

Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement

As we gather for worship in Jesus' name, we remember that we do so on the traditional and unceded territory of the ləkʷəŋən and the WSÁNEĆ. We acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting injustice and asking God to lead us along paths of reconciliation – inspiring new relationships of respect and solidarity.

A Father's Day Prayer

Holy God, today we pray for fathers near and far. We pray for fathers alive and fathers who are dead for those who were present with their children and those who were absent. We pray for new fathers and old fathers – for those who loved well and those who did not love as well.

We pray for fathers who play with their children and those who don't. We pray for those who take their fathering seriously and those who don't – for biological dads and dads who raised us. We pray for those who don't get to be dads at all.

We pray for fathers who were let down by their own dads – for those who felt unloved by their fathers. We pray for fathers who missed out on the presence of a father figure.

We pray for fathers who work hard in their families – for those fathers who may be unemployed – for those fathers who serve in the military – for those fathers who are retired from working life.

We pray for fathers trapped by addiction. We pray for fathers serving in prison and separated from their children. We pray for fathers who are all wrapped up in their work and therefore too busy for their children.

We pray for our fathers – for them to have strength, wisdom and courage. We pray for them to raise their children in the way that they should go – for them to love, laugh, play and live. We pray for forgiveness for our father's shortcomings, their weaknesses, and their abuses.

On this Father's Day, O God, we ask your blessing on all fathers. Amen

➤ *O let the power fall on me*

Call to Worship

Holy and generous is God – Creator of all things.

**Loving and gracious is Christ – Bearer of healing and hope.**

Gentle and wise is the Holy Spirit – Breath of new life.

**Trinity of grace, we call on you today.**

Come and worship the God who made and loves us all!

**We come with joyful praise and hopeful hearts!**

† Gathering Prayer / Words of Hope

Creator God, you have made a world of such amazing diversity – with unique living things we cannot number! We praise you for such wonder. You have created such amazing diversity in humankind –through culture and language, custom and community, expressed in so much creativity and compassion. We praise you for such wonder. In Jesus Christ, you show us how much you love your creation and how we can live by your love. By the power of your Spirit, give us new eyes to behold the wonders you have made and teach us how to love your creation with humble, grateful hearts.

Creator God, the diversity in your creation amazes us, but we confess we often prefer what seems familiar. We'd like everyone to speak our language. We wish others held our values and shared our customs. We fail to see how our own preferences affect others and the earth itself in harmful ways. Forgive our easy assumptions and teach us to listen to the stories others tell with open minds and hearts. **Amen**

The prophet Micah declared that God requires three things of us: to do justice, to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God. To all who seek reconciliation with God and neighbour in kindness and humility, God offers forgiveness and peace. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all.

† Prayer for Understanding

**Amid the distractions of our times, give us undivided hearts and attentive minds, O God. Help us discern your wisdom in the scriptures, so that we may follow Christ, your living Word. Amen**

Scripture **Exodus 19: 2-8a** [OT 65]

They journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. Then Moses went up to God; the Lord called to him from the mountain, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the Israelites: *'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now, therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.'* These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

So Moses went, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. The people all answered as one, "Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

**Psalm 100** [responsive/displayed]

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

**Worship the Lord with gladness; come into God's presence with singing.**

Know that the Lord is God. The Lord made us; we belong to God.

**We are God's people, and the sheep of God's pasture.**

Enter the gates of the Lord with thanksgiving, and God's courts with praise.

**Give thanks to the Lord, bless God's name.**

For the Lord is good;

**God's steadfast love endures forever, God's faithfulness to all generations.**

**Galatians 3: 1-9** [NT 188]

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified! The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so much for nothing? – if it really was for nothing. Well then, does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law or by your believing what you heard?

Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," so, you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would reckon as righteous the gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the gentiles shall be blessed in you." For this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

**Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 8** [NT 9]

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "*The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.*"

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of

the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: *“Do not take a road leading to gentiles, and do not enter a Samaritan town, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ Cure the sick; raise the dead; cleanse those with a skin disease; cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.*

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God!**

### Message

When I was a teenager, our family lived in a small town in British Columbia. The town had a drive-in that operated in the summer and a movie theater that rarely showed new and exciting movies. On one occasion I wanted to go to the movies with my friends but when I asked permission of my mother, she referred me to my dad. Although I don't recall the movie, it must have been something controversial or of questionable merit for my mom to send me on to my father. I went to talk to him, surer than ever that I would not be allowed to go. My father was an interesting, and sometimes philosophical man who pondered for some time in our conversation about the movie. Finally, he responded saying that I needed to decide for myself what the right thing was. He did not approve of my going but would not prevent me, insisting that I must chose what to do. I confess that I don't remember what I decided! It seems strange to me now that the movie, so important at the time, has disappeared from my memory of this event. What I do remember is the realization that, whatever I decided to do, my father loved me. I did not have to prove myself to him by choosing what he would choose or doing what he would like me to do. I did not need to – and in fact could not – earn his love. Somehow, in that moment, I understood that my father loved me, not because of what I did or did not do – not because of who I might become – not through any action on my part – he just loved me.

