

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

We recognize that the land where we gather for worship belongs to God, as does all of creation, and that the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ – have lived on this land since before settlers of European descent claimed ownership and displaced those for whom it was home.

As we pursue our goals to dismantle racism and attend to growing diversity, we lament this injustice in our history and commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships within our congregation and our neighborhood.

Call to Worship

God is the source of our life – journeying with us in love.

God is the giver of all that is good– journeying with us in love.

God is the sower of grace and truth– journeying with us in love.

God is our strength and our hope– journeying with us in love.

Come, let us worship God who loves and blesses us.

➤ *Dance with the Spirit*

MV 156 (repeat)

† Prayer

God of goodness and purpose, in you we live and move and have our being. You are the Fountain of Life, and you refresh us. You are the Light of the world, and you show us the way. You are the Spirit of life, and you move in us each new day. We worship you as Creator, Healer, and Source of our hope and our joy.

God of goodness and mercy, we confess that we have been indifferent to your will, staying silent when we should have spoken up for justice. We have heard your call to put our faith into action, but fear holds us back. There is work to be done in Jesus' name, but we often seek an easier way. Forgive us, O God, and give us courage and commitment to serve as your saints in this time and this place, whatever the challenges may be.

Words of Hope

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Know that you are forgiven by God's great mercy, and have the grace to forgive each other, just as you have been forgiven.

➤ *God, we praise you for the morning*

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Video by author Karen Armstrong, "The Charter of Compassion"

<https://youtu.be/DCG4qryy1Dg>

† Prayer for Understanding

Wise and patient God, in the midst of distractions, help us focus on your presence with us. In the midst of confusing voices, make your Word plain. In the midst of competing desires, show us the path to follow for the sake of Jesus, our friend, teacher and guide. Amen

Scripture

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-18 [Contemporary English Version]

The Lord told Moses to say to the community of Israel: *I am the Lord your God. I am holy, and you must be holy too!*

*Don't hold grudges. On the other hand, it's wrong not to correct someone who needs correcting. Stop being angry and don't try to take revenge. I am the Lord, and I command you to **love others as much as you love yourself.***

Matthew 7: 7-12 [Contemporary English Version]

Ask, and you will receive. Search, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who asks will receive. Everyone who searches will find. And the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. Would any of you give your hungry child a stone, if the child asked for some bread? Would you give your child a snake if the child asked for a fish? As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give good things to people who ask.

Treat others as you want them to treat you. This is what the Law and the Prophets are all about.

Matthew 22: 36-40 [Contemporary English Version]

“Teacher, what is the most important commandment in the Law?”

Jesus answered: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, “**Love others as much as you love yourself.**” All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.*

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Story ***The Golden Rule*** by Ilene Cooper

Reflection / Sharing

The Golden Rule basically states that you should treat others like you want others to treat you. It implies the basic assumption that other people would like to be treated the way you would like to be treated. *The Golden Rule* is also known as the *Ethic of Reciprocity* – arguably the

most consistent, prevalent, and universal ethical principle in history. It is found worldwide throughout cultures, religions, secular philosophies, and indigenous traditions...

> Session members share from various traditions...

Gold has symbolic value and a psychological appeal that spans cultures throughout history. As a metaphor, it points to what is most pure, noble, enduring and ideal. It was long considered the most valuable of metals, so it is no surprise that we call this prized principle is known as *the Golden Rule*.

This is a rule for individuals – about considering how to treat others – but it is also a rule to apply to groups of people and society as a whole. As many regions of the world – including Canada – become more and more multicultural, we are seeking ways to live together in harmony. *The Golden Rule* can be the standard to which different cultures appeal in resolving conflicts. It can be the ethical cornerstone as the human family works together to build a peaceful, just, and sustainable global society. It has tremendous capacity for promoting social justice, the teaching of compassion and ethics, multicultural and multifaith cooperation, and unity.

We live in a global village – all citizens belonging, not only to our particular groups, races, cultures, religions and nations. We have privileges and responsibilities as global citizens to bring the world's people together and to live together in peace.

If we follow *the Golden Rule*, it would be safe to assume:

- We would be kind to others.
- We would not be rude to others.
- We would help others in time of need.
- We would welcome guests to our homes, neighborhood and our country.
- We would thank others for the good things they do.
- We wouldn't bad mouth and defame others.
- We wouldn't spread hate against others.
- We wouldn't hurt others.
- We wouldn't oppress others.
- We wouldn't kill others.

Pope Francis told the American Congress, *“Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us.”*

Thinking about the Golden Rule

How would you express the Golden Rule in your own words?

Do you know the title or message of a TV program, book or popular song which expresses the same idea as the Golden Rule? Explain.

Think of one occasion when someone treated you in the spirit of the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? How do you understand the behaviour of the other party involved in this incident?

Think of one occasion when you treated someone in the spirit of the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? What is your sense of the other party's reaction to your behaviour in that situation?

Think of one occasion when someone treated you in a manner that violated the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? How do you understand the behaviour of the other party involved in that incident?

Think of one occasion when you treated someone in a manner that violated the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? What is your sense of the other party's reaction to your behaviour in that situation?

What could things be like if everyone behaved according to the Golden Rule? Why is it that sometimes we don't behave according to the Golden Rule?

Do you think that people generally live by the Golden Rule? Why? Why not? If not, what Rule do you think many people do live by?

How do people usually treat each other at work (school, home, etc.)? Why is that so? How might the Golden Rule make a difference?

To what current issue in our city or country might the Golden Rule offer a solution? How so?

➤ *Healer of our every ill*

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† Offering and Prayer

We give thanks for all those who have helped us learn the Golden Rule – who have encouraged us to compassion for others – who have shown in many ways what it costs to follow Jesus. Our offering is one way in which we share our abundance in the world. May the example of others, who shared their faith in Christ so that we may believe, inspire our generosity today.

➤ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*

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O God, because life is your gift to us, we give with gratitude. Because freedom is your gift to us, we give with gladness. May we be graceful and generous in our giving as you are in yours. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

O God, we give thanks that you call each of us by name and unite us in a community of faith. Give us love enough to make a difference in your world – trust enough to follow even when the way before us is a challenge.

Holy One, bring your compassion to this world once more.

O God of peace and promise, you call us to love our enemies and to be peacemakers in the word you love. We pray today for people and places divided by ancient bitterness and current hostility, *(especially we remember... adding places in the recent news...)*

Holy One, bring your compassion to this world once more.

O God of the bruised and broken, we are grateful that you know the things that bring us suffering and pain. We pray today for all those in need of healing and comfort... *(keep silence...)*

O God of the lonely and sorrowing, we remember now in this moment of quiet those people we miss – those who grieve and those who are lonely... *(keep silence...)*

Holy One, bring your compassion to this world once more.

O God of promise and possibility, give us courage to face the future with confidence and hope, knowing you will sustain us. We offer our prayers together in words Jesus taught **...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, for ever. Amen**

➤ *Oh, for a world where everyone*

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Blessing

Go into the world sharing care and compassion – participate in building a more humane and holy world. Let your regard for the dignity of all guide your path. And may the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ and the nurture of the Spirit embrace and sustain us all.

➤ *Go now in peace, never be afraid*