



**COMMUNITY CHURCH OF WALKER
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

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“No matter who you are, or where you are, you are welcome here!”

**September 14, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
“Joy in Heaven”**

Worship Leaders:

Pastor: Michael Small

Liturgist: Deb Farrell

Special Music: Celebrate

Greeter: Doris Johnson

Keyboard: Sabbastian Wilson-Webb

Tech: Ace Diehl (Video), Ben Batson (Audio)
Spiritual Life, Chancel and Communion Preparation

PRELUDE

WORDS OF WELCOME

A TIME FOR CHILDREN

† HYMN

“Invisible, Immortal, God Only Wise”

#1

CALL TO WORSHIP (Inspired Psalm 51)

One: Let us enter the presence of our God with a renewed heart and a right spirit.

All: Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

One: Let us speak, hear, and embrace truth and the wisdom of God.

All: Strengthen and empower us, O God, according to your steadfast love.

One: Let us hear joy and gladness. Restore our crushed spirits.

All: Revive us again, O God, according to your steadfast love.

A TIME OF CENTERING

(During this time of centering, open your hearts to God; be in the present, here and now.)

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

† For those who are able, please stand.

One: Maker of Heaven and Earth, we rejoice in your presence. In you, we find joy and strength, comfort and courage, truth and insight. Speak to us again. Reveal your power in and through us. Show us your glory and be glorified in our worship. May your glorious light shine through hidden spaces. May your blessed darkness make space for rest. Fortify us for this journey and make us instruments of your kindom. Amen.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION AND NEW LIFE

All: Holy God, you seek us when we are lost. You do not turn away from those who others minimize and demean. Help us to recognize the belovedness of every human being and all your creation. Give us courage and curiosity to engage with those that others would ignore or isolate. Let us rejoice on earth as your rejoice in heaven as we make restoration, redemption, and reconciliation abound among us. Amen.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

(Each person can take this time to surrender to God privately anything weighing heavy on their heart.)

WORDS OF GRACE

One: Beloved, the Holy One seeks you and rejoices when you turn from the ways of the world that minimize and marginalize the community God has prepared for us. We can be builders of a future that celebrates the kindom of God alive and rejoicing on earth.

† PASSING THE PEACE

One: The Peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also, with you.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Better than a Hallelujah”

Celebrate

Focus Scripture: Luke 15:1-10 *Priests for Equality. The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation* (p. 686). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Kindle Edition.

¹ Meanwhile, the tax collectors and the “sinners” were all gathering around Jesus to listen to his teaching, ² at which the Pharisees and the religious scholars murmured, “This person welcomes sinners and eats with them!”

³ Jesus then addressed this parable to them: ⁴ “Who among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, doesn’t leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and search for the lost one until it’s found? ⁵ And finding it, you put the sheep on your shoulders in jubilation. ⁶ Once home, you invite friends and neighbors in and say to them, ‘Rejoice with me! I’ve found my lost sheep!’ ⁷ I tell you, in the same way

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there will be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.

⁸ “What householder, who has ten silver pieces and loses one, doesn’t light a lamp and sweep the house in a diligent search until she finds what she had lost? ⁹ And when it is found, the householder calls in her friends and neighbors and says, ‘Rejoice with me! I’ve found the silver piece I lost!’ ¹⁰ I tell you, there will be the same kind of joy before the angels of God over one repentant sinner.”

Luke 15:1-10 *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament* (p. 137). Wildman, Terry M. InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.

The Worth of the Lost Ones

¹ Tribal tax collectors and other outcasts would often gather around Creator Sets Free (Jesus) to listen to him tell his stories. ² But the Separated Ones (Pharisees) and the scroll keepers would complain about this. They would say things like, “This man welcomes outcasts to join him at the table and eat with him.”

³ On one of those occasions Creator Sets Free (Jesus) answered them with a story.

⁴ “Who among you, if you were caring for one hundred sheep and one of the lambs wandered away, would not leave the ninety-nine and search for that lost lamb until you found it? ⁵ Would you not put that lamb on your shoulders, hurry home, ⁶and invite your friends to a celebration, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my lost lamb!’?”

⁷ “In the same way, the spirit-world above will celebrate even more over one outcast who finds the way back home than for ninety-nine who are already safely there.

⁸ “*Let me say it another way,*” he explained. “What man who has ten eagle feathers and loses one would not light a torch, sweep the house clean, and look everywhere until he found it? ⁹ Then, after he finds it, would he not gather his friends together for a celebration? ¹⁰ In the same way, Creator’s spirit-messengers will celebrate when even one outcast finds the way back home.”

REFLECTION

“Rejoice”

HYMN

“Come, O Fount of Every Blessing”

#459

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE/PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER (*Unison, using debts*)

† For those who are able, please stand.

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.

SPECIAL MUSIC

“Those Who See Light”

Celebrate

Those Who See Light

**Those who see light can walk in the dark.
Those who see love can see God
Those who look up will discover God’s face.
Those who look down will uncover God’s path
Those who perceive God is here with us now
will see God’s return**

**Those who see light can walk in the dark
Those who see love can see God.
Those who have witnessed the sun rise and set
Those who have studied a flower unfold
Those who have focused on land, sea and sky
Have seen Jesus Christ**

**Those who see light can walk in the dark.
Those who love can see God
Those who see good in each person they meet
Those who look after their neighbor in need
Those who believe God’s now living in them
Will see God’s return**

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY

One: Let us give generously and lovingly to support the ministry of the gospel—loving our neighbors as ourselves through sharing the abundant gifts of God.

MUSICAL INTERLUDE

**DOXOLOGY: *(as collection plates come forward)*
Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God for all that love has done;
Creator, Christ, and Spirit One. Amen.**

Tune #780

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PRAYER OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING

One: God our Provider, receive these gifts in gratitude from your people. We pray that these offerings meet the needs of the world and our community. May they serve as a public witness of our commitment to being your church. Amen.

† HYMN

“Amazing Grace”

#547

PARTING WORDS

One: As you go,
Rejoice that God knows you, recognizes you, and communes with you.
Rejoice knowing that you have the power do do the same
With all you encounter.
Go, and rejoice!

POSTLUDE

WI-FI – “Guest” Scan QR Code for Internet Access

Joy in Heaven: Service Prayers for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost was written by the Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay, Minister for Worship and Theology for the United Church of Christ.



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