

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

May 17, 2026

John 17:1-11

Spirit of Witness

Easter tide is coming to an end. But before we usher in the power of the Holy Spirit at the celebration of Pentecost next week, I pause to pray. For you. Yes, you.

I have even stepped away from writing this to light a candle, thanking God for the hearts that would be touched by words that often seem a feeble attempt in capturing how amazing, awesome, and perplexingly mysterious our God is.

I thanked God for you, dear readers. I thanked God for each soul awakening to the Easter promise of new life. I thanked God that while we never have or never will see one another in person, we can still call each other siblings in Christ, connected by our thirst for not only knowing God, but for understanding God if only a little bit better.

Eastertide's 50 days are wrapping up and that means Jesus is about to leave his friends for good this time to ascend into Heaven. But before he goes, he talks to them, and he prays.

John 17 is known by scholars as the "high priestly prayer," where Jesus first prays for himself, thanking God for all that God has done through him, and then prays for others. I love that Jesus begins with himself in mind. It is a reminder that it is not selfish to pray for ourselves.

As a pastor, I have heard many people brush aside their worries, uttering something like "enough about me, my problems a nothing compared to others." That is so not true. Your worries, your fears and your problems matter to God. As the old hymn attests, many times "it's me, it's me, O Lord, standing in the need of prayer."

After praying for himself, Jesus then prays for his friends, thanking God for them and asking for continued strength and protection for their days ahead.

I wonder how many times after Jesus finally left his earthly life that his friends remembered how, through the power of prayer, Jesus continues to be right there by their sides? How many times do we remember that when feeling lonely and needing our Friend and Savior in our life, that all we have to do is pray?

And what is prayer? It is simply talking to the one you love. Prayer is also sitting silently with the one you love the most as God doesn't need our words. All God wants is our hearts.

And so, I find myself on this Sunday as Eastertide comes to an end, sitting here saying a prayer of thanks for each one of you reading these words right now. And I pray you feel those prayers.

Heavenly God, we know that You are not far off, but very close to us. You are always surrounding us with love and protection. We thank Jesus for his example of prayer, too. May this day we find ourselves praying more frequently and praying more boldly, remembering that prayer does change all things. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

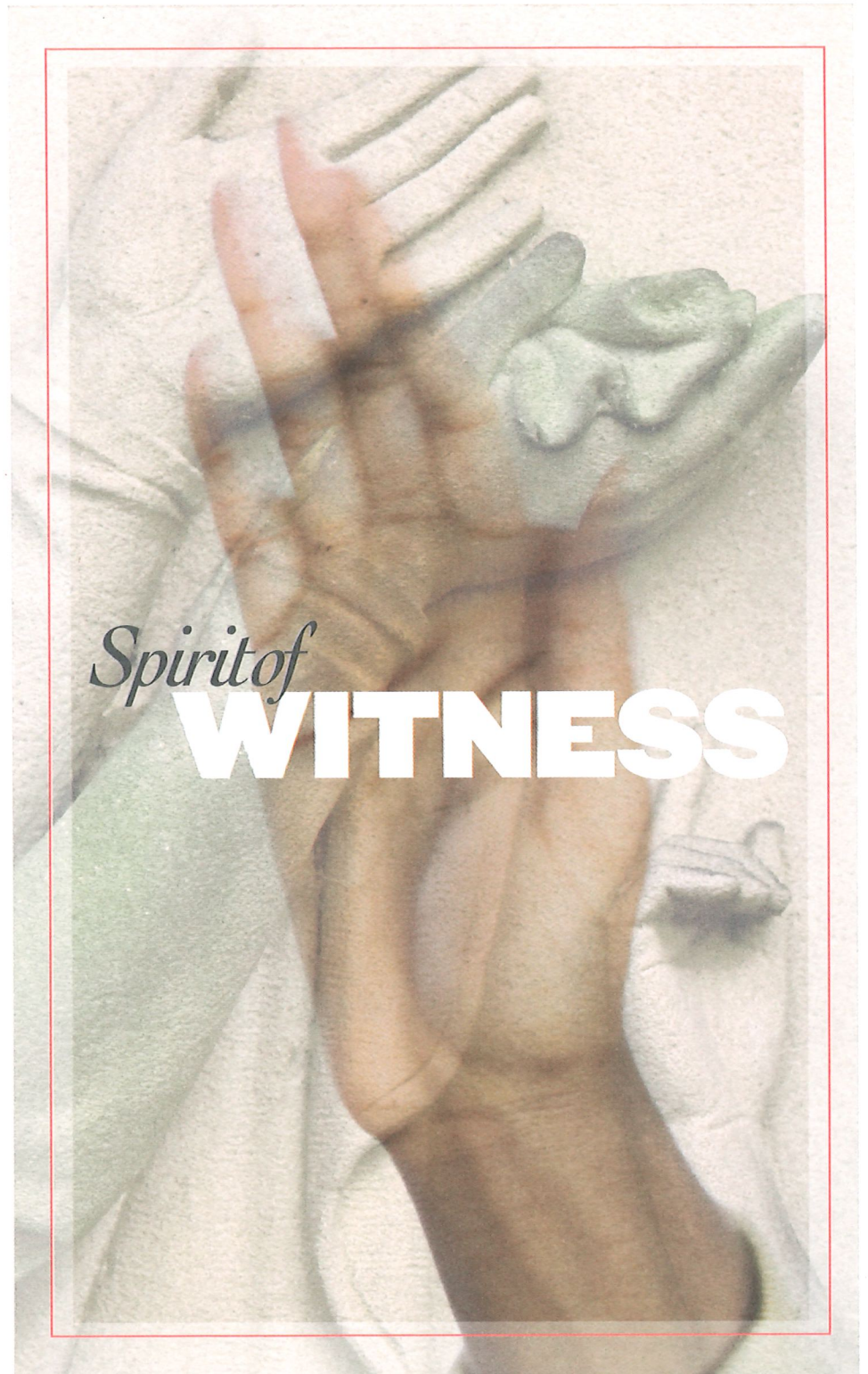
(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



