

st. John's

Serving Christ & Community! Serving you!



Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost

October 3/4, 2026

As We Gather

"God loves you." It is not like we have never heard that before. We may even have taken that fact for granted, thinking, "Well, of course He does! That's His thing! 1 John 4:8 says that God *is* love." Nevertheless, as our lives and circumstances unfold, through the uncertainties of sin and doubt and failure, many have come up short and been forced to wonder, "How can God love me now?" Love, after all, is always in direct proportion to our worthiness of it, to how lovable we are, right?

The highest love of God, agape, can commonly be defined as the love of intelligence and corresponding purpose. This definition may seem at first to drain the whole idea of the depth of emotion or the value of love. But we discover the power of God's love even more as we are convinced of the greatness of our need—our own sin and unworthiness. That's when the cross of Calvary and the sacrifice of Christ crucified shines forth as the highest, greatest, and almost unbelievable love of God for you—even you. Notice how many of today's hymns examine the depth and, yes, "strangeness" of the fact that God loves you.

Chimes and Prelude

Please Stand

Opening Hymn

"Christ Be My Leader"

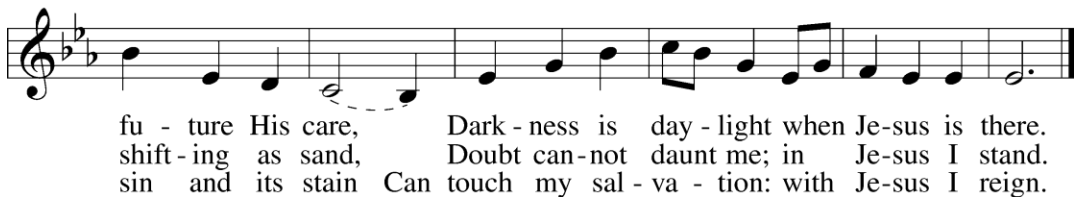
LSB 861 (1-3)



1 Christ be my Lead - er by night as by day; Safe through the
2 Christ be my Teach - er in age as in youth, Drift - ing or
3 Christ be my Sav - ior in calm as in strife; Death can - not



dark - ness, for He is the way. Glad - ly I fol - low, my
doubt - ing, for He is the truth. Grant me to trust Him; though
hold me, for He is the life. Nor dark - ness nor doubt - ing nor



Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, 1926–2024 Tune: Irish Text: © 1964, renewed 1992 Hope Publishing Co. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110001315 Tune: Public domain

Invocation and Call to Worship

P In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P I will go to the altar of God,

C to God my exceeding joy.

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth.

P God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son,

C that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Confession and Absolution

P Beloved, “the love of Christ constrains us,” because “He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” For the sake of the miraculous love of God, let us draw near to Him with a true heart and confess our sins and our need for God’s love.

C Lord God, heavenly Father, we confess to You that we have sinned against You through our fears and failure to live according to Your will and design. Because our love for You has faltered, so also have we not loved those whom You would have us call our neighbor. So certain are we of our sin that we have even wondered at times how You could still love us. Because of Your merciful invitation alone, we come before You, begging Your forgiveness solely and alone for the sake of the sacrifice of Your Son. O Lord, have mercy on us.

P Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

Please be Seated

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 5:1-7

5 Let me sing for my beloved
my love song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

2 He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
and he looked for it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem
and men of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.

4 What more was there to do for my vineyard,
that I have not done in it?
When I looked for it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

5 And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.

6 I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and briers and thorns shall grow up;

I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.
⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the men of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
and he looked for justice,
but behold, bloodshed;
for righteousness,
but behold, an outcry!

P This is the Word of the Lord
C **Thanks be to God**

Epistle

Philippians 3:4b-14

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:
⁵ circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—
¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.
¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God**

Choir

“Beloved, Let Us Love One Another”

by Pepper Choplin

Please Stand

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord**

Holy Gospel

Matthew 21:33-46

³³ “Hear another parable. There was a master of a house who planted a vineyard and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. ³⁴ When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to get his fruit. ³⁵ And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶ Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. ³⁷ Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ ³⁸ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.’ ³⁹ And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. ⁴⁰ When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” ⁴¹ They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons.”

⁴² Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is marvelous in our eyes’?

⁴³ Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits. ⁴⁴ And the one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.”

⁴⁵ When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶ And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord
C Praise to You, O Christ

Nicene Creed

- C** I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the
dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,

**and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life ✕ of the world to come. Amen.**

Please Be Seated

Sermon Hymn

“In Christ Alone”

Verse 1

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light my strength my song
This Cornerstone this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought
and storm
What heights of love what depths
of peace
When fears are stilled when
strivings cease
My Comforter my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

Verse 2

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe

This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

Verse 3

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

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Sermon

“Rejoice in the Lord!”

