

September 3, 2023 – Labor Day Sunday
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Liturgist: We pray for all our elected leaders that they might place our brothers and sisters struggling on the margins at the very center of their deliberations. We pray that they will support policies that create good jobs with living wages. We pray that Congress would be just in considering the minimum wage so that no one would be forced to work full-time and still live in poverty.

All people: God of justice, hear our prayer.

Pastor: And finally, we pray that we, members of your faithful community, might use our voices and our resources to build a more just economy: an economy of shared prosperity where workers earn living wages, and all people live lives of dignity. May we be mindful of our own paid support staff here at Starview UCC.

All people: God of justice, hear our prayer.

Liturgist: God of Justice – we lift up all these prayers to you in the knowledge that you are already at work amid the brokenness of our economic system and that you invite each of us to be a part of your holy work of justice.

Pastor: God we offer to you these prayers today – both spoken aloud and those in our hearts – in the hope that together we might be the people you have called us to be, reflecting your compassion, mercy and justice in all that we do, continuing to pray as Jesus taught us:

All people: “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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.” Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC Mr. Kevin Crone

OFFERING INVITATION

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

DOXOLOGY *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* Hymnal, #258

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

All people: Loving and indiscriminate God, we know that the whole world is your family. Let us show that we mean it through what we share with others. Bless these gifts given in person, and those given online and electronically so they may go where they are most needed. Amen.

HYMN *I Have Decided to Follow Jesus* Bulletin Insert

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Mr. Kevin Crone

GREETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS
JOYS AND CONCERNS

Pastor Laura Baker

PRELUDE

Mr. Kevin Crone

(Please stand in body and/or spirit)

CALL TO WORSHIP

Pastor: Worker God, whose hands built the earth, molded our bodies, and sowed the stars across the sky,

All people: we gather in your presence this morning with praise and thanksgiving for your mighty deeds.

Pastor: Meet us here, Worker God,

All people: strengthen our hearts and our hands to work with you in the building of a world filled with justice and peace.

HYMN

For the Beauty of the Earth

Red Hymnal, #12

ACT OF CONFESSION

Pastor: On this Labor Day Sunday let us, in a special way, lift up all people who labor, either for pay or as volunteers, in jobs or at school, at home or in the workplace, in the U.S. and around the world.

All people: We are workers, God, just like you. But we confess that our actions do not always affirm and honor each other. Our work is not always done in a spirit that is pleasing to you. We confess that, on some occasions, we have blindly bought goods made by people who are paid too little or work in unsafe conditions. We admit that we have failed to end an unjust system in which some workers have jobs that provide good wages and benefits while others may have no job, or one that pays little and provides few benefits.

Creator God, help us to be your people, working for a world where all workers are valued. A world where those who clean houses are also able to buy houses to live in. A world where those who grow food can also afford to eat their fill. And one where those who serve and care for others — in stores, schools, hotels, restaurants, nursing homes, and many other places — are, themselves, also served and cared for. It will be a world where all workers everywhere share in the abundance that you have given us. Hear now our silent prayers, which reflect upon our acts of greed, feelings of superiority, self-

righteous pride, and fear.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Our God is a God of grace and transformation. When we ask, God gives us the courage and strength to live out our faith in the workplace and the marketplace, as well as in the sanctuary.

All people: Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Amen.

PRAISE HYMN

Gloria Patri

Hymnal, #493

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Pastor: God's forgiveness and transforming love gives us great peace. Let us turn then, to one another, and share that same God-given peace with each other. Offer the words: "The peace of Christ be with you..."

Congregation: "And, also with you."

(The congregation may be seated, as the children & youth come forward)

JESUS SAID, "LET THE CHILDREN COME"

HYMN

We Plow the Fields and Scatter

Red Hymnal, #432

OLD TESTAMENT READING – 1 Samuel 6:1-6; 7:15-8:5

GOSPEL READING – Matthew 16:21-28

SERMON

Rev. Laura Baker

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE & THE LORD'S PRAYER (using "sins")

Pastor: Let our prayers surround those who are struggling on the economic margins: The ones who have not shared in the great abundance that God has entrusted to our care; the ones who have been left behind by the so-called economic recovery; the ones who are unemployed or underemployed; and the ones who are unjustly employed, working hard and yet living in poverty. And let us pray for all those caught up in the workings of our unjust economic system — the workers, the managers, the owners, the policymakers and the consumers – all of us have a responsibility to help create a faithful economy that values work and honors the dignity of all workers. Hear now our prayers:

O God, we pray today for all those who are seeking employment, those facing a very difficult and uncertain future whether they are experiencing joblessness for the first time today or are among the millions of the long-term unemployed.

All people: God of justice, hear our prayer.

Liturgist:

We pray today for those who are working in low-wage jobs yet remain trapped in poverty — workers who need fair wages, respect and dignity in their workplace.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer

Pastor:

We pray for children whose parents must work long hours in hard jobs just to afford shelter, food and clothing. And we pray for the moms, dads and family members who struggle with the difficult choice of working long hours and making long commutes, or spending more time with their children, to be able to tuck them into bed each night and see them off to school in the morning.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer

Liturgist:

We pray for those who labor in the fields to provide us food each day. For the farm workers who too often work beneath the hot sun without shade and in the deadly heat without water and who do not even make sufficient wages to buy the food they are harvesting.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Pastor:

We pray today for our brothers and sisters who work in the shadow of a broken and unjust immigration system – workers who face discrimination and exploitation and whose rights are too often denied through intimidation and threaten deportation.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Liturgist:

We pray for all those who labor in restaurants and earn as little as \$2.13 per hour – the average 'tipped wage.' Here in Pennsylvania, being \$2.83 per hour.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Pastor:

We pray for ethical employers who share fairly the earnings of their businesses with all their workers; we pray for those who pay living wages and provide benefits sufficient for workers to support themselves and their families.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Liturgist:

We pray for employers who have not yet learned to value their workers or recognize their inherent dignity. We pray for CEOs and managers who have hoarded riches and yet denied fair wages to their employees. We pray, God, that you might turn their hearts of stone into hearts of compassion.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer.

Pastor:

We pray for our President that he might use the power of his office to guarantee that all workers on federal property are paid a living wage.

All people:

God of justice, hear our prayer.