

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

September 21, 2025

United Church of Christ - Neillsville

Pastor Julie Ruegsegger

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PRELUDE "Toccata" Robet W. Thygeron
Deon Spangler

RINGING OF THE CARILLON

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP (*inspired by Psalm 79*)

We look upon our world, our neighborhoods,
our families, and see suffering and want.

How long, O Lord?

We see deep suffering, brutal violence,
destroyed homes, and ravaged nations.

How long, O Lord?

Let your compassion come quickly to meet us,
for we are brought low.

How long, O Lord?

Help us, O God of our salvation!
Help us, O Source of our hope!

OPENING PRAYER

God of our salvation, you see your world laid waste
with false worship, injustice, and indifference, and
we tremble at your anger. Only in your tears, born
out of vast love, do we find hope. Open to us the
way of your tears— the way that leads us back to
your love. Teach us to serve you and you alone,
that you may deliver, forgive, and renew our world
at last. Amen.

HYMN "God of Jeremiah" (verses 1-3)

Lyrics: Brian Wren

Tune: Kelvin Grove ("The Summons")

1 God of Jeremiah, grieving with an aching heart
for an empire, unbelieving as it falls apart,
when your thunder goes unheard,
we will tend the prophet's word
And in season, out of season, we will sing your song.

2 When our wound is left to fester, though the pain
goes deep,
when we've sown a hundred whirlwinds, but have yet
to reap,

when the platitudes of peace only make our fears
increase,
with a poem and a story we will sing your song.

3 When the palace looks at poverty with scornful
eyes,
when the scroll of truth is shredded by a leader's lies,
when the glory of the cross is a propaganda gloss,
in the square and in the senate we will sing your song.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

One: The Peace of God be with you.

Many: And also with you.

All are invited to greet one another with words such
as "*The peace of Christ be with you,*"
and the response: "*And also with you*".

RESPONSE: "Open Our Eyes, Lord" #491 W&R
**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch him, and say that we love
him.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen,
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

NEIGHBORS IN NEED

M.E. Sjolín

PRAYER OF COMPASSION

God of compassion, give us the courage to breathe
in care, and breathe out all that separates us. The
voices of your people can be lost in a discordant
wailing of need. Help us to pay attention and see
clearly our neighbors. Encourage us to not only
help but listen, so all may have a voice in the
decisions that affect our lives. Strengthen us to
confront evil and alleviate suffering. Let us not turn
away from the direct needs of ourselves and those
around us even as we seek to dismantle deeper
injustice. Turn us toward justice, peace, and
reconciliation. We pray in your holy name. Amen

CHILDREN'S TIME

SCRIPTURE READINGS

OLD TESTAMENT Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

¹⁸ My grief is beyond healing; my heart is broken.

¹⁹ Listen to the weeping of my people; it can be
heard all across the land.

“Has the Lord abandoned Jerusalem?” the people ask. “Is her King no longer there?” “Oh, why have they provoked my anger with their carved idols and their worthless foreign gods?” says the Lord.

²⁰ “The harvest is finished, and the summer is gone,” the people cry, “yet we are not saved!”

²¹ I hurt with the hurt of my people. I mourn and am overcome with grief. ²² Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why is there no healing for the wounds of my people?

^{9:1} If only my head were a pool of water and my eyes a fountain of tears, I would weep day and night for all my people who have been slaughtered.

NEW TESTAMENT Luke 16:1-13

¹ Jesus told this story to his disciples: “There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer’s money. ² So the employer called him in and said, ‘What’s this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.’

³ “The manager thought to himself, ‘Now what? My boss has fired me. I don’t have the strength to dig ditches, and I’m too proud to beg. ⁴ Ah, I know how to ensure that I’ll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.’

⁵ “So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, ‘How much do you owe him?’ ⁶ The man replied, ‘I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.’ So the manager told him, ‘Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons.’

⁷ “‘And how much do you owe my employer?’ he asked the next man. ‘I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,’ was the reply. ‘Here,’ the manager said, ‘take the bill and change it to 800 bushels.’

⁸ “The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light. ⁹ Here’s the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.