It was – it is – an amazing thing to know. Freeing me to participate in a richer and more meaningful relationship with my father. Unfortunately, I have sometimes forgotten this realization through the course of my life – trying to earn recognition, to be the first child in the family to call on special occasions, to somehow please my father in an effort to gain his love. At times I forgot that I already had that love, freely given. My actions never increased or decreased my father's love.

I think our scriptures today remind us of the love of God that is eternal, tireless, relentless.

Think first of the Israelites who had become slaves in Egypt and how they prayed to the Lord for help. Think of how God worked through Moses and Aaron in the extended negotiations with Pharaoh. Think of the climax of that story when God's answer to prayer is to deliver the people from the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds.

The people never got over whatever it was that happened there! The deliverance from Egypt counts as one of the "mighty acts of God" and is recalled in creeds, prophetic sayings, songs, and psalms. To this day our Jewish neighbours recall these events in the celebration of the Passover. Christians too recall the Exodus in many hymns and prayers that remind us that God will stop at nothing to deliver us – God loves us.

One commentator I read noted that the only passage of Hebrew scripture he was required to memorize in his time at seminary was from the Exodus passage we read today: *'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now, therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.'*

The words are a promise that abundant life grows out of our devotion to God and to each other – bold, yes – but wise rather than preposterous. As we will later see in Paul's letter to the Galatians it is also a wise recognition of human limitations to recognize that only the grace of God makes abundant covenantal life possible.

This moment marks the fulfillment of the promise of God to Moses at the burning bush – that God would be with them – would bring them out of Egypt – would never forsake them. It is a reminder of the people's relationship to God and a reminder of what God has done for them. It is an encouragement to keep their covenant with God – to continue to praise and obey God as their true journey begins: the covenant relationship between Israel and God outlined in the next chapter when the ten commandments are brought down from the mountain. The covenant made at Sinai is thus born and nurtured in a matrix of trust and steadfast love. These people are treasured by God – loved and valued beyond measure.

Consider to the reading from Matthew's Gospel, which tells of Jesus choosing twelve apostles. The selection of twelve apostles is an indication that Jesus is going about the task of forming a new people of God, with these disciples as the twelve founding figures, balancing the twelve sons of Jacob in Israel. And each one is named – even the traitor, Judas Iscariot. What we know of them is limited but we know they are not perfect – not fully trained. Just a moment ago, they were only fishermen and accountants, zealots and doubters. But they were called, and they did follow.

Jesus sends them to *the lost sheep of Israel* to proclaim the mighty acts of the God who has called them out of darkness into light. I think he is sending them to his own people out of compassion. Jesus is sending out the disciples to a people who are already hoping for the Messiah, who already know the stories, who have already celebrated the feasts and observed all the Laws and know the prophets. People who remember that God has come after them time and again because they are God's *treasured possession – a priestly kingdom and a holy nation*.

Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, is also talking about love – God's love as shown in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul's letter is written in love for the Galatian church about which he has heard disturbing things.

The reports informed Paul that those who had received his teaching, who had received the Spirit in faith, are now being persuaded by a different teaching. The "troublemakers" promoting this different teaching are imposing on the Galatian Christians some requirements of Jewish law. They are "bewitching" the believers into thinking that they need to be circumcised. That they need to observe Jewish holy days and eat according to certain dietary restrictions. Paul considers the teaching of the troublemakers, to be a perversion of the gospel of Christ which the Galatians had previously received. By demanding such law-keeping from the Galatians, the principle of justification by works of the law is promoted in contradiction to the principle of justification by faith which is the gospel Paul had proclaimed.

Paul's language is forceful and direct: *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?* He can hardly believe what he has heard about the Galatian Christians. Paul is distressed and emotional in his letter. He is dismayed that those who suffered for their belief – those who understood their salvation in God's free gift of Jesus Christ – those who experienced miracles and who participated in the life of the Spirit could now be swayed by the spell of another teaching. How could they accept the idea that their own effort – their own actions – would achieve the salvation freely offered in God's grace? Are they so foolish?

In our present age, are we so foolish? Foolish enough to believe that self help books and goal setting seminars, extreme makeovers and hard work will save us? In our society there is a false religion of human achievement at every turn. We are constantly bombarded with messages that everything we have – everything we want – everything we think we need – can be obtained by our own efforts. Can we really buy into a lifestyle of survival of the fittest – envy of the richest – admiration of the perfectionist in our day to day lives and then turn about face to receive the Spirit by faith alone? Can we live in a way that says we need to earn everything – even the love of our parents – even the love of our God? Is that sustainable?

Perhaps if we understood the purpose of the law – if we understood the place of hard

work and achievement and the relative value of self-help literature – if we could see these as ways to help us live and keep them in proper perspective – then perhaps we would be able to understand that our own efforts will never bring us to righteousness – never cause God to love us less or more. Our own efforts can only achieve self-righteousness. We are righteous before God only through faith which is a gracious gift from God and has nothing to do with how successful or smart or religious, we may think we are.