8 1/2" x 11" UCC SUNDAY BULLETIN SERVICE

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BUC0312



Bismarck-Mandan Area
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



1200 E Highland Acres Rd, Bismarck, ND 58501

701-223-2915 www.uccbismarck.org

May 17, 2026 at 10 AM Worship

Easter Season: Lay Leadership Celebration

Pastor: Rev. Gretchen Deeg | Guest Preacher: Bill Patrie

Liturgist: Carrie Mandigo & Faith Schwartz | Video: Dana Schaar Jahner

Music: Jeanne Kolberg

*Rise in body or in spirit.

WELCOME TO WORSHIP!

*NO MATTER

Sing! 35

No matter who, no matter what
No matter where you are on the journey of life;
You're welcome, welcome in this place.
Accepted and welcomed by God's grace.

*CALL TO WORSHIP & OPENING PRAYER

One: We come together to honor the heritage that brought us here and the vision that leads us home.

All: We cherish the foundations of our past while refining them for the world we live in now.

One: Faith is not a relic to be parked, but a vessel meant for the journey.

All: We are tending to what is broken and strengthening what is built to last.

One: Let us worship the One who guides our movement and restores our momentum.

All: We are ready to move forward, updated by grace and driven by love. Amen.

*HYMN Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer NCH 19

SCRIPTURE IN HEBREW Psalms 68:1-10, 32-35

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Children are invited to remain in worship or attend Sunday School after the Offering.

OFFERING

*DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, our heavenly host;
Creator, Savior, Holy Ghost. Amen.

*PRAYER OF CONFESSION

We pray that we can see Jesus in the face of our children, and in all the children of the world. We understand Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red and Yellow, Black and White, they are precious in his sight. May they become precious in our sight. May we go to them in the universal love of all faiths, and protect them and their parents against the darkness of evil and hate. May we be the instruments of peace. Amen

*GLORIA

Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

CHOIR ANTHEM

I See Jesus in the Face of Every Child

SCRIPTURE

John 17:1-11

SERMON

Bill Patrie

HYMN

Lift Every Voice and Sing

NCH 593

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

*HYMN

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

NCH 393

*CARRY GOD'S LOVE

Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from [ONE LICENSE](https://www.onelicense.com), License #732302-A.



Thank You for Worshiping with Us!

Your offerings are essential for the ongoing ministry of this congregation. Donations can be made using this QR code, online at www.uccbismarck.org/donate, mailed to the church, or placed in the offering box.

Sponsored in Remembrance of Greg Stites



Monday, May 18th, 2026 would be my late husband, Greg Stites', 75th birthday. Since Greg's death on May 22nd, 2022, friends and family have gathered each year on May 18th for a celebratory birthday toast to Greg. We try to keep his memory alive by telling stories about him. Some are new and some are old, well-worn favorites.

