



“The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like lambs.”  
Psalm 114

**Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost, September 17, 2023**  
**Manor Road United Church**  
**A congregation of the United Church of Canada**  
**240 Manor Road East, Toronto, ON, M4S 1R8**  
[www.manorroadunitedchurch.com](http://www.manorroadunitedchurch.com)

# **Service of Worship Season of Creation Blessing of the Animals September 17, 2023**

“Our work, rather, is to help reawaken the sense of the sacred that is already deep in the human soul, our primordial relationship with nature, our ancient mother love of the earth.”

**John Phillip Newell**

**Responses and Prayers in bold type are for congregational participation.**

## **PRELUDE**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORY**

We gather for the season of creation, we honour the winds: of the north where we see the northern lights, the south where we meet tropical waves on sandy shores, of the west the land of setting sun and in the east where we meet the new day. We thank the many First Nations as our brothers and sisters and traditional inhabitants of the lands.

### **GATHERING MUSIC MV 14**

**“Where Two or Three Are Gathered”**

**Where two or three are gathered in my name,  
I am there, I am there.**

## **WORDS OF WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

People of God, bless the Lord, bless God's holy name.

**For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is God's steadfast love for us.**

## **HYMN VU 619**

**"Healer of Our Every Ill"**

**Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.**

**You who know our fears and sadness, grace with us your peace  
and gladness. Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts.**

**Healer of our every ill, light of each tomorrow,  
give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.**

**You who know each thought and feeling, teach us all our way of  
healing. Spirit of compassion, fill each heart.**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

God be with you.

**And also with you.**

God, our source and our salvation, in love you made us and by love  
you have redeemed us.

**Make your love for us bear fruit in our forgiveness of others,  
that in this life we may know your all-embracing compassion and  
in the world to come receive the everlasting joy of fellowship.**

**Amen**

## **LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE**

May the angels of light glisten for us this day. May the sparks of God's  
beauty dance in the eyes of those we love. May the universe be on  
fire with Presence for us this day.

**May the new sun's rising grace us with gratitude as we light the  
Christ candle. Let earth's greenness shine and its waters breathe  
with Spirit. Let heaven's winds stir the soil of our soul and fresh  
awakenings rise within us. Amen**

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Loving God, we confess that we have failed to live in harmony with our sisters and brothers. We have been self-righteous in our attitudes, closed-minded in our beliefs, and judgmental in our opinions.

**We have shunned those whose ways we do not understand, and we have despised those who do not endorse our convictions.** Forgive our sins of discord and conceit, and heal our divisiveness and quarreling.

**Help us to be charitable in our regard for others that we may dwell in peace. Amen**

## **SILENT REFLECTION**

### **ASSURANCE**

Friends, the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Amen**

### **SHARING CHRIST'S PEACE**

The Peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you!**

(Please share the peace of Christ with a hand wave)

### **\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE MV 33**

**“Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope”**

**Jesus came bringing us hope, Jesus came bringing us hope,  
Jesus came bringing us hope, hallelujah forevermore!**

**Jesus came bringing us love and joy, Jesus came bringing us  
love and joy, Jesus came bringing us love and joy, hallelujah  
forevermore!**

## **ENCOUNTERING THE CHILD WITHIN**

### **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS**

### **PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION**

Lord, by the power of your Holy Spirit open our understanding that we may receive the Word of life. **Amen**

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **1st Reading Genesis 50:15-21 Peter McNaughton**

50:15 Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?"

50:16 So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died,

50:17 'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

50:18 Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves."

50:19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God?"

50:20 Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today.

50:21 So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

### **2nd Reading Romans 14:1-12 Rasoul Rashidian**

14:1 Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions.

14:2 Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables.

14:3 Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them.

14:4 Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

14:5 Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds.

14:6 Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

14:7 We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves.

14:8 If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

14:9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

14:10 Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

14:11 For it is written, "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God."

14:12 So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

### **3rd Reading Matthew 18:21-35**

18:21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

18:22 Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

18:23 "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

18:24 When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him;

18:25 and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made.

18:26 So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.'

18:27 And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

18:28 But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe.'

