



Community UCC

We're worth our words

Welcoming Progressive Community

Vibrant Messengers of Hope



Champaign, Illinois **Seventh Sunday of Easter**
May 29, 2022

Thoughts Before Worship—

"If you are sitting here wondering if Christianity still matters, it must. Because we have a better story. God will continue to redeem all of humanity through embarrassingly imperfect people....God will raise broken bodies. 'Do not do yourself harm because we are all here' [Acts 16 says] and we do not want you to miss the beautiful things God is doing."

- Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber preaching Acts 16:16-34 in the context of the drastic rise in suicides in the US during the pandemic, coupled with the extreme self-isolation prompted by Covid precautions, set amid our influencer culture

*Please note that today's worship service will include talk of recent mass shootings and the scripture text mentions suicide. If you are feeling suicidal, help is available and you can speak with someone today at the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline which is available 24 hours a day: 800-273-8255. The LGBTQ+ suicide prevention line (Trevor Project) can be reached at 866-488-7386.

If you have requests to add to the prayer list (a public document), go to community-ucc.org/pray (a Google Form), or scan the QR code found in the bulletin or there are prayer cards on the table at the back of the sanctuary that you may fill out and hand to the usher.

Gathering Music

Aaron Ames

Welcome

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Prelude

Aaron Ames

Call to Worship

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser, Jennifer Cromley

We come to this place of prayer,

for here we can bring our hopes and dreams, our hidden fears and the doubts we dare wear on our sleeves.

We come to this place of grace,

to be blessed by the variety of gifts, to live as one for our God.

Litany for Gun Violence

We welcome you to our service this morning. Celebrating the diversity of creation, Community United Church welcomes persons of any age, ability, race, gender identity, sexual orientation or life condition. May the Divine Presence become real to you through this time of worship. We hope you come back!

Note: *Our worship services are live streamed. If you prefer not to have the back of your head seen on the live stream worship please do not sit in the first seven pews on the left side (organ/piano) of the sanctuary.*

Note 2: *The congregation responds to the liturgy parts in **BOLD***

*Everyone is invited to stand in body or in spirit.

Hymn

God our Nation Feels the Loss

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Sung to the tune of Journey to Gethsemane

*God, our nation feels the loss
as our children pay the cost
for the violence we accept,
for the silence we have kept.
Rachel weeps for children gone;
God of love, this can't go on!*

*Jesus, Lord, we hear you say,
"Don't turn little ones away!"
May we build a kinder land
where our children understand:
Every child here matters more
than the guns we clamor for.*

*Holy Spirit, wind and flame,
send us out in Jesus' name.
May we shout and say, "Enough!"
May we build a world of love —
till the sounds of weapons cease,
till our young can grow in peace.*

Call to Confession

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Last week, we were reminded of the definition of sin – sin is what separates us from God. We were reminded, too, of who we are called to be, and HOW we are called to be: in addition to loving God wholeheartedly, we are called to love ourselves and others in equal measure. Loving others wholeheartedly and loving ourselves just as fully are ways we love God. It would make sense then sin is also what separates us from other people and what keep us separate from our selves. What is causing you to become a stranger to yourself? What is isolating you from others? What is separating you from God?

Prayer of Confession and Letting Go

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Let us pray...

Gracious God, it seems as though we are bound by sin. Daily, we ignore you and your dreams for us. Daily, we find reason to stay separate from others, especially when we have differences. Daily, we insist on doing life on our terms, instead of journeying down your path of joy and obedience.

Silence is held for personal reflection

In this moment of honest vulnerability,

we come humbly admitting our shortcomings. Deliver us. Set us free. Break the chains of sin and death which hold us captive. Open us to receive the grace you offer, and give us the gift of the Spirit so we may live as people of our Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words of Forgiveness and Assurance

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

In the beginning was God, and at the end will be God, and in every moment in between, there is God: creating, redeeming, and sustaining us.

And through Christ, gracious love is poured into our empty souls; through the Spirit, peace becomes the gift we can share with those around us. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven. No longer divided, everything that separates us from God has been removed. We need be distant from one another, nor from our true selves, any longer. Amen.

***Passing of the Peace**

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Today, you are invited to remain in your space, turn and greet those around you, make eye contact across the room and flash a peace sign, or say "Peace" in the comments on Zoom or Facebook Live broadcast.

Children's Moment

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Prelude to Scripture

Jennifer Cromley

Whether we take what is written in the Bible as fact, metaphor, myth, or story, let us listen now for the meaning it might hold for us on this day.

Sacred Reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Acts 16:16-34

¹⁶ One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. ¹⁷While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, 'These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.' ¹⁸She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place before the authorities. ²⁰When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, 'These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews ²¹and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.' ²²The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. ²³After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. ²⁷When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.' ²⁹The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰Then he brought them outside and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' ³¹They answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.' ³²They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. ³⁴He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

Postlude to Scripture

Jennifer Cromley

Together, let us say:

May the Spirit bless us with wisdom and wonder as we ponder the meaning of these words for our lives.