(Philippians 3:4b-14)

- 1) God’s encouragement through the Apostle Paul**
- 2) God’s encouragement through the Lord Jesus Christ**
- 3) God’s encouragement through the Church – through YOU!**

Verse 4

No guilt in life no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Offering (Please place in the Box located in the Narthex)

Prayer of the Church

P Lord God, heavenly Father, Your apostle John wrote, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are" (1 John 3:1). As Your children, then, we come before You crying, "Abba! Father!" For the mystery of Your gift of our lives, Your good creation, and Your holy will of love and salvation, we praise You without end. Help us to live in Your love and praise, giving thanks every day for Your provision of life and salvation. Lord, in Your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

P By Your goodness, O Lord, keep and preserve Your holy church in the true faith, proclaiming the pure, heavenly doctrine of Your Word and being constantly strengthened in Your love. Lord, in Your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

P By Your Spirit, we pray You to guide all who are in the authority of government in our land and in all the nations of the earth, that we dwell in peace and rely on Your provision of justice and freedom for all. Lord, in Your mercy,

G hear our prayer.

P We pray for all who are sick or hospitalized and for any who are in trouble, doubt, or fear of death. **[We especially pray]** Grant Your healing gifts and merciful presence to save and deliver all who look to You for help in every need. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Receive, O God, our bodies and souls and all our talents, together with the offerings we bring, as You have purchased us by the blood of Your Son to be Your own, that we may live under Him in His kingdom. Help us live by true faith to prepare for the world to come, doing the work You have given us to do while it is day. And when our last hour comes, support us by Your power and receive us into Your heavenly kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands we commend ourselves and all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

LSB 179

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **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
as we forgive those
who trespass 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 and ever. Amen.**



Service of the Sacrament

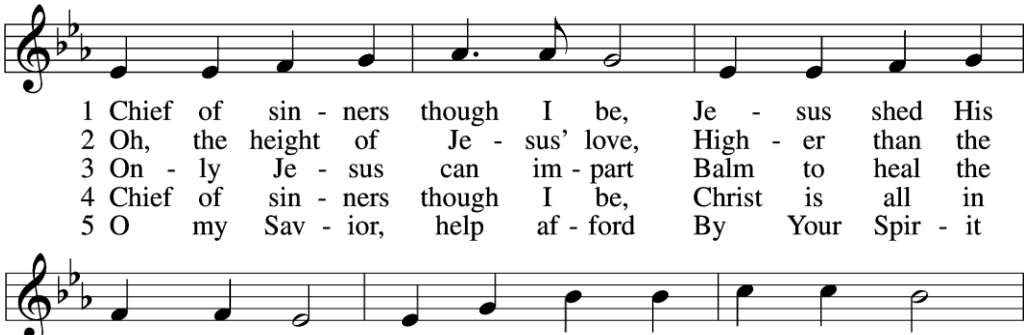


Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." *Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-2*

Communion Statement of Love

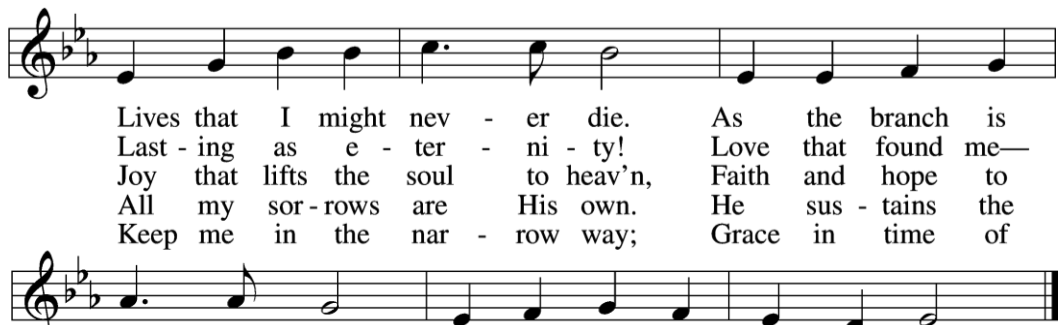
We rejoice in this celebration of the LORD'S Supper as the Lord Jesus indeed comes to us in a very intimate manner, giving to us His true Body and Blood in with and under the bread and wine in this sacred meal. St. Paul writes, *"Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. ²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves"* (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). It is out of love and care for every baptized individual that comes to the Lord's Supper that we ask those who are not instructed in the faith and/or doubt the presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus in this Sacrament to speak to the Pastor before attending the Lord's Supper.

