

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 W̱SÁNEĆ. 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.

➤ *O let the power fall on me*

Call to Worship

We travel here by car or bus or bike...

entering on foot or with the help of a walker or in a parent's arms.

We come to worship in the house of God.

We arrive alone or with members of our household or in the company of friends.

We come to worship as the people of God.

We identify ourselves as workers and musicians, students and retirees.

We come to worship seeking to be servants in Christ's name.

In this place and time, we have a church home, a faith family, a holy purpose.

We come to worship with glad and grateful hearts.

➤ *Come sing, O church in joy!*

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† Gathering Prayer / Words of Hope

God of grace, you created our minds to grow in wisdom. You created our hearts to expand with love for you and your world. You created our voices to sing your praises forever. Fill us to overflowing with your Holy Spirit, so we may worship you in spirit and in truth, bold and unafraid to follow Jesus, even when challenges confront us. In this time of worship, assure us of your presence with us and reveal to us the path you open before us, for we live to serve as your people wherever you lead.

God who creates the future, you call us to follow you, yet we prefer familiar paths. You offer us new beginnings yet change makes us uncomfortable. You invite us into the fullness of life, yet we resist more than we already know. Forgive us, O God, and make of us courageous disciples ready to serve in Jesus' name. Amen

In Christ, we are a new creation; the old life is gone, and the new life has come! Trust that God loves and forgives you. Do not be afraid to make a new start!

† Prayer for Understanding

God of wisdom, open our minds to your truth, our hearts to your love, and our hands to do your will as we listen to the Scriptures. With your Holy Spirit, equip us to follow Jesus – your Living Word. Amen

Scripture **Genesis 21: 8-21** [OT 17]

The child grew and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac."

The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, "Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named for you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring."

So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, "Do not let me look on the death of the child." And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept.

And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

Psalm 86: 1-10, 16-17

Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.

You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long.

Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name.

For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant; save the child of your maid servant.

Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame, because you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

Romans 6: 1b-11 [NT 156]

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound?

By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin.

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

So, you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10: 24-39 [NT 10]

A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.

Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

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

Message

It is not uncommon to hear people speculating about what they would do if they won the lottery – there is even the song, “If I had a million dollars.” I have played the same “what if?” game... maybe you have too. We want so much – are I think a greedy society by and large – one that desires instant gratification. There are many types of music and literature, television shows and movies that feed this desire. There are even jokes...

A man is walking down the beach and comes across an old bottle. He picks it up, pulls out the cork and out pops a genie. The genie says, "Thank you for freeing me from the bottle. In return I will grant you three wishes."

The man cheers, "Great! I always dreamed of this, and I know exactly what I want. First, I want one billion dollars in a Swiss bank account."

Poof! There is a flash of light and a piece of paper with account numbers appears in his hand.

He continues, "Next, I want a brand-new red Ferrari right here."

Poof! There is a flash of light, and a bright red brand-new Ferrari appears right next to him.

He continues, "Finally, I want to be irresistible to women."

Poof! There is a flash of light, and he turns into a box of chocolates.

In ancient times I would guess that many people were just as greedy and just as blind to the consequences of their wishes – humanity is humanity after all. One of the great desires of the people of Israel is the promise of a Saviour King who will come and rescue them from their plight. The people have been waiting and watching, hoping and longing, for a Messiah. They have been on the alert for signs and the fulfillment of prophecy. They have followed the careers of many miracle workers, healers and teachers. The people of Israel have been praying and wishing for that which God has promised – the Messiah.

Finally, Jesus arrives on the scene. He gathers a group of followers and begins his ministry in Galilee. The people listen to his interpretation of scripture, they watch in wonder as he heals the sick and banishes demons. The people hover close by as the Pharisees question and challenge. Jesus is the Messiah for which they have been wishing, the saviour that will free them from their oppressors and release them from bondage to sin.

Jesus is the one, but no one ever told the people to be careful what they wished for. No one thought to inform them that the Messiah might not come to serve their desires and their dreams but would be sent by God to fulfill God's plan. No one mentioned that the Messiah could bring more trouble than they had bargained for. No one ever had it cross their mind that the Messiah would bring anything other than peace and wellbeing – the shalom of God. No one that is until Jesus made it plain in his words from the Gospel of Matthew that Heather read for us this morning: ***Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.***

Jesus, the chosen one of God, the Messiah came as God promised – fulfilling the desires of the people and overturning them as well. What do we make of his words? Not peace,

but a sword – not family harmony as we know it, but division, distrust and disloyalty. Not peace, but a sword – not ease and comfort, but challenge and risk. Not peace, but a sword – not cheap grace, but costly discipleship.