Call to Prayer

Jennifer Cromley



After the sermon, we will offer up our joys and concerns. Your prayer requests will be offered aloud. Whether you are sitting here in the sanctuary, or worshipping with us remotely, you are invited to add your joys and concerns to the prayer list: go to community-ucc.org/pray (a Google Form), or scan the QR code found here or there are prayer cards on the table at the back of the sanctuary that you may fill out and hand to the usher.

Message

We are All Still Here

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Silent Meditation

Hymn

There is a Balm in Gilead

NCH 553

African-American spiritual
CCLI Song # 4357689, CCLI License # 3154689

Call to Offering

Jennifer Cromley

In a few moments, we will pray. You still have time to enter your prayer concerns into the Google doc, or hand a prayer card to an usher so your prayer concern can be offered up aloud. Before that, though, we turn our attention to the offering. The Confirmands spent a good portion of their year learning what it means to be of service and what each of them has to offer in terms of their own spiritual gifts. What do you have to offer the world in the way of Christ Jesus? What does our church have to offer? We are called to be authentically who we are, to contribute to our ministry of CUCC, RIP Medical Debt Campaign, or to the Strengthen the Church Fund. The Strengthen the Church Fund provides funds for congregations around the UCC to re-form, re-imagine, and re-create community welcoming folks into their midst like never before! All offerings put into the globes will go to Strengthen the Church Fund. Offerings in the offering plates will support the mission and ministry of this local church or as noted on the envelope/check. You may also go to www.community-ucc.org and click "donate".

May God bless what we give, multiply them, and employ them in faithful service. Amen.

Joys and Concerns

Pastoral Prayer

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

*Hymn

Shadow and Substance

NCH 398

Daniel Charles Damon
One License Song #10050, One License #A-734456

Please sing these words for verse 2

*We are your image, formed in community
Sisters and brother and siblings are we.
You gave us color, custom and history;
Teach us to honor what others receive.*

Commissioning of the Community

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Benediction

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser

Postlude

Aaron Ames

Acknowledgements:

The liturgy today is adapted from the words of Rev. Thom Shuman

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Next Sunday, June 5, is PENTECOST!
We invite you to join us at Ambucs Park, Jean Driscoll Pavilion
for worship in the park at 10:15am
where we will celebrate 9 years of ministry with Jessica Smiley, Director of Youth Ministry

Brien's Food Truck will be in the parking lot following worship
so you can purchase your lunch
then we will play Bingo with lots of prizes for all ages in the Pavilion.

Join us for a day of worship and fellowship!

Ambucs Park is located at
1140 E. University Ave, Urbana, IL
Hope to see you next Sunday in the park!

Summary of the All Congregation Event of May 22, 2022 at Hessel Park

On May 22nd, CUCC folks gathered at Hessel Park to discuss the future of CUCC's budget in light of the decision we made last summer to end our rental agreement with the congregation that shared our building for many years. We shared snacks and listened to a story with a travel analogy: planes, trains, and automobiles. We separated into small groups and started by naming the things that Community UCC is known and celebrated for, including our extravagant welcome, our progressive theology, our support of the LGBTQ community, art and music, hospitality and our supportive community, Jubilee Café, and our role as a Campus Church. Then we put pens to paper to figure out how to continue to be and do all of the things we value about CUCC under our new budget situation.

Without steady rental income for our building, the church's overall expected income for the year decreases by about \$30,000. In 2021 when the rental agreement ended in the middle of the fiscal year, CLB appealed to the congregation for increased donations and a favorable stock market period made up the difference. However, 2022 has shown us that we can't count on the church's investments to pad our budget every year. We broke down our options for meeting the gap in our budget without sacrificing existing programs into three categories, and discussed options for each.

Plane: Get there fast, but hardest on the pocketbook. The "flying" approach is a direct appeal to our church members to increase pledging and gifts. If the \$30,000 was added to the pledged giving column of our budget, it would represent a 16% increase in giving across the entire congregation. For households that give \$500 a year, that's about \$7 additional dollars a month, and households that give \$2000 a year are looking at about \$28 a month, and so on. We know that increased giving will not be possible for all, but every bit helps to get us closer to the finish line.

Train: It takes a little longer, but we have some fun along the way. The "train" approach represents fundraising with events and activities that raise money for the church or our missions. This is an opportunity to showcase CUCC's work to our community and increase awareness of social justice issues that are important to us. Special events require special volunteers who are willing to give their time and effort.

Car: Slow, with required maintenance. The "car" method is earning funds through rentals of the church building or kitchen. We are on the lookout for a reliable long-term renter or several renters to carpool with us, renters who share our values and can work with us for mutual benefit. This may mean sacrificing some of our congregation's freedom to use our building, and requires work from volunteers and staff to coordinate and supervise.