Distribution Hymn: "Chief of Sinners Though I Be" LSB 611 (sts 1-5)



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed His
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love, High - er than the
3 On - ly Je - sus can im - part Balm to heal the
4 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Christ is all in
5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford By Your Spir - it

blood for me, Died that I might live on high,
heav'ns a - bove, Deep - er than the depths of sea,
wound - ed heart, Peace that flows from sin for - giv'n,
all to me; All my wants to Him are known,
and Your Word! When my way - ward heart would stray,

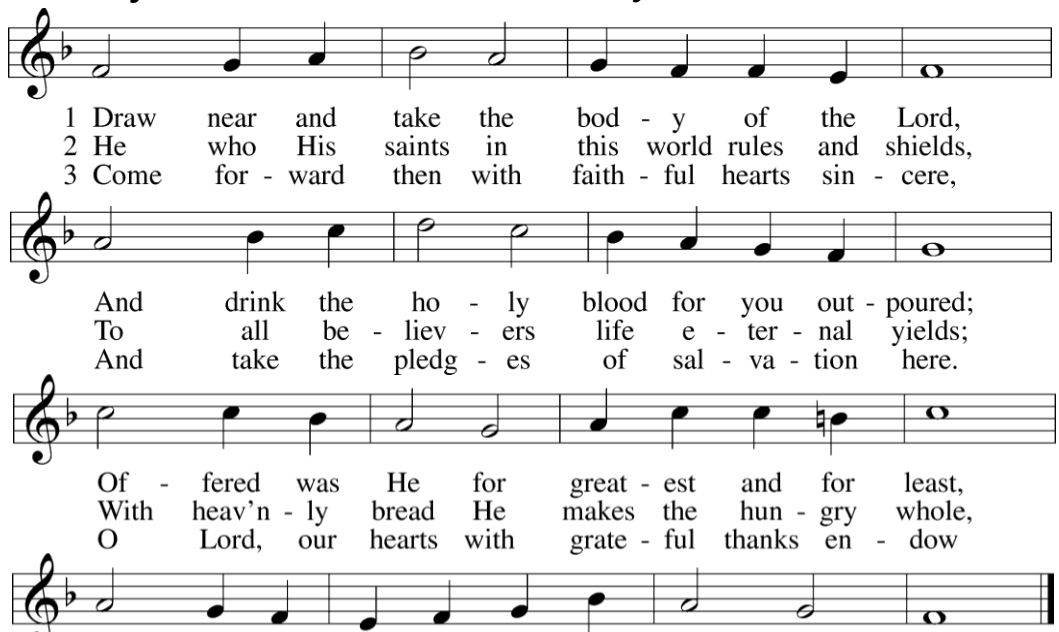


Lives that I might nev - er die. As the branch is
 Last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty! Love that found me—
 Joy that lifts the soul to heav'n, Faith and hope to
 All my sor - rows are His own. He sus - tains the
 Keep me in the nar - row way; Grace in time of

to the vine, I am His, and He is mine.
 won - drous thought! Found me when I sought Him not.
 walk with God In the way that E - noch trod.
 hid - den life Safe with Him from earth - ly strife.
 need sup - ply While I live and when I die.

Text: William McComb, 1793–1873, alt. Tune: Richard Redhead, 1820–1901 Text and tune: Public domain

Distribution Hymn: “Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord” LSB 637 (sts 1-3)



1 Draw near and take the bod - y of the Lord,
 2 He who His saints in this world rules and shields,
 3 Come for - ward then with faith - ful hearts sin - cere,

And drink the ho - ly blood for you out - poured;
 To all be - liev - ers life e - ter - nal yields;
 And take the pledg - es of sal - va - tion here.

Of - fered was He for great - est and for least,
 With heav'n - ly bread He makes the hun - gry whole,
 O Lord, our hearts with grate - ful thanks en - dow

Him - self the vic - tim and Him - self the priest.
 Gives liv - ing wa - ters to the thirst - ing soul.
 As in this feast of love You bless us now.

Text: Latin, 7th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt. Tune: Trente quatre Pseaumes de David, 1551, Geneva, ed. Louis Bourgeois Text and tune: Public domain



1 The Church's one foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ, her Lord;
 2 E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the earth;
 3 Though with a scorn - ful won - der The world sees her op - pressed,
 4 Through toil and trib - u - la - tion And tu - mult of her war
 5 Yet she on earth has u - nion With God, the Three in One,



She is His new cre - a - tion By wa - ter and the Word.
 Her char - ter of sal - va - tion: One Lord, one faith, one birth.
 By schisms rent a - sun - der, By her - e - sies dis - tressed,
 She waits the con - sum - ma - tion Of peace for - ev - er - more
 And mys - tic sweet com - mu - nion With those whose rest is won.



