

BEFORE WE WORSHIP, WE REFLECT ..,

The parable Jesus shares today tells of a farmer who plants his supply of seeds in a variety of places. The seeds fall on hard ground, on rocky ground, in amongst the weeds, and finally on good soil. God is like that farmer, planting lots of love in our hearts ... but someone has hurt us, so the love doesn't grow ... or, sometimes we're too busy or think about too many other things, and we don't have time for God's love ... and sometimes we're really happy when we feel God's love, but later we forget all about it. But sometimes – and this is what we strive for – we let God's love grow inside us. When that happens, we love other people. Then they know about God's love, too.

Today is a day to think about the seeds we plant. On what kind of “soil” are they being scattered? Do the seeds we plant show God's love or are they seeds of hurt, anger, jealousy, greed, apathy, and other emotions and behaviours that separate us from God and from one another?

SERVICE OF WORSHIP

JULY 16, 2023 – SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

▲ = Please stand in body or in spirit.

MUSIC TO GATHER US IN: “O Father, Hear My Morning Prayer”

sung by Janet Couch and Gwen Hansford

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

WELCOME AND SHARING IN COMMUNITY LIFE

CENTERING (a time of silence in preparation for worship)

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

One: Jesus is the Light of the World!

All: May he shine through us every day.

GATHERING MUSIC: "Surely the Presence" (sing twice)

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place

I can feel his mighty power and his grace

I can hear the brush of angel's wings

I see glory on each face

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: We come to give thanks for the Spirit that draws us together:

**All: for the fresh breeze of summer, the rain that nourishes new life,
the warmth of the sun that gives health to our living;**

One: for holidays and holy days, for friends and family,
for a world at play;

All: and for the faith that reminds us of the precious quality of life.

One: We celebrate the presence of God in all things.

All: We come to worship God.

OPENING PRAYER (said together)

O God, we gather together in your presence with expectation, hungry for an encounter with you, eager to hear your Word. Open our eyes and ears and hearts to the presence of your Holy Spirit. May the seeds of your Word scattered among us this morning fall on fertile soil. May they take root in our hearts and lives, and produce an abundant harvest of good words and deeds. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and our Lord. Amen.

▲ HYMN: "Come In, Come In and Sit Down"

**Come in, come in and sit down
You are a part of the family
We are lost and we are found
And we are a part of the family**

**You know the reason why you came
Yet no reason can explain
So share in the laughter and cry in the pain
For we are a part of the family**

**Come in, come in and sit down
You are a part of the family
We are lost and we are found
And we are a part of the family
God is with us in this place
like a Mother's warm embrace
We're all forgiven by God's grace
For we are a part of the family**

**Come in, come in and sit down
You are a part of the family
We are lost and we are found
And we are a part of the family**

**There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine
We are the branches, Christ is the vine
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine
But we are a part of the family**

**Come in, come in and sit down
You are a part of the family
We are lost and we are found
And we are a part of the family**

**There's rest for the weary and health for us all
There's a yoke that is easy and a burden that's small
So come in and worship and answer the call
For we are a part of the family**

**Come in, come in and sit down
You are a part of the family
We are lost and we are found
And we are a part of the family**

INVITATION TO WHOLENESS AND RIGHT RELATIONSHIP

If we want to truly live in God's presence, we must live as God's faithful people. Let us begin by confessing the mistakes we have made, the wrongs we have done, the people we have hurt, knowing that God hears and forgives.

PRAYER FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS (said together)

God, in our baptism we are called to be one with Christ, claimed as your children, and commissioned to a ministry of love, peace and justice. But in the day to day of life there are times when we struggle to live out those realities. In our baptism we embrace the task of bringing your hope to reality. But in the daily grind of life there are times when we fall into despair. For the times when we could have done more to be people of hope and love, we ask for strength. For the times we have slipped in living out our Baptismal reality, we ask forgiveness. Amen.

(A brief time of silent reflection.)

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S NEVER-ENDING GRACE AND MERCY

One: The God who is present at our Baptism is present in every aspect of our lives: there to forgive, to challenge, and to encourage. We are a forgiven people, loved unconditionally, and made whole.

All: **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

HYMN: "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise" (verses 1 and 2) VU #444

**Child of blessing, child of promise,
Baptized with the Spirit's sign:
With this water God has sealed you
Unto love and grace divine.**

**Child of love, our love's expression,
Love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
Into joy and laughter lead.**

PRESENTATION OF THE CHILD FOR BAPTISM *(George Harry, Board Chair)*

On behalf of the Official Board here at Reynolds Creek United Church, I present Layla Adeline Percival and Oliver Edison Percival for initiation into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism.

