

September 24, 2023
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost / Proper 20 / Creation 3

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude:

Lighting the Christ Candle

Moment of Silent Reflection

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...

Call to Worship

All humankind is one vast family,
this world, our home.

We sleep beneath one roof,
the starry sky.

We warm ourselves before one hearth,
the blazing sun.

Upon one soil we stand,
**and breathe one air, and drink one water,
and walk the night beneath one luminescent moon.**

The children of one God are we,
**brothers and sisters of one blood,
members of one worldwide family of God.**

Come, let us worship God.

Hymn: VU 410 "This Day God Gives Me"

This day God gives me strength of high heaven,
sun and moon shining, flame in my hearth,
flashing of lightning, wind in its swiftness,
deeps of the ocean, firmness of earth.

This day God sends me strength to sustain me,
might to uphold me, wisdom as guide.
Your eyes are watchful, your ears are listening,
your lips are speaking, Friend at my side.

God's way is my way, God's shield is round me,
God's host defends me, saving from ill.
Angels of heaven, drive from me always
all that would harm me, stand by me still.


Rising, I thank you, mighty and strong One,
King of creation, giver of rest,
firmly confessing Threeness of Persons,
Oneness of Godhead, Trinity blest.

Opening Prayer (unison)

We come, O God. We come to sing our praise to you. We come to worship you. We come too to pour out our grievances. We come with expectations of how we ought to be rewarded for our faithfulness and for our works. We come to complain about our current circumstances. We want to go back to the way things used to be. We come to complain about those who are rewarded without deserving it. We come to complain about those who are not punished justly. Why do they deserve grace? Grace! Grace is yours to pour out in abundance on all. Forgive us for our harsh judgments. Teach us to judge as you judge. Teach us to offer grace as you offer grace, with no strings attached, that we might offer it to the world. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Anthem/Solo:

Time for the Young and the Young @ 

Hymn: VU 271 "There's a Wideness in God's Mercy"

There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice
which is more than liberty.

There is no place where earth's sorrows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's failings
have such gracious judgement given.

There is plentiful redemption
in the blood that Christ has shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.

Troubled souls, why will you scatter
like a crowd of frightened sheep?
Foolish hearts, why will you wander
from a love so true and deep?

For the love of God is broader
than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45 VU 828-829 *Parts 1 and 4*

Refrain: Bless God, my soul. Hallelujah!

Give thanks and call on God's name.

Make known to the nations what God has done.

**Sing, O sing the songs of praise;
tell of all God's wonderful deeds.**

Exult in God's holy name;

let those who seek God be joyful in heart.

R: Bless God, my soul. Hallelujah!

Turn for help to the One who is your strength;

seek God's presence continually.

**Remember the marvels the Most High has done,
the wonders and judgements God has given,**

O children of Abraham and Sarah, God's servants,

O offspring of Israel, chosen of God.

R: Bless God, my soul. Hallelujah!

You are the eternal God,

your justice reaches every corner of the earth.

You are ever mindful of your covenant,

the promise you gave to a thousand generations,

**the covenant you made with Sarah and Abraham,
the oath you gave to Isaac.**

You confirmed it for Jacob as binding.

To Israel your everlasting covenant you declared,

**"To you I give the land of Canaan,
as your appointed inheritance."**

R: Bless God, my soul. Hallelujah!

You led Israel out, with spoil of silver and gold.

Among the tribes not one fell behind.

**The Egyptians were glad when they went,
for dread of Israel had fallen upon them.**

You spread cloud as a screen,

and fire as light by night.

The people asked, and you sent them quail;

you filled them with bread from heaven.

**You opened a rock and water gushed out;
It flowed like a river through the arid land.**

R: Bless God, my soul. Hallelujah!

For you remembered the sacred promise

you made to Abraham and Sarah, your servants.

**You led out your people rejoicing;
your chosen ones with songs of gladness.**

You gave them the lands of nations,

**they took possession where others had toiled,
that they might keep your laws and obey your teachings.**

R: Bless God, my soul. Hallelujah!

Scripture: Matthew 20:1-16 The Labourers in the Vineyard

“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire labourers for his vineyard. After agreeing with the labourers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. When he went out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. When he went out again about noon and about three o’clock, he did the same. And about five o’clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ When those hired about five o’clock came, each of them received a denarius. Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

*The other readings for this week are: **Exodus 12:1-14; Romans 13:8-14***

Meditation: “That’s not fair!”

Hymn VU 223 “Eternal, Unchanging, We Sing”

Eternal, Unchanging, we sing to your praise:
your mercies are endless, and righteous your ways;
your servants proclaim the renown of your name
who rules over all and is ever the same.

Again we rejoice in the world you have made,
your mighty creation in beauty arrayed,
we thank you for life, and we praise you for joy,
for love and for hope that no power can destroy.

We praise you for Jesus, our Master and Lord,
the might of his Spirit, the truth of his word,
his comfort in sorrow, his patience in pain,
the faith sure and steadfast that Jesus shall reign.

We Respond To God’s Grace

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord’s Prayer

Loving God, you cause rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike.

