



Tough Love from a Loving God

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Celebration Sunday
September 8, 2024
10:15 am

Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

500 W. Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446

10:15 am—September 8, 2024—Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost/Celebration Sunday

*You are invited to stand when indicated by an *asterisk if able and **speak the words in bold.***

PRELUDE

Love Medley.....Arranged by Marilyn Ham
The medley includes *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling, O How He Loves You and Me, and My Jesus, I Love Thee.*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

*INTRODUCTION TO FALL THEME & CALL TO WORSHIP

During our worship this fall, we will be exploring a new theme: "Tough Love from a Loving God". Throughout Scripture, God shows just how much God loves us, sometimes in challenging ways we can't understand or fathom.

Time and time again, in the bible and in our own lives, God doesn't always offer us what we want or what makes us feel good.

God shocks us with a son who welcomes, heals, and feeds those on the edges of society, and who calls us to follow him and do likewise.

God offends us with a radical gospel full of stories and teachings that challenge the ways of popular culture, then and now.

God comforts the troubled and troubles the comfortable.

God's love is tough, and yet, we are drawn in and held by that same love that walks with us on our journey of faith and understanding.

As we explore, learn, stretch, and grow in this season, and even as we worship this day, may we be open to receiving tough love offered by a loving God, who will not let us go. **Amen.**

*OPENING HYMN

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing.....42
Stanza 2 may be sung in harmony.

*CONFESSION/ASSURANCE

Loving God, being open to your word, your love, and your truth is hard. Being open requires us to tear down walls that we have carefully crafted to protect our hearts from the hurt and disappointment that life sometimes hurls at us. The unfortunate thing is, walls also keep out the very people whom you have called us to welcome in and love. Forgive us for times when we are too scared to reach out, too wounded to take a leap of faith, too busy guarding ourselves to listen and respond faithfully to a world in need. Help us to, brick by brick, dismantle our walls. May we have open ears to *hear* of your love, open eyes to *see* your love around us, and may we have open hearts to *feel* the world's need for more. Amen.

The good news this day is that we serve a God who is in the business of tearing down walls...a God who meets our defenses, our hurts, our sins, our disappointments, our closed hearts with compassion, forgiveness, and grace. We are forgiven! **May we be open to receive God's gift of forgiveness this day and always. Amen.**

*SUNG RESPONSE

Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, joy of heav'n, on earth be found, Fix in us a hum-ble dwell-ing,
all your faith-ful mer-cies crown; Je-sus, you are all com-pas-sion; pure, un-bound-ed love im-part.
Vis-it us with your sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-'ry trem-bling heart.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Isaiah 35:4-7a.....Page xxx

GOSPEL READING

Mark 7:24-37

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter." And when she went home, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE/BLESSINGS OF BACKPACKS AND BOOKS

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

ANTHEM

Praise His Holy Name!.....Keith Hampton
Sing till the power of the Lord come down. Shout Hallelujah! Praise His Holy Name!

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind, but now I see. Jesus, Jesus, how I love Thee! Shout Hallelujah! Praise His Holy Name! Sing till the...

Must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free? No, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me. Jesus, Jesus, how I love Thee! Shout Hallelujah! Praise His Holy Name! Sing till the...

Holy Jesus, Praise His Name, Oh! Hallelujah! Praise His Holy Name...

-Keith Hampton

SERMON

"Be Opened"Rev. Addie Stong

*HYMN

We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness.....179
The hymn may be sung in harmony.

JOYS & CONCERNS/PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/SUNG RESPONSE

Grant us wis - dom to per - ceive you, hearts a - wak - ened to re - ceive you,
minds a - lert to thoughts that grieve you, God of mer - cy, hear us.

OFFERING & OFFERTORY MUSIC

God Loved the Word.....Edward Miller

Offering plates will be passed to the congregation in the pews during the Offertory music. The plates will then be dedicated during the Offertory Sung Response. You may also donate by scanning the QR code found in the bulletin and on laminated cards in the pews.

