



16th Sunday After Pentecost

Prelude

Everybody Sing Praise to the Lord

Gathering— In our scripture today we will hear the story of the prophet Jeremiah making an investment in the future, signing and sealing a deed of purchase for land in conquered Judah, placing it in a jar of clay so it would not wear out because God said to him: “Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.” So, we come to this place and time of promise. We are becoming a house of hope, a field of flowers, a vineyard of great caring. Come to a shared commitment to abundance possible for all people. We are an earthenware jar, to keep safe the tomorrow of God’s people.+

A Time of Prayer— God, we give you thanks that you make us redeemers, not just receivers of redemption. You bring us among friends and then ask for each one of our signatures, signs of our commitment, to change your world. We hold the jar of clay you call the church and fill it with all your promises.+

The Lord's Prayer (unison)—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.

Bell Choir

We Hear God’s Word

Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15 (NRSV)

32The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. ²At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, ³where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him. Zedekiah had said, ‘Why

do you prophesy and say: Thus says the LORD: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

6 Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came to me: ⁷Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, ‘Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.’ ⁸Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, ‘Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.’ Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

9 And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. ¹⁰I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. ¹¹Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; ¹²and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. ¹³In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, ¹⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. ¹⁵For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

Reflection Song

Change My Heart, O God, #373

Meditation

Jars of Clay: Filling Empty Jars

Hymn

As a Fire is Meant for Burning, #551

We Respond to God's Word with Our Giving

Invitation— God, we give you thanks that you make us redeemers, not just receivers of redemption. You bring us among friends and then ask for each one of our signatures, signs of our commitment, to change your world. We hold the jar of clay you call the church and fill it with all your promises.+

Called to Serve—Council 2023/2024

September Benevolence—Chicago, United, and Eden Seminaries (CUE)

Neighbors in Need Offering (October 2)—Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants. Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. You’ll be invited to give to this offering Sunday, October 2.

You can mail your offerings to our office or give online at www.zionuccindy.net/donate

Doxology

We Give Thanks— We are invited to offer resources, time, abilities, compassion, in a tangible expression of our hope for the future for ourselves, this community of faith and many others near and far away. May we be generous, my friends, with our trust in the future.+

Hymn

Take My Life and Let It Be, #466

Benediction—God, the Great Potter, can reshape all things and calls us to be shaped by hope. As you go out into the world, remember that each day you can invest in the future of hope God calls us to, so go forth this day with compassion and mercy in your hearts to serve and enrich God’s beloved. Amen.

Postlude

Great Is Their Faithfulness