

## 25 August 2024 – *Worship and Picnic in the Park*

### Gathering Songs

- *Come, now is the time to worship*
- *All who hunger, gather gladly* *534*

### Welcome / Announcements / Land Acknowledgement Wayne (suggested LA)

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 – Esquimalt and Songhees nations. We acknowledge their stewardship of this land through the ages. As we pray, reflect, and celebrate in this place, we do so as guests lamenting past and current injustice. We ask God to lead us along paths of reconciliation – inspiring new relationships of respect and solidarity.

### Call to Worship Terri Beaton

From the rising of the sun till its setting in the west – God's holy name be praised. On the lips of children, in the visions of the old, and in the dreaming of each one of us – God's holy name be praised. In the banquet hall of heaven and the forgotten corners of our hearts, let all that has life and breath praise the Lord as we gather in worship together.

### † Gathering Prayers/Words of Hope Betsy Wicks

Jesus, we ask you to join us in our fun today. So many times, we come before you with need, in sorrow, or in solemn worship. Today, we want you to come and play with us. It is really that simple.

We know that you ate and drank with those who needed you most. You blessed a wedding with happy wine and took time off from miracles to embrace children, showing us where the best miracles really are in the process. You know what it is to laugh. Please, Jesus, be in our joy, our songs, and our laughter today. Renew us with peace and innocence. Our picnic anticipates the great banquet of heaven. Glory is as near as the word of faith in our hearts. Let today be an appetizer for God's reign of love.

We know we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed: we have not loved you with our whole heart – we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We repent and are sorry for all our sins. Forgive us and strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life.

God of Wonder, send us away from our worship and picnic renewed in our faith, and assured of your guiding presence. Today we party – we picnic – we play, and we pray together in confident hope and in Jesus' name. **Amen**

Friends, God hears our confessions with an ever merciful and loving heart and forgives us repeatedly. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. Let us take hold of this forgiveness and live always in the power of the Holy Spirit.

➤ *Deep in our hearts*

† Prayer for Understanding Debra Verwey

God of wisdom and warning, we long to hear your word for our times and our lives. By the power of your Spirit, open the Scriptures for us. Prepare us to be challenged and changed as we encounter Christ, your Living Word. **Amen**

Scripture **Ephesians 2:13-22** Debra Verwey

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us, abolishing the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near, for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone; in him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

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

An off-the-record conversation between Jesus and Peter<sup>1</sup> Harold McNabb & Arthur Marcellus

***A new experience*** (Matthew 16:18-19)

Peter: Eh... Jesus...?

Jesus: Yes, Peter...?

Peter: Eh... I was just thinking...

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<sup>1</sup> A new experience. Jesus and Peter: Off-the record conversations, John L. Bell & Graham Maule, © 1999 Wild Goose Resource Group. Adapted.

Jesus: Is that a new experience, Peter?

Peter: I was just thinking about this... eh... church.

Jesus: Which church, Peter?

Peter: The one... the one you're going to build... on me.

Jesus: Oh, that church. Well, what were you thinking?

Peter: Eh... I was thinking that I'm not exactly the world's best administrator.

Jesus: There are some people who would say that you weren't exactly the world's best fisherman.

Peter: Oh, Jesus... you said you wouldn't mention that again!

Jesus: Sorry, Peter. Now... you were saying...

Peter: I was saying that I'm not the world's best administrator and you haven't given me much of a clue as to what I should do.

Jesus: What do you mean?

Peter: Well, for example... who is the church for?  
Is it just for the Jews?

Jesus: No.

Peter: Is it just for Gentiles?

Jesus: No.

Peter: Is it for everybody?

Jesus: Mm-hm.

Peter: Including women???

Jesus: Mm-hm.

Peter: Do you know what you're letting yourself in for?  
I mean, do you know what you're letting me in for?

Jesus: You mean they might get things organized?

Peter: Well... yes...

Jesus: And that would be a new experience... wouldn't it?

Peter: Well... well...  
Look, quite apart from the women, what do you want the men to do?  
Do you want us to sing... standing up or sitting down?  
Do you want us to kneel to pray or stretch our hands in the air?  
Do you want candles and incense... or is the church to be a no-smoking zone?  
Are there to be speakers or silence?  
Do you want drums and trumpets and organs? I mean, Thomas suggested guitars, but I told him that guitars gave God a sore head.

Jesus: What gave you that impression?

Peter: Amos 5, verse 23... remember?

Jesus: Oh... right... I think you may have misinterpreted that passage.