Hear our prayers:

for your church and your ministers....

especially Dorchester United Church and their spiritual leader, the Rev. Mark Perry....

may they know your blessing, and share it with all whom they come into contact with;

for the hungry and the overfed,... may all have enough;

for the mockers and the mourners, especially the friends and family of Marion Wallace.....

may we find healing and learn to laugh together;

for the victims and the oppressors,... may we share power wisely;

for the peacemakers and the warmongers,... may clear truth and love lead us to harmony;

for the silenced and the propagandists,... may we speak our own words in truth;

for the unemployed and the overworked,... may our mark on this earth be kindly and creative;

for the secure and the troubled... may we live together as wounded healers;

for the homeless and the pampered,... may our homes be simple, warm, and welcoming;

for the healthy and the ill, especially we think of

and their loved ones, and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

may we offer the gift of healing and wholeness to one another;

for the vibrant and the dying the world over, especially those who live in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Peru,

may we all die to sin and live to love.

All this we pray in the name of the one who taught us to pray, saying,

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come,

your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil:

for yours is the kingdom the power and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Like the labourers in today's parable we feel we should be rewarded according to our efforts. We resent it when others receive the same rewards for lesser, or even no effort, yet that is exactly how God works. God's grace is offered to all, regardless of our efforts. None of us is entitled to salvation, yet it is offered, as a gift, to all. Likewise, the offerings we present to God are offered without conditions, for the benefit of God's kingdom. Our tithes and offerings will now be accepted, via CanadaHelps and Canada Post, PAR, the offering plate or the mailslot.

Offertory Hymn *to the tune VU 232 Hymn to Joy*

Joyful, joyful, Lord we bring you gifts that you can use today.

Take them, bless them, may your kingdom spread to all the world, we pray.

We are here: our time, our talents, we would dedicate as well.

May we show Christ's love within us, by our lives our faith to tell.

Prayer of Dedication

God, you bless us with the things that we need and the hope that we seek. Out of our care for your creation and for your people everywhere, we offer these gifts. Guide us in our living, bless us in our service, and use these gifts in the fulfillment of your realm of justice and righteousness. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Hymn VU 601 "The Church of Christ in Every Age"

The church of Christ in every age,
beset by change but Spirit led,
must claim and test its heritage
and keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street
the victims of injustice cry
for shelter and for bread to eat,
and never live until they die.

Then let the servant church arise,
a caring church that longs to be
a partner in Christ's sacrifice,
and clothed in Christ's humanity.

For Christ alone, whose blood was shed,
can cure the fever in our blood,
and teach us how to share our bread
and feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve
in full obedience to our Lord:
to care for all without reserve
and spread Christ's liberating word.

Commissioning and Benediction

As we leave this time of worship,

Be:

Unafraid to question,
Relentless in your search for the truth,
Willing to act on what you discover,
Patient when the journey is rough,
And joyful when you reach your goal.

And every step of the way,
Know that God will be your companion.

May it be so. Amen.

Response: "Go Now in Peace"

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there supporting us with love.
Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.
Amen, amen, amen.

Postlude:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALL:

Register NOW! Antler River Watershed Regional Council will be holding a workshop regarding the Remit to establish an autonomous National Indigenous Organization within the United Church of Canada. The workshop will be held live at Siloam United Church in London, and via Zoom on Friday, October 20th from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. To register, go to:

https://united-church.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0lceuvqDopHde6L73B_u41tFjzwB6oJDwK#/registration

More information can be found on the website - <https://arwrcucc.ca/> Search under “GET INVOLVED” and click on “REMIT 1”

The **Salt of the Earth Calendar** for 2023-2024 is now available by order. If you would like to order a calendar, please let Rev. Mark know as he is working on getting enough orders together to get a bulk discount.

Thorndale United Church is holding a **Beef Supper** on Tuesday, October 17 at the Thorndale Community Centre, 4:30 – 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available until October 3, by calling 519-461-0463. Adults - \$25; Child 6-14 - \$10; Child 5 and under – free!

DORCHESTER:

Congregational Meeting: There will be a congregational meeting following worship today to approve our profiles and new position description as we work towards changing the terms of call for our minister (increasing his hours and presence).

Wanted: Volunteers to greet people as they arrive at church, light the Christ candle, and take the offering forward. Each week one person will cover all three tasks. A sign-up list is located across from the elevator, outside the front of the sanctuary.

Coffee Time Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. BYOLC (bring your own lawn chair)

UNION:

Indwell Invitation

Dear Friends at Union United Church,

We're excited to invite you to the Grand Opening of The Station. We welcomed our first tenants to their new homes last month, and individuals are continuing to move in. Please join us on Friday, September 29 at 10am at 16 Queen Street to celebrate 45 new apartment homes for people seeking health, wellness and belonging.

Meet the staff, see the spaces, and hear from our partners as we mark the opening of Indwell's second supportive housing program in St. Thomas. Please register by September 27 at –

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-station-grand-opening-tickets-714865661437?aff=oddtcreator>

Outreach Focus until the end of October

Inn Out of the Cold: bath towels, blankets for twin size beds, shaving cream/gel, razors, sunscreen, sunglasses, nail care products, running shoes, art supplies (colouring books, pencils) fruit & pudding cups, apple sauce cups, water bottles / juice boxes, cereal / granola bars, coffee, teas, hot chocolate, sugar and powdered coffee whitener, paper cups (no lids) napkins and plastic cutlery.

Wanted: Volunteers to greet people as they arrive at church, light the Christ candle, and take the offering forward. Each week one person will cover all three tasks. A sign-up list is located at the rear of the sanctuary.

LECTIONARY READINGS:

October 1 - 18th after Pentecost, Proper 21, Creation 4 – Worldwide Communion

Exodus 17:1-17; Psalm 78:1-4, 12-16; Philippians 2:1-13; Matthew 21:23-32