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. Christ does not bring false peace like so many other would-be Messiahs. Some Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah complained about those who say “*peace, peace, where there is no peace.*” [Jeremiah 6:14] What passes under the name of peace is often only a mask that disguises and hides injustice, brutality, and a dictatorship. Some families or nations give an aura and illusion of peace simply because of dictatorial “peaceful” rule by a despot. Jesus is not bringing a false peace, which tolerates injustice and oppression.

The one that the people wished for has come among them but the words he speaks, the healing he produces, the message he proclaims and the discipleship he demands are not what everyone will embrace. There will be conflict. Everything will not be smooth and effortless because we choose to follow Jesus. Everything will not always work out the way that pleases us or makes us comfortable. We come to faith by grace and believe that we die to sin as we are baptized into Christ. We wish for new life in Christ – we envision it, long for it, pray for it. Yet Jesus warns us to be careful what we wish for. What are we willing to risk for the kingdom? What are we willing to change and make new? Jesus tells us that we must lose our life to gain it – must put everything on the line in Christ’s name.

You would expect Jesus to say to the crowds. “Come, come. Come to the waters. Come to the Spirit. Come to the kingdom.” Instead, Jesus says, “Count, count. Count the cost. Count the expense to you. Count the price of being my disciple.”

As Jesus looked over the great crowds following him and listening to him, you would have thought he would have enticed them into discipleship. You would have thought he would have made it easy – that he would have set the bar of discipleship very low. You would have thought he would have said, “It is simple being a disciple. It is a life filled with contentment and ease. A life free from conflict or division. Love your spouse. Love your kids. Do well in school. Show up to work on time. Be “nice” to your neighbor. Go to church. It is effortless to be my disciple – there is nothing to it.”

But Jesus doesn’t say that – doesn’t promise that. Jesus comes and calls us to give up our vision of peace for **his vision** of peace – challenges us to be unpopular in the world – promises us that our journey of discipleship will be anything but a rose garden. Jesus is

no genie in a bottle, no get out of jail free ticket, no carte blanche. The people dreamed of a Messiah who would come to crush the Roman oppressors and put Israel back on the political map – Jesus said pray for those who are under bondage to sin. The people longed for one who would bring glory and wealth to a tired and abused nation – Jesus came to show forth **God's** glory. The people cried out for a leader who would bring peace at no cost or peace at any cost – Jesus proclaims **his** peace, not the world's peace. The people wished for a Messiah and Jesus came. He still comes and offers new life – new and abundant life in him to each one of us.

Tell the story that Jenn shared with clergy at Presbytery...

Be careful what you wish for because Jesus will come in when you open the door of your heart. And when Jesus enters your life, it will be on his terms, according to God's desire – Jesus will enter your life with the power of the Holy Spirit that is beyond your expectations. Be careful what you wish for it might just be more than you had hoped or dreamed... **Amen**

➤ *When we are living, we are in the Lord*

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

Around us the gifts of God's good earth appear in fields and gardens, speaking of God's goodness to us. Our gifts also speak of God's goodness as we offer our gratitude for all we have received in Christ and in creation.

Loving God, we release these gifts, letting go of these things that seem important to us: money we feel we have earned – time we feel is limited – lives we feel are our own. We let go of them – knowing that they are yours and praying that you will bless us – uniting us with you in Jesus' name. Amen

† Pastoral Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

*Embrace us all with your mercy, O God, **and give us grace to respond to needs around us.***

God of compassion and courage, in our weakness you are strength. In our sorrows you are comfort and peace. We thank you for your swaddling presence in our lives. Embrace each situation we lay before you today with your steadfast love.

We thank you for moments of joy that break into our lives – for love given and received – for friends who furnish our life with meaning and happiness – and for family who embrace us with love and understanding. We pray for those who cannot feel joy today – for any

estranged from family or friends – for those feeling stress as the costs of living rise – and for those who face any kind of loss.

*Embrace us all with your mercy, O God, **and give us grace to respond to needs around us.***

God of the nations, we pray for our country as Canada Day approaches. We give thanks for peace and plenty in this land and for resources to support those facing difficulties in our communities. Challenge those who govern to share resources as a generous global partner and commit to international efforts to preserve the earth for future generations. Guide leaders to set fair policies that protect the most vulnerable and ensure equity and dignity for all.

*Embrace us all with your mercy, O God, **and give us grace to respond to needs around us.***

Eternal God, we thank you for your people in every age who have entered into your heavenly presence, especially those dear to our own hearts. Thank you for memories that inspire us – for love and laughter shared and lessons learned. Hear us now as we offer prayers in silence for the concerns on our hearts this day...

*Embrace us all with your mercy, O God, **and give us grace to respond to needs around us.***

We bring all our prayers – spoken and unspoken – and offer them together Jesus' name...
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

➤ *To show by touch and word*

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Blessing

Go in faithfulness, ready to serve God, trusting that God counts your life as precious. I pray that you may know the presence of God with you all the places you may go! And may God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you, and may God grant you grace and peace now and evermore.

➤ *Jump with joy*

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