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**We are an Inclusive Faith Community. All Are Welcomed and All Really Means ALL!**

Sunday, July 16th 2023 10am

Seventh Sunday After Pentecost



*“*Some people point you to Jesus because it’s easier than to live in such a way that you can see Jesus in them.*” – Rev. Kevin Hart*

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**PRELUDE**

Greeting and Reply

Opening Hymn: **Leaning on the Everlasting Arms (New National Baptist Hymnal- 262)**

*What a fellowship, what a joy divine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms;  
what a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.*

*Refrain:  
Leaning, leaning,  
safe and secure from all alarms;  
leaning, leaning,  
leaning on the everlasting arms.*

*O how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,  
leaning on the everlasting arms;  
O how bright the path grows from day to day,  
leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]*

*What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
leaning on the everlasting arms?  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,  
leaning on the everlasting arms. [Refrain]*

**Our Church’s Mission:**

Welcome all into a loving, inclusive faith community,

Seeking to live out the teachings of Jesus,

Building on our own rich history, actively exploring beliefs and assumptions, and Promoting justice, peace and spiritual growth.

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: Gather us in, Mysterious Maker God.

**Many: That being close to you we will understand your intention for creation.**

One: Weave us into one, Sweet Savior of All.

**Many:** **That living your ways we will create communities of faith and peace.**

One: Gather us in, Powerful Spirit of Renewal.

**Many: That treasuring the past we will boldly shape the future.**

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One: Weave us into one, Holy One in Three.

**Many: That all of us together may be the signs of your presence, the weavers of your communities and the witnesses to your coming. Gather us in this day that we might gather strength from you as we worship in this sacred space.**

**Hebrew Reading:** *Isaiah 55:10-13*

***10****For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
    and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
    giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,****11****so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
    it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose  
    and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

***12****For you shall go out in joy  
    and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
    shall burst into song,  
    and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.****13****Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
    instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle,  
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,  
    for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.*

**Gospel Reading:** *Matthew 13:18-23*

***18****“Hear, then, the parable of the sower.****19****When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.****20****As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy,****21****yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away]****22****As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this[ age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing.****23****But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”*

Reader: This is the word of God, to the people of God.

**ALL: Thanks be to God!**

INVOCATION

Worship & Praise through Music

Passing the Peace of Christ

THE LORD'S PRAYER: (Singing) **(Green Hymnal-740)**

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 trespasses **(Debts),** as we forgive those who trespass against us **(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

Announcements

Offering

Doxology (Praise God from whom all blessings flow)

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above the heavenly host: Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost** *(Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost)*

Sermonic Hymn: **Standing on the Promises (New Baptist Hymnal- 257 verses 1,3 & 4)**

*Standing on the promises of Christ, my King,  
Through eternal ages let his praises ring;  
Glory in the highest, I will shout and sing,  
Standing on the promises of God.*

*Refrain:  
Standing, standing,  
Standing on the promises of God, my Savior;  
Standing, standing,  
I'm standing on the promises of God.*

*Standing on the promises of Christ, the Lord,  
Bound to him eternally by love's strong cord,  
Overcoming daily with the Spirit's sword,  
Standing on the promises of God. [Refrain]*

*Standing on the promises I cannot fall,  
List'ning ev'ry moment to the Spirit's call,  
Resting in my Savior as my all in all,  
Standing on the promises of God. [Refrain]*

MESSAGE: “There is Strength in Unity**”** Joshua 6: 1-5

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RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD:

*Sing them over again to me,  
wonderful words of life;  
let me more of their beauty see,  
wonderful words of life.  
Words of life and beauty,  
teach me faith and duty:*

*Refrain:  
Beautiful words, wonderful words,  
wonderful words of life.  
Beautiful words, wonderful words,  
wonderful words of life.*

*Christ, the blessed One, gives to all  
wonderful words of life;  
sinner, list to the loving call,  
wonderful words of life.  
All so freely given,  
wooing us to heaven: [Refrain]*

*Sweetly echo the gospel call,  
wonderful words of life;  
offer pardon and peace to all,  
wonderful words of life.  
Jesus, only Savior,  
sanctify forever: [Refrain]*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

The Three-Minute Suggestion:

Please spend the first three minutes with someone who is relatively new to our church family, or new to you. Get to know them like a friend might! THEN take some time with longtime friends. Thanks!

WORSHIP CONTINUES IN FELLOWSHIP:

*Join for Coffee and Connections in the Connections Café sponsored by Rev. Dr. James L. Mills, Sr.*

*MONDAY: 7/17*

*AA Group -- 6:30pm*

*TUESDAY: 7/18*

*Journey Band Practice – 5:45pm*

*Woodwinds Practice- 7:00pm*

*AA Living Sober – 7:30pm*

*WEDNESDAY: 7/19*

*VBS Meeting- 7pm*

*AA - 8pm*

*THURSDAY: 7/20*

*AA Meeting – 7:30pm*

*FRIDAY: 7/21*

*Stars of Tomorrow “Spelling Bee” Performance – 7:30pm*

*AA Meeting (Men’s) – 7:30pm*

*Saturday: 7/22*

*Stars of Tomorrow “Spelling Bee” Performance – 7:30pm*

*Bring a friend with you next Sunday!*

*Take them out to lunch! Have a better day!*

*If you would like to schedule time with Rev either in-person or zoom, please contact Mike via email to be placed on his calendar. office@wentzsucc.org*

*LOOKING AHEAD:*

*“25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” Live Performance at Brittany Pointe Estate 7/21 and 7/22 – 7:30pm*

*VBS (Vacation Bible School) 7/25-7/27*

*9:15am to 12:15pm*

Wentz’s UCC

Open & Affirming Statement:

We are Wentz’s United Church of Christ, an open and affirming congregation, where your identity and being are cherished. We respectfully welcome all without exception, including those of all races, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, and family structures. Together we create an open and active community. Everyone is invited to walk with us in our journey. You are welcome here. Whomever, wherever, at all times.

You. Are. Simply. Welcomed.

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Wentz’s United Church of Christ

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Matt MacDonald- Technology