18:29 Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

18:30 But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt.

18:31 When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place.

18:32 Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

18:33 Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?'

18:34 And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt.

18:35 So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

## **RESPONSE**

Hear the Wisdom told to us through the Ages.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **\*HYMN VU 589**

**"Lord, Speak to Me"**

**Lord, speak to me that I may speak in living echoes of your tone, as you have sought, so let me seek your straying children lost and lone.**

**O fill me with your fullness, Lord, until my very heart o'er flows in kindling thought and glowing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.**

## **SERMON "Say to Joseph"**

**The Rev Dr. John Joseph Mastandrea**

## **SILENT REFLECTION**

### **DIVERSITY CREED**

God loves queer people

God loves gay people

God loves lesbians

God loves straight people

**We believe that all individuals, including those who identify as 2SLGBTQIA, are created in God's image and deserve love, acceptance, and respect.**

God loves non-binary people

God loves trans people

God loves bi-sexuals and a-sexuals

God loves two-spirited people

**We affirm the sacred worth of individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities.**

Scripture tells us that God is love, and where love is, God is.

**We reject any theology or ideology that devalues or condemns 2SLGBTQIA identities and relationships.**

God loves each and every one of us.

**As followers of Jesus Christ, we affirm the sacred worth of ALL people.**

God loves you, and you, and you

God loves me

God loves ALL of us!

There is no justification for disrespecting, devaluing, hating, or harming any of God's children based on sexuality, gender, race, age, abilities or disabilities, economic status, or for any "reason" whatsoever.

All at once: **God loves you.**

## **OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND WORK**

### **OFFERTORY INSTRUMENTAL**

### **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE MV 191**

**"What Can I Do?"**

**What can I do? What can I bring? 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. I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.**

### **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

**It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, receive these gifts that we offer with grateful hearts and use our lives for the ministry of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear.

**Our righteousness will go before us, and the glory of God will be our rear guard.**



## **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE MV 62**

### **“There Is Room for All”**

**There is room for all in the shadow of God’s wing; there is room for all, sheltered in God’s love. And I rejoice and sing, “My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust.” There is room for all, there is room for all.**

We pray for those who are sick or in trouble. Heal their disease, relieve their distress, and return to them the joy of salvation. Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who suffer the violence of war or natural disaster. Bring an end to violence that destroys human flourishing; help us to live in peace with our neighbor and enable us to dwell in harmony with the earth.

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for children and for all who depend upon the support of others. Protect the vulnerable, shelter the weak, and give strength and wisdom to those who care for them.

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear.

**Our righteousness will go before us, and the glory of God will be our rear guard.**

## **CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE MV 62**

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**There is room for all in the shadow of God’s wing; there is room for all, sheltered in God’s love. And I rejoice and sing, “My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust.” There is room for all, there is room for all.**

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for elected officials and for civil servants. Stir up in them a desire for justice, enable them to fulfill their responsibilities with integrity, and drive from them any spirit of selfish gain.

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for pastors, teachers, and all the saints who lead your church. Grant them wisdom to know your truth and give them courage to live as faithful disciples of Jesus.

Loving God, **hear our prayer.**

Loving God, you have crowned us with steadfast love and mercy. Receive our prayers and help us to trust your goodness.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

As a mother nurtures her children. Let us pray...

**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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil, for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen**

## **HYMN VU 651**

**"Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"**

**Guide me O thou great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land. I am weak, but thou art mighty, hold me with thy powerful hand. Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more, feed me till I want no more.**

**When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside, death of death, and hell's destruction, land me safe on Canaan's side: songs of praises, songs of praises I will ever give to thee, I will ever give to thee.**

## **\*COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

### **\*SUNG RESPONSE MV 212**

**"Sent Out in Jesus' Name"**

**Sent out in Jesus' name, our hands are ready now to make the world the place in which the kingdom comes. The angels cannot change a world of hurt and pain into a world of love, of justice**

**and of peace. The task is ours to do, to set it really free. O, help us to obey, and carry out your will.**

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**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE STAFF OF MRUC**

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**A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS**

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