Greg was born and raised in Oakes, ND. He was an Eagle Scout and never forgot how to tie all the knots you learn in a lifetime of Scouting. He earned Engineering and Law degrees at UND. He applied his engineering skills to fearlessly remodeling our homes and practiced law for 40+ years.

He had a soft spot for animals. In our 34 years together, he loved nine dogs (three at a time), one horse, one cat, and I lost count of all the birds. Once he met someone, they were his friend for life, and he was adept at keeping up relationships with all those people!

Greg was intelligent and well read. He was very curious by nature and loved to travel the world. While his law practice was mostly in the field of insurance regulatory law, he was very active in constitutional law, government ethics, and human rights issues.

At his heart though, he was warm and funny, and my best friend. So sometime today, please consider raising a glass (of the beverage of your choice) to Greg and the 75th anniversary of his birth. He was a really good guy and my best friend!

Sponsored by Nancy Guy

May 31 and most of June is available. If you would like to sponsor a future Sunday, contact the church office at 223-2915 or visit uccbismarck.org/donate. Sponsorships are \$500.

Last Day of Sunday School - Today

Celebrate with the Sunday School kids after Worship on May 17 with an ice cream social! Sunday School will resume in the fall and is for children ages 3 through 5th grade.



Last Day of Youth Group - May 20

Confirmation and Youth Group will have an end of year celebration on May 20 at 6pm. Youth Group will resume in the fall and is open to all youth 6th through 12th Grade.

THIS WEEK'S OPPORTUNITIES: May 17 - 24

- Sunday:** 11 AM Fellowship & Ice Cream Social
12 Noon [Online](#) Fellowship
- Monday:** 7 PM League of women Readers
- Tuesday:** 1 PM Quilting/Knitting
3:45 PM Liturgical Arts
5:30 PM Trustees (in-person & [online](#))
6 PM Stewardship & Mission (in-person & [online](#))
- Wednesday:** 6 PM Youth Group & Confirmation
- Thursday:** 6 PM Bible Study (in-person & [online](#))
- Friday:** 9 AM Bible Study (in-person & [online](#))
- Sunday:** 10 AM Sunday Worship (Preacher: Carly Retterath)
11 AM Fellowship
12 Noon [Online](#) Fellowship

For pastoral care from May 1-17, please contact Darla Schafer 701-597-3407.

Serve the Banquet June 3

We will be serving the Banquet on June 3rd. We will need 10 volunteers to serve and an additional 2 volunteers to start earlier with meal prep. A sign-up sheet will be available soon.



Placerville UCC Camp - June 4-7

Family Getaway Camp
Placerville UCC camp is located near Rapid City in the Black Hills National Forest. All ages and family sizes are welcome.
Register at www.placervillecamp.net/camps
The early bird discount ended on May 1.



OUR PRAYER LIST

Family of Sharon Vanorny (Hannah's mother), Gayle Klopp, Ivan Sadlier (Autum's uncle), Lacy Peters (Dawn Archer's cousin), Jody Miller, Kayla Bruning, Bella Bruning, Gellsia (Oliver Gagner's daughter), Sandy Kirby (Autum's Sister), Matthew Nitschke, Nolan (Amanda Wilson's grandson), Tasha Hausauer (John Sauter's cousin), Hayes & Cooper (Brandon & Tasha Domagala's sons), Amanda Wilson, Frank Picard, Carla Christenson (Monica Klein's mother), Pam Crawford, Fredrick Krause (Kerri Kraft's grandfather), Colby (Janice & Gary Sather's son), Robyn Richter (Kyle Eisenbraun's aunt), Doretta Reule, Howard Etson, Camille Grothier, East Timor, Refugees

*Contact the church office to be added to our weekly prayer list.



**Strengthen
the Church**

Supporting next generation leaders

Through the Church Assessment, Support, and Advancement (CASA) Program, new and renewing ministries receive grant funding to establish and strengthen transformative faith communities within the United Church of Christ.

One of these grant recipients is the Service Learning Community Fellowship Program at Kailua Christian Church. Their mission to cultivate a loving, Christ-centered community is reflected in their investment in young adults discerning pastoral and social service vocations. By partnering with The Institute for Human Services and offering hands-on, community-centered learning, housing support, and spiritual formation, KCC is developing the next generation of compassionate, justice-oriented Christian leaders.