*SUNG RESPONSE

Praise God, the Gi - ver and the Gift. Hands, hearts, and voi - ces now up - lift:
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!
 Praise, praise the Breath of glad sur - prise, free - ing our spir - its, op'n - ing eyes.
 Three in One - ness, love com - mun - ing,
 Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

REMARKS FROM CHURCH LEADERSHIP & PRAYER OF GRATITUDE AND SENDING FOR LEROY HORST

God of all the many seasons of life and work, we come to you in thankfulness for the many years of service as Buildings and Grounds Supervisor given by your faithful servant and our friend, Leroy.

We thank you for the work of his heart and hands, and most importantly, for the spirit with which he did his work. We acknowledge and appreciate the long-term contribution and impact he has made in the execution of daily tasks, in his loyalty to our community, and in the sharing of his gifts, experience, and wisdom with others. We celebrate all of Leroy’s hard work and dedication, the way he has adapted to many changes over the years and has made sacrifices of his personal time when the job demanded it, even amid his own personal joys and challenges.

We pray your continued blessing upon Leroy during this next season of his life and we give thanks that he will continue to share his gifts as a member of our congregation. May your presence be with him as he settles into the new rhythm of life that retirement will bring. May he continue to be blessed with strong networks of friends and family with whom to enjoy the journey that lies ahead. Open new doors of service that will satisfy his desire to give and that will make a lasting difference both in our church and outside these walls.

We pray all these things in the name of Christ, with deep gratitude for Leroy, thankful for what has been and grateful for all that will be. AMEN

*CLOSING HYMN

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty
The hymn is located on the bulletin insert.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.....Setting by Hans Friedrich Micheelsen

Following worship, you are invited to join us for a light luncheon in Assembly Hall as we continue the celebration for Leroy!

Worship Leaders

Rev. Addie Stong, Acting Lead Pastor
Pastor Tom Adil, Bridge Support Pastor

Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music
Chancel Choir

Copyright Information

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Praise His Holy Name!

Text and Music: Keith Hampton © 1998, Earthsongs

Grant Us Wisdom to Perceive You

Text: Rae Whitney, 1991; rev. 1994, © 1994, Selah Publishing Co., Inc.

Praise God, the Giver and the Gift

Text: Brian Wren, 1989, © 1989, Hope Publishing Company

- The Nursery will be open for you to use mindfully, if your little one needs a break. No volunteers will be on duty, so a parent, grandparent, or responsible adult must stay with their child.
- Today's Sermon can be found on **Spotify** following the service, search "**St. John's UCC Lansdale Sermons**"
- Today's worship audio will be available later online on St. John's Facebook Page, Website or YouTube: youtube.com/stjohnsucclansdalepa
- Please ask a Hospitality Team member for an audio device if you are having difficulty hearing the service.
- CD's of this morning's service are available by contacting the church office.
- Reminder: The wheelchairs and first aid kit are stored in the "First Aid Closet" in the narthex (the door is clearly labeled). The automatic external defibrillator (AED) is located in the church Library on the wall closest to the Sanctuary.

Worship Assistants

Hospitality:

Mark Methlie, Jen Gilbert, Sarah Hogan,
Bonnie & Walt Weber

Elder of the Morning:

Emilie Truscott

Deacon of the Morning:

Judy Leslie

CD Technician:

David Douglass

Chancel Flower Ministry:

Karen & Mark Methlie

Driver:

Scott Vanderburg

Greeters:

Joyce Huisenga

Social Host:

Leroy's Retirement Celebration Team



- 🌸 In honor of Sandy & Bob Taylor’s September 11th wedding anniversary
- 🌸 In memory of Ruth Ekberg from her daughter, Sandy, and Scott Brown
- 🌸 In loving memory of Charles James Snyder on his 31st birthday on September 8. Love Mom, Dad, Jackie, James and the boys.

