OF FAITH

Hymnal Companion C-12

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**

adapted from "We Shall Not Be Moved!"

God of abundance, receive these gifts and help them to grow: grow into shelter, into courage, and into care. Let them grow into justice, joy, safety, and beloved community. Bless what we give. Bless what we hold. Bless what we build together. Root our generosity in love, justice, and affirmation, so that all your people may flourish. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

(liturgy on the screen)

We celebrate communion today by passing the plates of bread and cup.

We will hold the elements and consume them together as invited by Pastor Caroline.

***HYMN (insert)**

“In This Time of Great Reflection”

***COMMISSION & BENEDICTION**

from Illustrated Ministry

POSTLUDE (seated)

All are welcome at Christ’s table. To let the church office, know that you communed today, please sign the black attendance pad found in each row. If you are communing from home, please contact the church office to let us know.

Birthdays this week: 07/07 Rodney Byers; 07/10 Robert Archibald and Linda Zeger; 07/11 Betty Koontz and R. Kyle Myers; 07/12 Renee Byers.

Worship Participants:	
Pastor	Rev. Caroline E. Saxton
Organist	Barbara Motichka
Choir Director	Gary Crum
Worship Team	Diana Kongkeattikul, Swann Kongkeattikul, Neath Ham, Barbara Motichka, Courtney Robertson, Roxanne Davenport, Chris Willman-Bunge
Deacon in Charge	Diana Kongkeattikul
Lector	Jerry Thomason
Children’s Corner	Roxanne Davenport
Media Coordinators	Calvin Frantz and Neath Ham
Bulletin cover	Edd Scheer

The Flowers at the Foot of the Cross are given in loving memory of Pat Saxton by her children Caroline and David.



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: *Illustrated Ministry; The Words of Her Mouth: Psalms for the Struggle; “We Shall Not Be Moved! Rooted in Love, Justice, and Affirmation”*

638 Lift Every Voice and Sing

1. Lift ev - ery voice and sing, till earth and heav - en
 2. Ston - y the road we trod, bit - ter the chast - ening
 3. God of our wea - ry years, God of our si - lent

ring, ring with the har - mo - nies of lib - er -
 rod, felt in the days when hope un - born had
 tears, Thou who hast brought us thus far on the

ty; let our re - joic - ing rise, high as the lis - tening
 died; yet with a stead - y beat, have not our wea - ry
 way; Thou who hast by Thy might, led us in - to the

skies, let it re - sound loud as the roll - ing sea.
 feet, come to the place for which our fa - thers sighed?
 light, keep us for - ev - er in the path, we pray.

WORDS: James Weldon Johnson, 1921

MUSIC: J. Rosamond Johnson, 1921

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LIFT EVERY VOICE

Irregular

638 continued

PERSEVERANCE

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
We have come o - ver a way that with tears has been wa - tered,
Lest our feet stray from the plac - es, our God, where we met Thee.

sing a song full of the hope that the pres - ent has brought
we have come, tread - ing our path through the blood of the slaugh -
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we for - get

us; fac - ing the ris - ing sun of our new day be -
tered, out from the gloom - y past, till now we stand at
Thee; shad-owed be - neath Thy hand, may we for - ev - er

gun, let us march on till vic - to - ry is won.
last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.
stand, true to our God, true to our na - tive land.

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith in the form of a doxology

We believe in You, O God, Eternal Spirit,
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God,
and to Your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being,
create persons in Your own image,
and set before each one the ways of life and death.
You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.
You judge people and nations by Your righteous will
declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior,
You have come to us
and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death
and reconciling the world to Yourself.

You bestow upon us Your Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ,
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,
tongues, and races.

You call us into Your Church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be Your servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world

Continued from previous page.

and resist the powers of evil,
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His table,
to join Him in His passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust You
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,
Your presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in Your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto You. Amen.

*“In essentials unity; in nonessentials,
liberty; in all things charity.”*
Attributed to Rupertus Meldenius

VISION

IN THIS TIME OF GREAT REFLECTION

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 2026

Restoration
Walker's Southern Harmony, 1835

1. In this time of great re - flec - tion on two hun - dred fif - ty years,
 2. Here is what holds us to - geth - er: Mer - cy, love, com - mu - ni - ty.
 3. We re - call our na - tion's sto - ry. Keep us hon - est, God a - bove!
 4. Will we work for ra - cial jus - tice? Will we turn from fear and hate?
 5. In this time, O God, re - store us to the land we're called to be—

We re - mem - ber, as a na - tion, times we've pros - pered, times of tears.
 We're to seek to care for neigh - bors in a just so - ci - e - ty.
 In our quest for wealth and glo - ry, we have in - jured ones you love.
 What is now the pub - lic wit - ness that you call us to cre - ate?
 where all peo - ple here a - mong us know your blest com - mu - ni - ty.

