

DORCHESTER UNITED CHURCH  
PENTECOST 20 PROPER 23  
OCTOBER 15, 2023

WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

**Prelude**

**Land Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge that we worship and reside on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee and the Anishnaabe peoples. It is in the spirit of reconciliation and right relationships, and working towards this reality that we come to worship the One who will empower and guide us with grace.

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Who will strike the match?

**Soon it will burst into flame.**

We watch as it begins to glow.

**Let us gather around for God has come among us.**

**Moment of Silent Reflection**

**Birthdays, Celebrations, Life and Work of the Congregation**

**Call to Worship**

We are called to be in awe of God's creation.

**Awesome and magnificent is the handiwork of the living God.**

Behold the people of God and see how diverse they are.

**We belong to many tribes and nations.**

Let us celebrate the gift of diversity.

**God has come among us with promises that are always new.**

**Hymn VU 240 Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven**

(to be sung from Voices United hymnbook, not licensed to publish)

**Opening Prayer**

We enter with praise for God is our joy.

**In the midst of our doubt God deepens our faith.**

We may be overcome by despair, but God is our hope.

**In the midst of our fear, God is our strength.**

As we seek to worship, God is our presence.

WE ARE BLESSED BY GOD

**Time for the Young and the Young at Heart**

## The Prayer of Jesus (The Lord's Prayer)

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.  
Amen.**

Psalm 106 VU 830 (read responsive, sung refrain)

*Refrain: "O give thanks to God, whose love endures forever."*

O give thanks for God is good, God's love endures forever.  
**Who can recount your mighty acts, O God, or tell of all your praise?**

*Refrain: "O give thanks to God, whose love endures forever."*

Blessed are those who act justly, and always do what is right.  
**Remember me, God when you show favour to your people,  
And come to me with your saving help.**  
May I see prosperity of your chosen;  
**May I share the joy of your nation, and exult with the people you have made your own.**

*Refrain: "O give thanks to God, whose love endures forever."*

We have sinned like our ancestors;  
**We have erred, and acted wickedly.**  
They made a young bull at Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.  
**They exchanged the glory of God for the image of a creature that feeds on grass.**  
They forgot that you were the God who had saved them by your mighty acts in Egypt,  
**The wonders you had done in the land of Ham, awesome deeds at the Red Sea.**  
You would have destroyed them had not Moses, your chosen one, stood in the breach.  
**He turned back your wrath from their destruction.**

*Refrain: "O give thanks to God, whose love endures forever."*

## First Testament: Exodus 32: 1-14 The Golden Calf

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." <sup>2</sup> Aaron said to them, "Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them to me." <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> He took these from them, formed them in a mold,<sup>[a]</sup> and cast an image of a calf, and they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" <sup>5</sup> When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD." <sup>6</sup> They rose early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being, and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to revel.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD said to Moses, “Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; <sup>8</sup> they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ ” <sup>9</sup> The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. <sup>10</sup> Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation.”

<sup>11</sup> But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. <sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ” <sup>14</sup> And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Other Readings: Philippians 4: 1-9 Matthew 22: 1-14

### **Hymn VU 288 Great is Thy Faithfulness**

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God our Creator;  
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;  
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;  
as Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

#### *Refrain:*

Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Great is Thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided:  
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest;  
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:  
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide. [Refrain]

### **Sermon**

### **“IDOLATRY”**

### **Hymn VU 690 From the Slave Pens of the Delta**

From the slave pens of the delta, from the ghettos on the Nile,  
Let my people seek their freedom in the wilderness awhile:  
So God spoke out from Sinai, so God spoke and it was done,  
and a people crossed the waters, toward the rising of the sun.

From the aging shrines and structures, from the cloister and the aisle,  
Let my people seek their freedom in the wilderness awhile,  
So the son of God has spoken, and the storm clouds are unfurled,  
For his people must be scattered to be servants in the world.

When we murmur on the mountains for the old Egyptian plains,  
When we miss our ancient bondage and the hope, the promise, wanes,  
Then the rock shall yield its water and the manna fall by night,  
And with visions of a future shall we march toward the light.

In the maelstrom of the nations, in the journey into space,  
In the clash of generations, in the hungering for grace,  
In our agony and glory, we are called to newer ways,  
By the God of our tomorrows who is God of earth's todays.

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE**

### **Prayer of the People**

Gracious and bountiful God, in the turning of the season we see the richness of your all-encompassing love. You provide for all your people as the harvests are gathered in, but while many have shared in the abundance, others have faced hardship and want. Such disparities remind us that we can never be complacent in the face of injustice. In your great mercy and compassion show your deep concern for those who struggle to find adequate resources to meet each day's needs.

The beauty all around us as the leaves turn and fall to the ground seems to belie what is happening in places of dire and extreme suffering. Great parent of the human family, look with pity upon those whose hot tears turn into burning anger when their loved ones become pawns in the hands of those with insidious designs. You designed the planet to be our home but we have not cared for it. Overcome by selfish motives, we have allowed an overweening pride to cloud our desires.

We want the prophetic summons to sound again in our ears that we may move to put all things right and make all hearts glad. We have dammed up the mighty stream of justice and it no longer flows. The cries for a better world have gone unheard and we no longer dream of city and garden. What we once imagined to be ideal no longer holds promise for us. Show us how we can restore your vision to a world that has lost its sight and is covered in the darkness and shadow of evil.

There are shadows that seek revenge and shadows that call us to ignore the pain and hunger of others as long as we are full and successful. May we seek your way with all our hearts, love you with all our minds and follow you all our days. AMEN

### **Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

We in North America have been blessed beyond measure, but we continue to complain about the escalating cost of everything from food to housing to transportation. While this is true, a quick comparison with how the 'other half' is living makes us realise that we can and ought to follow John Wesley's advice to 'earn more, save more and give more.'

## Offertory Hymn Vu 538 For the Gift of Creation

For the gift of creation,  
the gift of your love,  
and the gift of the Spirit by which we live, we thank you and  
give you the fruit of our hands. May your grace be proclaimed,  
by the gifts that we give.

## Prayer of Dedication

There is peace beyond all our conflict.

**A song of hope is heard above our weeping.**

Above the cries of hate, there is a song of love.

**Bless these gifts, O God, that we may sing your song.**

## Hymn VU 426 Saviour, Again to Your Dear Name

(to be sung from Voices United hymnbook, not licensed to publish)

## Commissioning and Benediction

Our God has come down from the mountain.

**We will be a haven for those in distress.**

God is here among us.

**We will lift up the weak.**

God's presence will not fail us.

**We will fill the longing of those in need.**

## Hymn Closing Response

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