THE NARRATIVE

Hear these words from the stories of our faith:

"People brought little children to Jesus, for him to lay his hand on them and say a prayer. The disciples turned them away, but Jesus said: 'Let the little children alone, and do not stop them coming to me, for it is to such as these that the reign of God belongs.' Then he laid his hands on them..."

Baptism is the church's way of celebrating and naming the grace of God living in every one of God's children. It is the way we initiate new members into the life of the universal community of faith. And it marks the entry point into the life-time pilgrimage of following in the Way of Jesus.

NAMING OF THE CHILDREN

One: Michael and Kathleen, what are the names of this child?

(The parents respond, "Layla Adeline.")

Child of God, born of love, surrounded by love, one with all that lives, we now name you Layla Adeline. Take this name and make it your own as you travel your journey of life.

One: Michael and Kathleen, what do you ask of God's church and this Community of Faith for Layla Adeline?

Parents: We ask that she be baptized into the faith and family of God's love.

One: We welcome you to this family and this community, Layla. We rejoice that you are here.

One: Michael and Kathleen, what are the names of this child?

(The parents respond, "Oliver Edison.")

Child of God, born of love, surrounded by love, one with all that lives, we now name you Oliver Edison. Take this name and make it your own as you travel your journey of life.

One: Michael and Kathleen, what do you ask of God's church and this Community of Faith for Oliver Edison?

Parents: We ask that he be baptized into the faith and family of God's love.

One: We welcome you to this family and this community, Oliver. We rejoice that you are here.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

One: God is the heart of life.

All: And we are the heartbeat.

One: May our hearts be filled with thanks and praise and songs of joy.

All: We rejoice in the miracle of life and delight in our participation.

One: We give thanks for the gift of water, a precious commodity. Water is everything. Water is life. We claim the joy of water and the way it sustains and nourishes us.

**All: Let it flow and pour and sprinkle for all people,
that all may know each day the gift of God in water.**

One: The biblical stories also talk of the preciousness of water. These stories remind us that water is a blessing and the source and strength of life. Without it, humanity and all that is created could not survive. And our stories remind us that God's way is the way of compassion and love.

God's love, like a shower of rain in drought, awakens the sleeping seed within the soul and coaxes it to blossom. God's love, like a wading pool, inspires the responsive love of children, jumping, splashing each other, shivering with wet delight. God's love, like a hot shower after a long day's work, cleanses us, reawakens us. God's love, like waves crashing on the shore, breaks in on us and enfolds us, leaving us feeling vital and refreshed.

The water is poured into the font

So let's give thanks for this love of God that reaches out to us in what we say and do in love for these children whom we are welcoming into our midst.

We gather to pray, believing that God prays in us. We acknowledge our responsibility to ensure we use the resources of water well, and make available future resources for our children and their children. We give thanks for the gift of this water. May it be the birthing waters of a new and holy life.

All: Amen.

THE ACTION OF BAPTISM

One: Layla Adeline, in the touch of this water, the ancient symbol of new life, I baptize you into the love, service and joy of God:
(the sign of the cross is made on Layla's forehead)
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... our Source of Life, constant Companion, and Guide.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

One: Layla Adeline, may the presence of the Spirit of Love in you be nurtured and constantly affirmed by your family, your friends, and by your community of faith. May you know God's blessing, this day and always.

All: Amen.

One: Oliver Edison, in the touch of this water, the ancient symbol of new life, I baptize you into the love, service and joy of God:

(The sign of the cross is made on Oliver's forehead.)

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit ... our Source of Life, constant Companion, and Guide.

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

One: Oliver Edison, may the presence of the Spirit of Love in you be nurtured and constantly affirmed by your family, your friends, and by your community of faith. May you know God's blessing, this day and always.

All: Amen.

DECLARATION OF THE PARENTS' INTENT

One: Michael and Kathleen, I ask you now to respond to God's graciousness to Layla and Oliver by making these promises:
Will you provide for Layla and Oliver a welcoming home of love and trust?

Parents: We will, with God's help.

One: Will you help Layla and Oliver grow in their understanding and appreciation of a broad religious faith?

Parents: We will, with God's help.

One: Will you encourage Layla and Oliver to reach out to others with love and compassion?

Parents: We will, with God's help.

COMMITMENT BY THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

One: Each of us knows the need for support and care as we share in a journey of faith. As this family gathers around this font and this water, symbols of belonging and community, let us stand as we are able, and as individuals and as a community of faith pledge our care for them.