A participant of the program shared, "This experience has prepared me to pursue ministry with greater intentionality, creativity, and resilience, equipping me to serve diverse communities with both grace and practical leadership."



Your gifts to Strengthen the Church help support ministries like the Service Learning Community Fellowship Program all across the United States. Thank you for your generosity!

The Strengthen the Church Offering furthers the work of our Conference and National Ministries as we work together to strengthen and renew existing congregations, fund leadership development, and provide exciting new programs for youth and young adults. The offering is divided between your Conference and the National Ministries.

Learn more at www.ucc.org/stc



Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer

19

*William Williams, 1745**Exod. 13:21; 16:4; 17:6; Ps. 105:39-44; Rev. 22:1-2**St. 1, transl. Peter Williams, 1771; alt.**St. 2-3, transl. William Williams, 1772; alt.*

1 Guide me, O my great Re - deem - er, pil - grim through this bar - ren
 2 O - pen now the crys - tal foun - tain, where the heal - ing wa - ters
 3 When I reach the Riv - er Jor - dan, bid my anx - ious fears sub -

land; I am weak, but you are might - y; hold me with your power - ful
 flow. Let the fire and cloud - y pil - lar lead me all my jour - ney
 side. Death of death, and hell's de - struc - tion, land me safe on heav - en's

hand. Bread of heav - en, feed me till I want no more,
 through. Strong de - liv - erer, ev - er be my strength and shield,
 side. Songs of prais - es I will ev - er sing to you,

bread of heav - en, feed me till I want no more.
 strong de - liv - erer, ev - er be my strength and shield.
 songs of prais - es I will ev - er sing to you.

The Thomas Hastings tune for this text is popular in the United States. A self-taught musician, Hastings was a colleague of Lowell

Tune: ZION 8.7.8.7.4.7.4.7.
 Thomas Hastings, 1830

Lift Every Voice and Sing

James Weldon Johnson, 1921; alt.

1 Lift ev-ery voice and sing, till earth and heav - en ring, ring with the
 2 Ston-y the road we trod, bit-ter the chas-tening rod, felt in the
 3 God of our wea - ry years, God of our si - lent tears, God who has

har - mo - nies of lib - er - ty; Let our re - joic - ing
 days when hope un - born had died; Yet with a stead - y
 brought us thus far on the way; God, who by your

rise, high as the lis - tening skies, let it re - sound loud as the
 beat, have not our wea - ry feet, come to the place for which our
 might, led us in - to the light, keep us for - ev - er in the

roll - ing sea. Sing a song full of the
 peo - ple sighed? We have come o - ver a
 path, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the

Poet James Weldon Johnson was the first African-American to pass the bar examination in the state of Florida, and served as U.S. consul in Venezuela and Nicaragua. He collaborated with his composer brother, John Rosamond Johnson, to write

Tune: LIFT EVERY VOICE Irr.
 J. Rosamond Johnson, 1921

faith that the harsh past has taught us, Sing a song full of the
 way that with tears has been wa - tered, We have come, tread - ing our
 plac - es, our God, where we met you, Lest our hearts, drunk with the

hope that the pres - ent has brought us; Fac - ing the
 path through the blood of the slaugh - tered, Out from the
 wine of the world, for - get you; Shad - owed be -

ris - ing sun of our new day be - gun, let us march
 gloom - y past, till now we stand at last where the white
 neath your hand, may we for - ev - er stand, true to our

on till vic - to - ry is won.
 gleam of our bright star is cast.
 God, true to our na - tive land.

Blessed Be the Tie That Binds

393

John Fawcett, 1782; alt.

Gal. 3:28; 6:2; Col. 3:13-15

1 Blessed be the tie that binds our hearts in Chris - tian love;
2 Be - fore our God we come and pour our ar - dent prayers;
3 We share each oth - er's woes, each oth - er's bur - dens bear,
4 When we are called to part it gives us in - ward pain,

The shar - ing of a com - mon life is like to that a - bove.
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our com - forts and our cares.
And of - ten for each oth - er flows a sym - pa - thiz - ing tear.
But we shall still be joined in heart, and hope to meet a - gain.

An English Baptist minister, John Fawcett published a number of poetic works. His entire ministry was spent at a church near Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, where he wrote most of his hymns to follow his sermons.

Tune: DENNIS S.M.
Melody by Johann G. Nügeli (c. 1768-1836)
Adapt. Lowell Mason, 1845