From heav'n He came and sought her To be His ho - ly bride;
 One ho - ly name she bless - es, Par - takes one ho - ly food,
 Yet saints their watch are keep - ing; Their cry goes up, "How long?"
 Till with the vi - sion glo - rious Her long - ing eyes are blest,
 O bless - ed heav'n - ly cho - rus! Lord, save us by Your grace



With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.
 And to one hope she press - es With ev - 'ry grace en - dued.
 And soon the night of weep - ing Shall be the morn of song.
 And the great Church vic - to - rious Shall be the Church at rest.
 That we, like saints be - fore us, May see You face to face.

Text: Samuel J. Stone, 1839–1900, alt. Tune: Samuel S. Wesley, 1810–76 Text and tune: Public domain

Closing Hymn

"Thank the Lord"

Thank the Lord and sing His praise;
 Tell ev'ryone what He has done.
 Let all who seek the Lord rejoice
 And proudly bear His name.
 He recalls His promises and leads His people
 Forth in joy with shout of thanksgiving.
 Alleluia, alleluia.

Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
- C** Amen.

Silent Prayer: "Jesus, give me lips to speak of the evidence of Your cross and Your empty Easter tomb, that those I witness to may share in the greatest encouragement the world has ever known. You, Jesus! Amen."

Announcements

Postlude

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of Celebration Worship 815-275-0397
Chris Winter, Ministry Assistant.....815-291-6994
Lisa Lobdell, Organist 815-275-5165
Ruth Maedge, Choir Director 815-238-1595
Sharon Thompson, Accompanist 815-493-8347
Joy Shaw, Handbell Director 573-987-8421

STAY CONNECTED

www.stjohnslena.org
Facebook: St Johns Lena

WORSHIP TIMES

Saturday at 5:30 pm

Sunday at 8:00 am

Sunday at 9:15 am – Education Hour

Sunday at 10:30 am

**Acoustic – 4th Sunday 10:30 service*

BIBLE EDUCATION

Sunday at 9:15 am

Adults w/ the Pastor – Luke



Pre-School/Kindergarten
Jr. High & High School
WDS and **BLAST**
Women In the Word

1st and 3rd Monday's at 3:00 & 6:00 pm

Bible Journaling – Mark

Tuesday's 10:00 am

Stitching Blessings – Mark

Wednesday at 9:30 am

Women's Bible Study – Luke

Friday at 6:30 am

Men's Breakfast Bible Study – Fellowship H.

***See Church Calendar & Newsletter for
additional studies and gatherings!***

COMMUNITY

Church Van: If you live in Lena and would like a ride to the 10:30 am service, please call the church office.

My Friends Closet: Visit our thrift store for heavenly deals! 511 W Lena St, Lena, IL 61048. [\(815\) 369-4527](tel:8153694527)

Adult Day Care: Visit our "Friendship Center" to care for your loved ones. 311 N Lake Rd, Lena, IL 61048. [\(815\) 369-2690](tel:8153692690)

SERVING THE LORD THIS WEEK – October 3/4

	Saturday – 5:30 pm	Sunday – 8:00 am	Sunday – 10:30 am
ELDERS	Donny Fox/ Don Bamberg	Dave Thompson/ Jeff Jones/ Denny Potter	Brett Richardson/ Rob Cobine/ Mark Mau
GREETERS	Larry/ Eleanor Maaske	Barb Harbach/ Glenda Potter	Rob/ Laura Cobine
USHERS	Neal Wagner	Steve Stich	Hudson Winter
ACOLYTES	Usher	Blaine Drake/ Evelyn Tessendorf	Max Winter/ Layne Richardson
AUDIO/VIDEO	Dave/ Judy Zier	Gary Erickson/ Jeff Jones	Ron Conway/ Steve Levan
ALTAR GUILD	Ardi Ireton/ Joan Liles	Ardi Ireton/ Joan Liles	Ardi Ireton/ Joan Liles

SERVING THE LORD NEXT WEEK –October 10/11

	Saturday – 5:30 pm	Sunday – 8:00 am	Sunday – 10:30 am
ELDERS	Tom Bannon	Jon Werkheiser	Kevin Keltner
GREETERS	Kevin/ Becky Huttenlocher	Kory/ Lindsey Gerbick	Ryan/ Nikki Keltner
USHERS	Donny Fox	Bob Werhane	Tim Hamilton
ACOLYTES	Usher	Ella Korte	Gavyn Gerke
AUDIO/VIDEO	Dave/ Judy Zier	Kory Gerbick/ Denny Potter	Anita Mau/ Michelle Rothschadl
ALTAR GUILD	Ardi Ireton/ Joan Liles	Ardi Ireton/ Joan Liles	Ardi Ireton/ Joan Liles