"We shall be," a prea - cher told us, "as a ci - ty on a hill"—
 If we fail to help the nee - dy and to build a land that's just,
 Through en - slave - ment, through dis - place - ment, we have cho - sen ways of sin.
 As we ce - le - brate our coun - try, help us, Lord, to un - der - stand:
 May we seek to be that ci - ty, not with pride but as a prayer.

not to praise us but to warn us: We've a du - ty to ful - fill.
 we will sim - ply be a by - word as the world looks on at us.
 We've been vio - lent. We've stayed si - lent. So our light of love stays dim.
 All of us must share the boun - ty and the good - ness of the land.
 May we love and serve you hum - bly, in our land and ev - ery - where.

NEWS IN THE PEWS July 5, 2026

The Rev. Caroline E. Saxton, pastor@sjucc1811.org (641) 260-1868 (cell)
Tonya Schwartz, Office Administrator, 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: NO Bible Study on the book of Ecclesiastes – (Will begin on Sunday, July 26)

Monday, July 6

1:30 pm NO Afternoon Book Study - (Chapter 5) - (Will resume on July 20)

Tuesday, July 7

10:00 am Summer Singers Practice – Fellowship Hall

5:30 pm Yoga – Room 202

Wednesday, July 8

11:30 am Ladies Luncheon – Hoss's Steak & Sea House (20 Falling Spring Rd Chambersburg)

Friday, July 10

7:00 pm Civil War Ball – Fellowship Hall

Sunday, July 12

8:45 am K-12 Faith and Fellowship – Youth Room 206

8:45 am Combined Adult & Youth Sunday School Gathering at the Peace Pole – Church Grounds

10:00 am Sunday Worship – Sanctuary (Hymn Sing)

11:15 am VBS Workday After Worship – Fellowship Hall

Pastoral Coverage Pastor Caroline will be on vacation July 6-18. Rev. Danielle Neff of Trinity UCC in Waynesboro is "on call." If a pastoral emergency arises, please contact the church office and they will get your message to Pastor Dani. Pastor Caroline will return to lead worship on Sunday, July 19.

Summer Special Music A sign up is posted on the choir room door for those who would like to help provide special music in worship this summer. This can be singing or playing a musical instrument. Contact Gary Crum to learn more. Thank you for sharing your talents!

Summer Church School Classes Both the Wired Word and Upper Room adult church school classes will meet throughout the summer. Additionally, we will offer a K-12 Faith and Fellowship opportunity in the youth room for our young people to continue their Christian Education. Please see Diana Kongkeattikul or Roxanne Davenport if you have questions re: Faith and Fellowship

Summer Prayer Gatherings Join us at 8:45 AM on **Sunday, July 12** at the Peace Pole where we dedicate this symbol of unity and pray together prayers for peace. Please bring your own chair. We will also gather at St. John's Camp at 9:30 AM on **Saturday, August 22**.

Monday Afternoon Book Study We will read Chapter 5 of Adam Hamilton's "The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life" for our discussion on Monday, **July 20, 1:30 PM** in Conference Room 111. Come and join the conversation

Summer Snacks for NETWORK Ministry Collection boxes for non-perishable snacks to share with the kids at NETWORK Ministry are located in the front lobby. A list of suggested items to donate is posted on the bulletin boards and is listed in the July/August Spirit.

Vacation Bible School Our VBS wish list for Snowball Mountain challenge includes: snow sports equipment; white poly-fill stuffing/batting; Styrofoam balls 3" diameter and larger; white sheets; Styrofoam medication coolers; and a snowflake projector (commonly used outside on houses). A grocery cart to collect these items is in the lobby. Contact Roxanne with questions. VBS Work Days are scheduled after worship on **Sunday, July 12.**

A Civil War Ball will be held **Friday, July 10, 7-9 PM** in Fellowship Hall featuring period dances. No experience? No problem! All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Summer Singers in Concert Mark your calendars for **Sunday, July 27, 3 PM** as the Summer Singers perform here at St. John's UCC. Bring your family and friends and come to be blessed!

Sweet Treats: Ice Cream Social We are planning an ice cream social for **Sunday, August 16** after worship. If you would like to bring homemade ice cream or baked goods, please sign up at the Welcome Center. We'll beat the summer heat by enjoying the A/C and a sweet treat!

Summer Quarter First Fruits in May, June, and July will support the Race Against Poverty (RAP), Maranatha Ministry, and United Way's Stuff the Bus. More information about these organizations is included in the Spirit. Thank you for your generosity.

Stuff the Bus The collection of physical items for United Way's "Stuff the Bus" school supply drive will run **July 15-31**. Please look for the boxes in the vestibules and consider contributing through the First Fruits offerings.

Blessing of the Animals will be held outside on Sunday, August 9. Your pets are invited to come in person or via photo as we bless and give thanks for our animal companions.

Sunday Night Bible Study Join Pastor Caroline on Sunday evenings at 8 pm via Zoom for a Bible study on the Book of Ecclesiastes. Due to Pastor Caroline's schedule, we will be taking a break for a few weeks and will begin studying Ecclesiastes on **Sunday, July 26**. Zoom Meeting ID: 836 0593 5961 and Passcode 277938. A hyperlink is included in the weekly e-blast.

July/August 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.

Want to Stay in Touch? Contact the Church Office to be added to our email list! You can sign up to receive our regular weekly emails, Diana's Devotionals, and/or be part of the Prayer Chain.