

Welcome / Announcements

Land Acknowledgement

May righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more (Ps 72:7).

We acknowledge with gratitude the gift of this place and the original peoples. We gather on the traditional and unceded territory of the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ. Today this land is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, including survivors and intergenerational family members who have been impacted by the legacy of the residential school system. We honour them too, as we stand committed to be partners in healing, reconciliation, and justice.

As the wise ones of old carefully observed the heavens before immersing themselves in a journey across the land, let us examine where we are and all who share this watershed, *that the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known (Eph 3:10).*

□ *Dance with the Spirit*

156 (MV)

Call to Worship

Some look to technology or power to bring them salvation,
but we look to God.

Some look to quantity or efficiency as signs of success,
but we look to God.

For you, O God, have made us whole.

At the works of your hands we sing for joy!

□ *This is my Father's world*

328

Gathering Prayer / The Lord's Prayer / Words of Hope

God of the mysterious garden that flourishes when we least expect, you do not perceive the world as we do. In the smallest seed, you see a home for a host of creatures. From among the overlooked and forgotten, you call disciples to carry out your will. Enable us to regard each person not through the prejudices that have shaped us, but through the love of Jesus Christ, the first fruit of your new creation.

Holy God, you call us to live in mystery, to walk by faith.

Yet we long for plans with goals and schedules. It's hard to live by faith.

You call us to place our trust in you, to live according to your direction.

Yet we want life to make sense from a human point of view. It's hard to live by faith.

You call us to feel the mystery of life, to marvel at the power of your love.

Yet it's not easy to accept your promise that everything old has passed away. It's hard to live by faith.

Forgive us, holy maker of reality.

Forgive us for playing god instead of accepting our humanity.

Hear us as we prayer together as 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***

Fear not, for our creator, the loving maker of all reality, forgives us, and redeems us from violence and oppression. God sows the good news in tiny seeds, inviting us to tend the soil of community, and marvel as they grow. In the name of Jesus, who is the Christ, you are forgiven. Amen!

□ ***Come, let us sing to the Lord a new song***

412

Prayer for Understanding

God of patience and persistence, speak through the Scriptures, and inspire our growth and gratitude, so that we may be changed by what we hear. Open our minds and hearts to a fresh encounter with Christ, your Living Word. Amen

Scripture **1 Samuel 15:34 – 16:13 [OT 259]**

Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul.

Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king over Israel. The LORD said to Samuel, *"How lo ng will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."*

Samuel said, *"How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me."*

And the LORD said, *"Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you."*

Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, *"Do you come peaceably?"*

He said, *"Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice."* And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, *"Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the LORD."*

But the LORD said to Samuel, *"Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."*

Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, *"Neither has the LORD chosen this one."*

Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, *"Neither has the LORD chosen this one."*

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, *"The LORD has not chosen any of these."*

Samuel said to Jesse, *"Are all your sons here?"*

And he said, *"There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep."*

And Samuel said to Jesse, *"Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here."*

He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, *"Rise and anoint him; for this is the one."*

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

Psalm 20

The LORD answer you in the day of trouble!

The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

May the Lord send you help from the sanctuary, and give you support from Zion.

May the Lord remember all your offerings, and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices. May the Lord grant you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your plans. May we shout for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God set up our banners. May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

Now I know that the LORD will help the anointed one; and will answer from the heavenly sanctuary with mighty victories by God's right hand.

Some take pride in chariots, and some in horses, but our pride is in the name of the LORD our God. They will collapse and fall, but we shall rise and stand upright.

Give victory to the king, O LORD;

answer us when we call.

2 Corinthians 5:6-17 [NT 181]

So we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord – for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Mark 4: 26-34 [NT 38]

He also said, *"The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."*

He also said, *"With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of*

all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

Friends, listen to what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Message "What you see may not be all you get"

□ *In the bulb there is a flower*

674

Offering and Prayer

The parables in Mark's gospel remind us that God's kingdom grows from small beginnings with surprising results. So give to God as you are able, and trust that God will honour your generosity for the purposes of God's Spirit at work among us and beyond us.

□ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow*

306

God of small seeds and secret growth, bless the gifts we bring to you. Use them as seeds of new life in our community, and in your world. Grow results we cannot even imagine – within us, among us, because of us, and beyond us, for the sake of Christ, our Living God. Amen

Pastoral Prayers

God of love and care, in a world where many would seek to damage your creation, bring hatred to your people, show violence to your children... help us always to be grateful for the gifts of love and life, for the glimpses of transforming beauty and unending wonder. Take us now and use us well to combat evil and destruction wherever we find it.

In world driven by greed and a lust for power; where the material threatens to overwhelm the spiritual; where goodness seems too frail in the face of badness... help us not to give up on righteousness and truth; to believe that you can use well the gifts we offer; that you will call forth the gifts of your people again and again.

In a world where people are broken at the hands of humanity and by the storms of nature... help us to trust the healing of your blessing and love, placed even now in the hands of those who seek to face down injustice and champion human rights; who stand in the dark places with your light held high; who give of themselves for the sake of others.

In a world where we struggle to understand pain and suffering, and, most especially, in the lives of those we love... we bring before you those for whom we weep; those we embrace in our hearts; those to whom we reach out in the yearnings of our prayers...

(time for silence)

In a world where we can feel so insignificant and helpless... help us to know you have a place for us; lift our spirits when we don't feel good enough; fit us into your plan in amazing ways.

In a world where so much is focused on the here and now... help us to remain bound with those who have gone before us; to rejoice in our fellowship in the one kingdom of your love; to give thanks that, from time to time, we have a glimpse of eternity. **Amen**

□ *To show by touch and word*

763

Blessing

Go forth into the world in faithfulness. Take the transforming love of God into the world and invite others to celebrate God's love with you. And may the grace of Christ redeem you, the enduring love of God support you and the friendship of the Holy Spirit accompany you, this day and always. **Amen**

□ *Go now in peace, never be afraid*