

DORCHESTER UNITED CHURCH

October 29, 2023

Order of Service

L Van Harten

WE GATHER IN GOD'S PRESENCE

Prelude Meditation on "How Great Thou Art"

Swedish Tune/Steward Hine Setting by John Carter

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

Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Call to Worship

The world blares out: bigger, stronger, greater.

And we wonder why we feel smaller, weaker, less.

We look around at others and notice newer, smarter, more together.

We look inside ourselves and fear we are not enough.

We come today seeking God's presence,

seeking to be reminded that throughout every struggle, God is with us.

God know us in all our frailty.

God knows us with all our failings.

And yet God loves us.

With care and compassion, God holds us close.

With trust and encouragement,

God calls us as capable servants.

Opening Hymn VU #356 Seek Ye First the Kingdom

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And His righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, Alleluia

We do not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, Alleluia

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
Seek, and ye shall find.
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, Alleluia

Opening Prayer

Amid the boastful words,
your hopeful Word endures, O God.
Amid the self-serving words,
Your selfless Word endures, O God.
Amid the uncaring words,
Your compassionate Word endures, O God.
Amid the apathetic words,
Your Word of love endures, O God.
Hallowed be your Name. Amen

WE ARE BLESSED BY GOD

Psalm 14 VU #868 Pt 1

Refrain: "Sing to God in great thanksgiving."

How good it is to sing praises to God,
how pleasant to laud the Most High.
You are building Jerusalem, O God,

And gathering the scattered exiles of Israel.

**You are healing the broken-hearted,
and binding up their wounds.**

You count the number of the stars,
and call them all by their names.

**Great are you, O God, and mighty your power;
yes, and your wisdom is infinite.**

You raise up the lowly,

and bring down the wicked to dust.

Refrain: "Sing to God in great thanksgiving."

Sing to God in thanksgiving;
make music on the harp to our God,

**who covers the sky with clouds,
who prepares rain for the earth,
who makes the hills green with grass.**

You give the cattle their food, and the young ravens when they cry.

**You set no store by the power of a horse,
nor by the strength of a warrior's thighs.**

But your delight is in those who revere you,

in those who rely on your mercy.

Refrain: "Sing to God in great thanksgiving."

Scripture Reading

Mark 1:32-45

That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

A man with leprosy^[a] came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

Jesus was indignant.^[b] He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."⁴⁵ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Hebrews 12:1-3

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Message "Joy to the World"

(a message adapted from "*Ministry: Authorized or Unauthorized*", a sermon by Rev Michael Wagenmann, PhD)

Hymn of Response VU#562 Jesus Calls Us

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea;
day by day His sweet voice sounding,
saying, "Christian, follow me."

Long ago apostles heard it,
by the Galilean Lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for Jesus' sake.

Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, "Christian, love me more."

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still He calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these."

Jesus calls us: by your mercies,
Savior, may we hear your call;
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Life and Work of the Congregation, Birthdays, and Celebrations

Prayers of the People followed by The Lord's Prayer

Holy God, you have called us to be a community grounded in the gospel and commissioned to live in its light. But we confess that we often have chosen the ways of the world, rather than the way of your kingdom. We may find ourselves seeking out the favour of the wealthy and powerful while ignoring the need in our community and around the world. So often our faith does not translate into action. Help us, loving God, to be merciful and compassionate, to be open to the gifts of your kingdom that we discover, not in the people the world tells us are important, but right in our midst, in those who need us most and in those we need the most.

Merciful God, we pray for all who are ill or dying, awaiting medical treatment, or recovering from medical intervention, and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

Our hearts now turn to the Middle East: (prayers by Rose Berger, from *Sojourners*)

God of Comfort,
send your Spirit to encompass all those whose lives
are torn apart by violence and death in Israel and Palestine.
You are the Advocate of the oppressed
and the One whose eye is on the sparrow.
Let arms reach out in healing, rather than aggression.
Let hearts mourn rather than militarize.

God of Justice,
give strength to those whose long work for a just peace
might seem fruitless now. Strengthen their resolve.
Do not let them feel alone. Show us how to support their work
and bolster their courage. Guide religious leaders to model
unity and reconciliation across lines of division.
Guide political leaders to listen with their hearts as they seek peace and
pursue it.
Help all people choose the rigorous path of just peace.

God of Love,
we lift up Palestine and Israel — its people, its land, its creatures.
War is a monster that consumes everything in its path.
Let us burn incense, not children. Let us break bread, not bodies.
Let us plant olive groves, not cemeteries.
We beg for love and compassion to prevail
on all your holy mountains.

God of Hope,
we lift up the cities of the region: Gaza City and Tel Aviv,
Ramallah and Ashkelon, Deir El Balah and Sderot,
so long divided, yet so filled with life and creativity.
Come again to breathe peace on your peoples
that all may recognize you.

God of Mercy,
even now work on the hearts of combatants
to choose life over death, reconciliation over retaliation,
restoration over destruction. All people, Israelis and Palestinians,
deserve to live in peace and unafraid, with a right to determine
their future together.

God of the Nations,
let not one more child or elder be sacrificed on altars of political
expediency.
Keep safe all people from unjust leaders who would exploit
vulnerability for their own distorted ends.
Give wise discernment to those making decisions to pursue peace.
Provide them insight into fostering well-being, freedom, and thriving for all.
Teach all of us to resolve injustices with righteousness, not rockets.

Guard our hearts against retaliation, and give us hearts for love alone.

Strengthen our faith in you, O God of All Flesh,
even when we don't have clear answers,
so that we may still offer ourselves peaceably
for the cause of peace.

Now let us pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, For ever and ever.
Amen.**

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S GRACE

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

Too often we believe we are the chosen ones;
we believe we are the ones God raises up and fills and protects.
However, in a global context, we are the rich, the proud, and the powerful.
Here is the good news. When we choose to generously share our
wealth—to feed and house, to comfort and heal, to seek justice and to
resist evil—we unite ourselves with the love of God. Let us share our gifts,
then, that all may know God's love.
Our offerings will now be accepted, via Canada Helps, PAR, the offering
plate or the mail slot.

Offertory Hymn VU #538 For the Gifts 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

Gracious God, with thanks and praise, we bring our offerings. We ask that these gifts be used to bring joy to our communities and joy to the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the One you sent to bring joy to everyone.

Amen

Commissioning and Benediction

We are called to follow Christ and to lead change in this community and this world; to accept Christ's protection and to offer protection to others. Go from here to live out good news, with God's tender blessing.

Closing Hymn VU# 313 God, Whose Almighty Word

God, whose almighty Word
Chaos and darkness heard
And took their flight:
Hear us, we humbly pray,
And where the gospel day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
Let there be light!

Jesus, who once came to bring,
On your redeeming wing,
Healing and sight,
Health to the troubled mind,
Sight to the Spirit-blind:
Oh, now to humankind
Let there be light!

Spirit of truth and love,
Life-giving, holy dove,
Speed forth your flight;
Move on the water's face,
Bearing the lamp of grace,
And in earth's darkest place
Let there be light!

Holy and blessed Three,
Glorious Trinity,
Wisdom, love, might!
Boundless as ocean's tide,
Rolling in fullest pride,
Through the earth, far and wide,
Let there be light!

Postlude “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring”

Johann Sebastian Bach Arr by Jan Sanborn