Peter: And another thing, Jesus... how do you want it run?

Jesus: Run?

Peter: Yes... how do you want it run?  
James says it should be a territorial democracy. Andrew thought it might be a centralized bureaucracy. Simon said that people should do as they please... be he's just an anarchist!  
What do you say?

Jesus: Not very much.

Peter: Jesus, be serious.  
I mean... you said you were going to build the church on me, but you don't give me a clue as to what it should look like.  
What happens if you disappear, and I drop dead? Will the whole thing go up in a puff of smoke?

Jesus: Well, that would be an interesting way of finding your successor.

Peter: Pardon?

Jesus: Peter, Peter, don't worry about the church. That's God's problem, not yours. You set your eyes on the kingdom and God will make clear what should be the shape of the church.

For God want the church to be the servant of the kingdom, not the master – to celebrate the kingdom, not to dominate it – to be a sign of the good news, not just a reminder of the bad.

*(Pause)*

Peter: Jesus... I don't think you've answered any of my questions.

Jesus: Is that a new experience, Peter?

Peter: No, Jesus... actually, it's not.

➤ ***Your hand, O God, has guided (verses 1 + 4) 477***

Scripture **Mark 6:30-44** April Watt

The apostles gathered around Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, *"Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."* For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, *"This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat."*

But he answered them, *"You give them something to eat."*

They said to him, *"Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?"*

And he said to them, *"How many loaves have you? Go and see."*

When they had found out, they said, *"Five, and two fish."*

Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before the people, and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and

were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men.

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

Message ***What did you bring to the picnic?*** Mitch

➤ ***We are one in the Spirit*** 471

Offering and Prayer Laura

The growth around us in field and garden speak of God's abundant love. What we offer to God this day spreads that abundance to those in need, for Christ's sake. Let us pray...

God of growing gardens and growing hope, receive our gifts and our gratitude this day. Bless what we bring and what we do, so that we become expressions of your abundant love, in Jesus' name. **Amen**

➤ ***Come, share the Lord*** ***PCUSA 510***

Gathering at the Lord's Table Laura and Mitch

*When invited to do so, please come forward to receive Holy Communion – everyone is welcome at this table. If you are unable to come forward, please signal by raising a hand and we will come to serve you.*

*We are using gluten and dairy-free bread. Juice, wine, and pre-packaged elements are available.*

**Laura:** We have heard about God, who loved confusion into order and gave each creature a divine image, making the world.

**Mitch:** We have heard about Jesus, a poor man whose banquet feeds the world, a healer whose wounds give life, a teacher whose wisdom traces love's order in the world, finding the divine in each of us.

**Laura:** We have heard how Jesus died, and how, for those who loved him, he rose again.

**Mitch:** We have heard about the Holy Spirit, who breaks the bonds of race and class, of gender and creed, to show God's love for everyone.

**Laura:** And we have heard that love makes all things new. We come to share in the bread of such blessings. These miracles begin with simple human gestures, bits of bread in a basket, tongues that talk, souls that yearn. And so, we bring bread and wine, prayers and our own yearning, that the miraculous may begin in us today.

**Mitch:** Almighty and merciful God, in the face of much that seems to deny your presence, we give you grateful thanks for Jesus. We thank you for revealing yourself to us in him. We thank you that in his death and resurrection he has overcome all that can destroy us. We thank you that nothing in our lives can ever separate us from your love.

**Laura:** We thank you that on the night of his arrest Jesus sat down to eat with friends. During the meal, he took the bread, said a prayer, broke it and shared it with everyone at the table, saying: *"This is my body which is for you. Do this to remember me."*

**Mitch:** At the end of the meal, he took a cup of wine and raised it, saying: *"This is God's new covenant, made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me."* We ponder, O God, the mystery of Jesus' promise that in this meal we are joined to him and to one another as a holy people.

**Laura:** Gracious God pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon this bread and wine. Make us one with Christ and all who share this meal. Unite us in faith – encourage us with hope – inspire us to love, that we may serve as your faithful disciples. The one whom the universe could not contain is now present to us in this bread.

**Mitch:** The one who redeemed us and calls us by name now reaches out to us in this cup.

**Laura:** The bread of life...

**Mitch:** The cup of grace...

**Laura:** We remember and share with thanksgiving these gifts in which God comes to us so that we may come to God.

† Prayer / the Lord's Prayer Mitch

**...*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, forever. Amen***

➤ ***May the God of hope go with us every day*** 726

Sharing the Peace of Christ Mitch

**Picnic and Activities!**