Weekly amount needed for Current Income 2024	\$7,884.62
Weekly amount needed for OCWM 2024	\$798.00
A Look at the Week of August 25, 2024	
Attendance: 9:30 am, August 25, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost	95
Offering For Current Income	\$3,225.00
Offering For Our Church’s Wider Mission	\$260.00
A Look at the Week of September 1, 2024	
Attendance: 9:30 am, September 1, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost	85
Offering For Current Income	\$6,346.00
Offering For Our Church’s Wider Mission	\$641.00

To give online through our secure platform, visit <https://app.easytithe.com/app/giving/stjohnsucc>

Scan here for online giving



St. John’s United Church of Christ

500 West Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446 Office: 215.855.5489 email: office@st-johns-ucc.org

If you would like more information about St. John’s please speak with one of the staff or contact the office.

Rev. Adelaide L. Stong, M. Div., Acting Lead Pastor Pastor Tom Adil, M. Div., LPC, Bridge Support Pastor
 Andrew Paulson, M.M., M.A., Minister of Music Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children & Youth
 Kay Peebles, Church Admin. Leroy Horst, Buildings & Grounds Supervisor Bill Bergey, Custodian
 Grace Marchione, Communications Coordinator Mark Bruen, Council President.

Have questions or comments about the church website or social media?
 Please contact Grace Marchione, Communications Coordinator, at communications@st-johns-ucc.org.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



After serving as Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds the for past 11 years, Leroy will be retiring.

Join us for a light lunch and cake after church on **Sunday, September 8** to celebrate his retirement and years of service to St John's.

Women's Retreat

Saturday, September 14

9:30 am

Church Library



This month's program will feature David Furniss, who will share his ideas about what makes Oaxaca, Mexico a special place. Learn about the customs, music, festivals and more through photos, descriptions and a little Oaxacan music. Exciting news from the Oaxaca Learning Center will also be included. Light refreshments will be served.

All women are welcome!

Looking for feedback from families with young children on their NEED in opening the St. John's nursery up with volunteers. Please let us know your need by answering a few questions on the survey found on the purple sheet by the Sanctuary doors or just contacting a member of the BOE or emailing the church office.

-Board of Educators

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE FOR YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION FOR THE MALAWI BOOK / FLASHLIGHT DRIVE! THE BOOKS ARE ON THEIR WAY! 8 PLASTIC TUBS WERE FILLED FOR MALAWI!



This Week at St. John's

If you would like more information, please contact the church office 215.855.5489 or office@st-johns-ucc.org

Sept	8	Sun	10:15 am 11:30 am	Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 10:15 am Worship Resumes Celebration Sunday Enlightener Due Morning Worship, Sanctuary Leroy's Retirement Party, Assembly Hall Elders, Library Stewardship, Senior Pastor Study
Sept	9	Mon	10:00 am 7:15 pm	Library Closed Book Club, Activity Room Council, Assembly Hall
Sept	10	Tues	7:00 pm	AA, Assembly Hall
Sept	11	Weds	5:45-6:45 pm 6:15-6:45 pm 7:00-7:20 pm 7:30-9:00 pm	Wednesday Night Live Returns! Community Meal, Activity Room Adult Education, Library United Ringers, Sanctuary Children's Choir, Music Room Holden Evening Prayer, Sanctuary Chancel Choir
Sept	12	Thurs	1:00 pm 6:30 pm	Stampers, Activity Room Girl Scouts, Activity Room
Sept	14	Sat	9:30 am	Women's Retreat, Library
Sept	15	Sun	10:15 am 11:30 am 11:45 am	Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost Council Communications Day Morning Worship, Sanctuary Fellowship, Assembly Hall CGM Meeting, Library



Psalm 15

¹ O Lord, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?

² Those who walk blamelessly and do what is right
and speak the truth from their heart;

³ who do not slander with their tongue
and do no evil to their friends
nor heap shame upon their neighbors;

⁴ in whose eyes the wicked are despised
but who honor those who fear the Lord;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;

⁵ who do not lend money at interest
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

Those who do these things shall never be moved.

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

⁷ Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, ² they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³ (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders, ⁴ and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash, and there are also many other traditions that they observe: the washing of cups and pots and bronze kettles and beds.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶ He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
⁷ in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

⁸ “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

²¹ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”