Paul urges his followers in Galatia to understand that seeking perfection in the flesh – seeking to confirm their justification by human action – is a perversion of their faith which they have begun in the Spirit. Paul reminds them that Abraham was counted as righteous, was saved, by faith. It was not any action on Abraham's part that brought and kept him in relationship with God, but the relationship with the divine that sustained him – knowing that God would fulfill the promises that God had made. Abraham was a man of faith and all who have faith are blessed along with Abraham.

This is a powerful message for the Galatian church and a stern rebuke those who tried to corrupt the gospel message that salvation – forgiveness, healing, wholeness – salvation comes from God's grace, received through faith in Christ alone. It encourages them to live confidently in the Spirit – not because of what they do, but because of what God has done for them in Christ. Reminding them that they are treasured by God – borne up on eagles' wings and brought close to the divine.

We can live confidently in the Spirit because the love of God does not depend on what we do – the love of God depends on God who has come close to us in Jesus Christ – freeing us to participate in a rich and meaningful relationship with God, to participate in God's love for the world, to live in God's grace, through faith alone. **Amen**

➤ *You who dwell in the shelter/On Eagle's Wings 57*

Offering and Prayer *Praise God from whom all blessings flow 306*

God's Spirit equips Jesus' followers to bring healing and hope to the world God loves. The gifts we offer God are tangible signs of that healing and hope at work in us and through us, for the sake of Christ our Lord.

**God of grace and goodness, your world is full of gifts that sustain our lives. We offer our gifts in gratitude. Bless them and make them signs of your presence at work in the world, touching lives in need with your love and strength in Jesus' name. Amen**

† Pastoral Prayers and the Lord's Prayer (adapted version)

God of the earth and all its peoples, in Jesus Christ, you proclaimed the good news that true life and peace are found in you. Guide your church to proclaim this good news, not in ways that merely please people or don't ruffle feathers, but in ways that bring Christ's reconciling love to divided communities and lives out of joint with each other. Shine your light into the world's hidden corners, exposing violence, exploitation, and bigotry. Reveal what dehumanizes the vulnerable and degrades your creation. God of the earth and all its peoples. Let your light shine!

➤ **383 – 8 bars (verse) – instrumental only**

On this National Indigenous Sunday, we pray for Indigenous communities across this land, and all around the world. We thank you for Indigenous leaders who lead and advocate for the needs of their people. Bring healing to those who confront painful experiences and build bridges of understanding among us all. May your justice prevail so that Indigenous communities have the resources needed to thrive and receive respect for the decisions they make.

We pray for the National Indigenous Ministry Council and the ministries with Indigenous people that the Council tends. Bless the leaders and participants in each ministry with the resources they need to serve their communities effectively. Teach the wider church what is being learned through these communities and deepen the bonds of faithful friendship we can share with each other.

Cedar Tree Ministries is an outreach ministry for Indigenous People on Vancouver Island. The mission is to bring healing and reconciliation between the church and the First Nations, as well as to worship God. We pray for this ministry that includes worship, a food bank, Sunday school, prayer meeting, youth group, children's after-school program, and counselling services for youth and adults dealing with mental health issues and addictions. Show us how we can encourage Cedar Tree as they share the good news of Jesus in Indigenous communities in our region.

God of the earth and all its peoples. Let your light shine!

➤ **383 – 8 bars (verse) – instrumental only**

God of healing and hope, thank you for your faithfulness to us in all situations. We pray for all those who are ill or in pain – for the anxious and discouraged – for those facing death or the loss of someone dearly beloved – and for those struggling to make ends meet. We pray for Presbyterian World Service & Development and its partners as they work to bring healing and hope to places of strife and deprivation.



East Africa is facing a severe humanitarian crisis. Conflicts, such as those in Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo, are forcing thousands of families from their homes. Extreme climate weather events across the Horn of Africa have created high levels of hunger. Strengthen and encourage these people as they suffer and hope for our compassionate response. We give thanks that PWS&D is currently supporting food assistance responses in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. We know the need is great and we appreciate the matching funds from the Government of Canada through Canadian Foodgrains Bank that make every dollar we contribute make an even greater difference.

May the mission we share in Jesus' name shine the light of your love into desperate lives. God of the earth and all its peoples. Let your light shine!

➤ **383 – 8 bars (verse) – instrumental only**

God of the faithful future, bless this community of faith and guide us as we plan for the future in changing times. Bless students and teachers as the school year ends and restore them for learning with summer enjoyment. Grant us all times to rest and to enjoy this summer and replenish our hope and energy to serve in your world. God of the earth and all its peoples. Let your light shine!

➤ **383 – 8 bars (verse) – instrumental only**

We offer all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, through Jesus, the Christ, who encourages us to pray together... ***Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:***

***The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.***

***With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and for ever. Amen***

➤ ***The kingdom of God is justice and joy*** **787**

### Blessing

Walk gently on the earth God has entrusted to us all and cherish God's amazing creation. Deep peace of the running wave to you. Deep peace of the flowing air to you. Deep peace of the quiet earth to you. Deep peace of the shining stars to you. Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you. **Amen**

➤ ***Jump with joy*** **406**