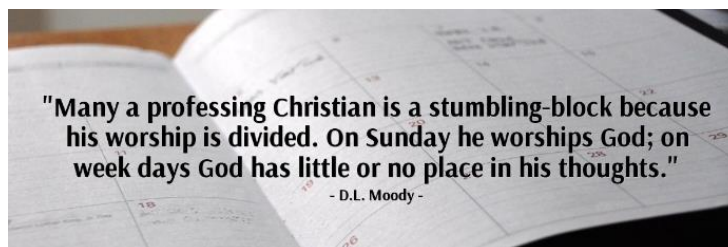


SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2023 **15th Sunday after Pentecost**
Caldwell United Methodist Church, 8 Academy Road, Caldwell, N. J. 07006
Rev. Kil Jae Park, Pastor



PRELUDE

WELCOME AND INVOCATION

Pastor Park

From different walks of life, you, O God, have called us to this place of worship, whether the place of worship for us today may be our church sanctuary, our homes or other places of life. Help us now to block out all the distractions of life and focus upon you with a single desire to worship you and honor you. Speak to us through your Holy Spirit and fill our hearts with your love and peace and help us to worship you in spirit and in truth. Be with us as we listen for your word and seek your ways for us. Guide our steps and guard our lives that we may serve you more effectively in this broken world. We pray these things in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. AMEN.

*** CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: There are so many directions in which we are being pulled.

P: We struggle and hope that we have chosen the right way.

L: Some of these paths are falsely enticing and others dangerous.

P: How can we know what to do?

L: Look to Jesus! He will be your guide and Holy Spirit will guard your life.

P: I am going to follow Jesus. He is the example of compassion, healing and hope. Amen.

*** OPENING HYMN**

**“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” /
 “I’d Rather Have Jesus (V. 1)”**

**HYMN # 174
 Insert**

**1 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 no turning back, no turning back.**

**2 Though none go with me, I still will follow;
 though none go with me, I still will follow;
 though none go with me, I still will follow;
 no turning back, no turning back.**

**3 The world behind me, the cross before me;
the world behind me, the cross before me,
the world behind me, the cross before me;
no turning back, no turning back.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (Together)

God of life and love, forgive us, we pray, for our unwillingness to follow your lead in our lives. Pardon us for our selfish ways that seem to be all about us and have little to do with anyone else. Remind us that when our lives become separated from the movement and work of your Spirit that we are lost and divided from the source that gives and breathes life. Move us beyond our preoccupation with ourselves and the idols of our culture. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and restore our souls to hope and life. In the name of Jesus we pray, AMEN.

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS AND PASSING OF THE PEACE

GATHERING SONG

“THOU ART WORTHY”

TFWS # 2041

**Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy,
Thou art worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory,
Glory and honor,
Glory and honor and power
For Thou hast created,
hast all things created,
Thou hast created all things;
And for Thy pleasure
they are created -
Thou art worthy, O Lord.**

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:21-28

Stephanie DeBruyne, Reader

21 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" 23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." 24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for a man

if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. 28 I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

The word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

Noel Piercy

MESSAGE

"From Rock to Stumbling Block"

Pastor Park

RECEIVING THE MORNING'S OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY #94**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise God the source of all our gifts!
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

***DEDICATION**

Lord of all mercy and compassion, we thank you and praise you for all of the ways that you love us, care for us and provide for us. As we come to worship you today, we bring our gifts and offer them to you with gratitude and joy. We honor you through the offering of these tangible gifts. Bless these gifts lovingly offered and all the people here. Help us to use these gifts for ministries of hope through our church and into our community, nation and world. In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

HOLY COMMUNION

THE MORNING PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER

Pastor Karen Gazzillo

*** CLOSING HYMN**

"The Summons"

TFWS # 2130

**1 Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my Name be known?
Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?**

**2 Will you leave your self behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?**

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

3 Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoner free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen?
And admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

4 Will you love the 'You' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

5 Christ, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show,
thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

*BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

*Stand as able

Altar Flowers today are given by **Louise Woodcox** to the **glory of God** and in celebration of **Louise's** birthday.

Thank you to Noel Piercy, our substitute musician for sharing his talents with us today.

Back to School Celebration & Blessing will be held on Friday, September 8, 5:30—7:30 pm and Sunday, September 10, 10 am—12 noon. Please invite family, friends & neighbors.

The Caldwell United Methodist 18th Annual Golf Outing is September 26th. To register as a golfer or for information on sponsorship opportunities contact Ken Ingra at 201-410-1940 or keningra@optonline.net or scan the code below.



Readers for September**Sept. 3 Stephanie DeBryune****Sept. 10 Jeannie Lauriano****Sept. 17 Tracy Voca****Sept. 24 open**