We will likely need a combination of these "methods of travel." We have a lot of factors to consider, and we want the congregation's input on steps going forward. Keep an eye on your church emails and Communigram, as CLB will be reaching out to the congregation as we work together to maintain our current programs and stretch ourselves toward new faith destinations as a community. ~ Ilsa Kantola



CUCC is very grateful for freely available vaccines and boosters (including 5-11 YO booster eligibility). Unfortunately, due to **HIGH** community spread, we are adjusting our COVID guidelines. This adjustment honors our commitment to keeping our CUCC family and our community safe. We continue to acknowledge that our community has beloved members still ineligible for vaccines (under age 5) or not fully protected due to immunocompromised health, and our faith asks us to care for the most vulnerable.

With that in mind, our updated Summer 2022 Covid Protocol Recommendations are:

- Continued masking in the church and sanctuary during services for all attendees inside the church. Attendees should consider wearing a higher filtration mask.
- Spacing in pews between families or friend pods is highly recommended.
- If you have a fever, cough, headache or any other COVID symptoms, please consider testing before coming to church.
- All normal entrances and exits at the building are allowed.
- Congregants are able to leave the pews at dismissal as they are ready, no usher dismissal is required.

While the [CDC Community Level](#) for Champaign County is **HIGH** as of May 24th, 2022, the following exceptions are permitted, with adjustments:

- **All speakers who unmask will test the morning of service.** Two people can be unmasked at the chancel or choir loft at a time. They will be spaced at least 10 feet apart and 10 feet from the congregation. If one of those two people is singing, the other may not sing.
- Six people may sing in the choir loft together, provided they are masked.
- One unmasked soloist may sing in the choir loft.
- **Coffee hour will move to outside as the weather allows.** Other Congregational activities that include eating and drinking, like or dining together or socializing together outside of church are permitted, as these are opt-in events at the attendee's own discretion. We recommend still wearing masks together indoors, unless actively eating or drinking.

Vaccination and boosters reduce the risk of people becoming seriously ill and Champaign Urbana Public Health Dept. has sign-ups open weekly at this link: [Champaign Urbana Public Health Dept. Sign-ups](#)

We will monitor these levels weekly and reassess these protocols as Covid cases increase or decrease within our community. On behalf of your Health & Safety team, thank you for working together to keep everyone healthy and safe.

Serving Today

Ministers: The Community of Community UCC
Preaching & Presiding: Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser
Liturgist: Jennifer Cromley
Greeter: Chase Skye
Usher: Peg Wade
Organist: Aaron Ames **Singers:**
Audio/Video: A/V Team

Community United Church of Christ Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Leah Robberts-Mosser
leah@community-ucc.org

Director of Youth Ministries:

Jessica Smiley | jessica@community-ucc.org

Commissioned Minister of Congregational Health:

Linda Morgan | lindamorgan@sbcglobal.net

Faith Community Nurse

Johnalene Radek | johnalene.radek@carle.com

Parish Associate:

Rev. Connie Bandy | connie@community-ucc.org

Director of Music Ministries:

Kathy Lee | music@community-ucc.org

Organist: Aaron Ames, Interim Organist

Office Manager:

Carla Rush | info@community-ucc.org

Your Ministry Team Leaders

Moderator: Erin Ewoldt*

Past Moderator: Elizabeth Shack*

Incoming Moderator: Johnalene Radek*

Clerk: Jeff Radek*

Pastoral Relations Committee: Cara Finnegan

Personnel Committee: Anna Barnes

Community Building:

Peg Wade* and Randy Musser

- **Care Team:** Marilou Hinrichs

- **Prayer Shawls:** Elena Kasper

- **Meal Train:** Jennifer Robbennolt

- **Driver's Ministry:** John Osborne (U), Open

- **Healing Music Ministry:** Marilou Hinrichs

- **Card Ministry:** Peg Wade

- **Visitor's Ministry:** (Open)

- **Health and Wellness Team:** Doug Irwin

- **Hospitality Team:** Randy Musser and Peg Wade*

Children & Family: Julie McClure* and Alison Anders

Finance: Roger Wade* (treasurer), David Willcox (financial secretary)

Identity: Keri Evans* and Ramona Oswald

Mission: Jeanne Ward* and Kristy Brownfield

Sound & Ethical Practices (SEP):

(Open) and (Open)

-**Buildings & Grounds:** Tom Ward and Matthew Hart

-**Contracts & Insurance:** Andrew McClure

UCC Campus Ministry Liaison: Ilsa Kantola*

Worship: Susan Pawlicki* and Tina Cowsert

- **Sound Coordinator:** Roger Wade

*denotes Church Life Board Member

United Church Foundation (UCC Campus Ministry)

Director of Campus Ministry: Reverend Nate Brantingham | nate@ucccampusministry.org
www.community-ucc.org/campus-ministry

Community United Church of Christ

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