▲ All : **We stand as witnesses to the commitment this family has made this day. And we pledge ourselves to their support and care, in whatever way we can, as they discover the ways that the Spirit unfolds for them.**

One: Let us join in a statement of our communal faith.

▲ All: **We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the Spirit. We trust in God. We are called to be the Church: to celebrate God's presence, to love and serve others; to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.**

Please be seated.

BAPTISMAL PRAYER

One: Bless these newly baptized children. May Layla and Oliver always know that the Source of all Love lives and comes to unique expression, in them.

All: Amen.

One: Bless this faithful people. May we all live in love. And may we continue to draw encouragement from the faith which connects each one of us and our loving community with the mystery we call 'God.'

All: Amen.

One: This is a day of great celebration for Layla Adeline and Oliver Edison and their family.

All: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

PRESENTATION OF THE BAPTISMAL CANDLE

Layla and Oliver, may this candle remind you throughout your life of Jesus, who opened peoples' minds and hearts to see the 'light' of God's presence within them.

Michael and Kathleen, I encourage you to light these candles each year to help tell Layla and Oliver the story of their baptisms as you remember this day.

CONGREGATIONAL WELCOME

(The children are walked around the sanctuary by their parents and introduced to the congregation.)

PRESENTATION OF THE BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE AND BIBLE

HYMN: "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise" (verses 1 and 2) VU #444

Child of joy, our deepest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came;
Back to God we humbly give you,
Live as one who bears Christ's name.

Child of God, the loving parent,
Learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

READINGS FROM OUR FAITH TRADITION

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

For the Word of God in scripture,
For the Word of God within us,
For the Word of God among us,
Thanks be to God!

SERMON: “Scattering Seeds”

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus,” VU #357
sung by Janet Couch and Gwen Hansford

INVITATION TO INVEST IN GOD’S MISSION

All our gifts, resources, and blessings come from our Generous God, Source of Life and Creator of all that was, all that is, and all that is yet to be. This morning we have the opportunity to return a portion of these gifts in grateful generosity for the ministry of the kingdom.

▲ OFFERING HYMN: “What Can I Do” (sing twice) MV #191

**What can I do? What can I sing?
What can I say? What can I sing?
I'll sing with joy, I'll say a prayer,
I'll bring my love, I'll do my share.**

▲ DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING (said together)

Holy One, we thank you for revealing yourself to us and through us. Receive these gifts given from grateful hearts and magnify them for the needs of your creation. May they bring light for all who wander in the shadows of loneliness. May they bring healing for painful situations where comfort is needed. May they offer the gift of community for all who are isolated and feel forgotten. In Jesus' name, we pray Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One: "O God, hear our prayer "

All: and, in your love, answer.

▲ **HYMN:** "I was there to hear your borning cry"

VU #644

**I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.**

**I was there when you were but a child,
with a faith to suit you well;
In a blaze of light you wandered off
to find where demons dwell.**

**When you heard the wonder of the Word
I was there to cheer you on;
You were raised to praise the living Lord,
to whom you now belong.**

**If you find someone to share your time
and you join your hearts as one,
I'll be there to make your verses rhyme
from dusk 'till rising sun.**

**In the middle ages of your life,
not too old, no longer young,
I'll be there to guide you through the night,
complete what I've begun.**

**When the evening gently closes in,
and you shut your weary eyes,
I'll be there as I have always been
with just one more surprise.**

**I was there to hear your borning cry,
I'll be there when you are old.
I rejoiced the day you were baptized,
to see your life unfold.**

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

One: From this time of worship, God scatters us into the world,

All: like seeds upon waiting soil.

One: From this time of worship, Christ calls us to reach out,

All: like sun and rain upon waiting seeds.

One: From this time of worship, the Holy Spirit encourages us to grow,

All: like fruitful trees, greening in God's presence.

One: May you be rooted in God's love, showered with Christ's peace,
and empowered by the Holy Spirit to go out into the world on
the winds of hope.

Many: And you as well.

All: Amen.

▲ HYMN: "Never Ending Joy"

MV #40

**Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy!**

**God of every tribe, every language,
God of every river and sea,
God of every mountain and island,
you bring joy to me:**

**Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy!**

**God of every hill, every valley,
God of every leaf, every tree,
God of every cloud, every raindrop,
you bring joy to me:**

**Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy!**

**God of every song, every story,
God of every captive set free,
God of every dance, every footstep,
you bring joy to me:**

**Never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy,
never ending joy, never ending joy, never ending joy!**