¹⁰ “If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities. ¹¹ And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? ¹² And if you are not faithful with other people’s things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?”

¹³ “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”

SERMON “Taking Account”

HYMN “There is a Balm in Gilead”

#553 NCH African-American spiritual

Refrain:

**There is a balm in Gilead
to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in Gilead
to heal the sin-sick soul.**

**1 Sometimes I feel discouraged,
and think my work’s in vain,
But then the Holy Spirit
revives my soul again. [Refrain]**

**2 Don’t ever be discouraged,
for Jesus is your friend,
who, if you lack for knowledge,
will never fail to lend. [Refrain]**

**3 If you cannot preach like Peter,
if you cannot pray like Paul,
you can tell the love of Jesus,
who died to save us all. [Refrain]**

MORNING PRAYERS

PRAYER OF OUR SAVIOR

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

THE OFFERING SERVICE

Offertory *"Balm in Gilead" Spiritual*

Doxology *"We Give You But Your Own"*

#785 NCH

**We give you but your own,
whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is your alone,
We give it gratefully.**

Prayer of Dedication

Knowing that many voices clamor and compete,
we pray that these offerings may be signs of our
decision to serve one master, one holy God. Bless
these gifts that they may help to heal a world in
need. Amen.

HYMN *"O For a World"*

#575 NCH (vs. 1-3) Miriam Therse Winter

**1 O for a world where everyone
respects each other's ways,
Where love is lived and all is done
with justice and with praise.**

**2 O for a world where goods are shared
and misery relieved,
Where truth is spoken, children spared,
equality achieved.**

**3 We welcome one world family
and struggle with each choice
That opens us to unity
and gives our vision voice.**

BLESSING

JOYS AND CONCERNS

HYMN *"O For a World"*

#575 NCH (vs. 4-5)

**4 The poor are rich, the weak are strong,
the foolish ones are wise.**

**Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong,
who perishes will rise.**

**5 O for a world preparing for
God's glorious reign of peace,
Where time and tears will be no more,
and all but love will cease.**

COMMISSIONING (All)

Be the church:

Protect the environment

Care for the poor

Forgive often

Reject racism

Fight for the powerless

Share earthly and spiritual resources

Embrace diversity

Love God

Enjoy this life!

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Deon Spangler

RADIO BROADCAST

**11 AM Sunday radio broadcast
on WCCN 98.5FM and 1370AM**

This week's radio broadcast is given
In loving memory of
Dale & Betty Opelt
sponsored by their children.

WELCOME

We welcome you to our service of worship!
We are glad that you have joined us on site,
through the internet or on the radio.

We pray that you will hear God's call,
seek to follow Jesus, led by the Holy Spirit.

YouTube link for Sunday, September 21, 2025
<https://youtube.com/live/IO1gnRbu6AQ>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

This Sunday, September 21st

- 9:30 AM Worship

Deacon Host – Janice Miller

Greeters - Carole Romens, Jenny Erickson

Ushers – Mike & Debbie Perkl

PowerPoint – Reese Ziegler

Following Sunday, September 28th

Deacon – JoAnn Wren

Greeters – Barb Miller, Janice Miller

Ushers – Ray & Bonnie Weyer

Power Point – Janice Miller

Tuesday, September 23rd

- 1:00 PM Bible Study

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

- 3:30 – 5:30 PM – Confirmation here

- 5:00 – 5:45 PM – JAM at Calvary

- 6:00 PM Immersion Bible Study

- 6:00 PM Deacon's Meeting

Thursday, September 25th

- 5:30 PM Council Meeting

Coffee fellowship after worship -

Sign up on back bulletin board

Sept 21 - Voss's & Rodman's

Sept 28 – Stewardship Committee

Oct 5 – Carole Romens

Oct 12 –

Oct 19 – Stewardship Committee

We need people to sign up

And whatever you do,
in word or deed,
do everything in the name

*of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks*

to God the Father
through him.

Colossians 3:17



Meal Giveaway

UCC NEILLSVILLE

515 West Second Street

September 21, 2025

10:15 -10:30 AM