



"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it"
Psalm 24

Eighth Sunday of Pentecost
July 14, 2024
Manor Road United Church
A congregation of the United Church of Canada
240 Manor Road East, Toronto, ON, M4S 1R8
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Service of Worship

July 14, 2024

Seventh Sunday of Pentecost

The Season of Creation

Communion Sunday

“We are being invited into a new humility, to serve the holy wisdom that is already stirring in the hearts.”

- John Philip Newell

PRELUDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TERRITORY

As we gather today, we acknowledge that the sacred land on which each of us lives, has been, and continues to be, home to Indigenous peoples. For many thousands of years, they have sought to walk gently on this land. They offered assistance to the first European travellers to this territory and shared their knowledge for survival in what was at times a harsh climate. We seek a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this land, one based in honour and deep respect.

GATHERING MUSIC MV 2 “Come All You People”

**Come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come now and worship the Lord.**

WORDS OF WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

God of peace, the world is troubled.

And you come among us with healing and grace.

God, the world is torn by evil.

And you surround us with goodness and mercy.

Your witnesses for righteousness are scorned.

But you uphold your beloved to do your will.

God of grace, we thank you, and we open our hearts to you.

Even in the shadow of injustice we worship you with joy.

Give us hearts of courageous mercy; give us the faith of Jesus.

HYMN VU 242 “Let All Things Now Living”

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving

to God our Creator triumphantly raise,

who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,

by guiding us on to the end of our days.

God’s banners are o’er us, pure light goes before us,

a pillar of fire shining forth in the night,

till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,

as forward we travel from light into Light.

By law God enforces, the stars in their courses

and sun its orbit obediently shine,

the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,

the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.

We too should be voicing our love and rejoicing

with glad adoration a song let us raise:

till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,

to God in the highest, hosanna and praise.

OPENING PRAYER

God be with you.

And also

Eternal God, Life-Giver, you create all things,

you establish the bounds and set the laws of all Creation,

you are infinite and unknowable—yet you come among us in faithful presence.

We worship you. As David danced before the ark, our hearts rejoice in the presence of your Word.

Speak to us; sing to us.

May we hear the music of your grace, and lose ourselves in your beauty. **Amen**

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

INVOCATION

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. 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

Holy, holy, holy Lord, you are the God of glory.

We confess that we often forget that your holiness is dangerous.

We take our impurities for granted, make excuses for the sins we commit,

Forgive us, and return us to a right relationship with you

You made us for the purpose of praising you; enliven us with the Holy Spirit so that we can fulfill our calling.

Amen

SILENT REFLECTION

ASSURANCE

According to the riches of his grace,

which God has lavished upon us and sealed for us by the promised Holy Spirit,

hear this good news. **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)

RESPONSE MV 33 "Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope"

**Jesus came bringing us hope, Jesus came bringing us hope,
Jesus came bringing us hope, hallelujah forever more!**

ENCOUNTERING THE CHILD WITHIN -

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Spirit of the living God, seal in us your Word of truth,

**the gospel of salvation, so that we can faithfully follow
and joyfully serve**

our Lord Jesus Christ,

for it is in his name that we pray. **Amen**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1st Reading 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12-19 Glen Seville

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. David and all the people with him set out and went from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim.

They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God; and Ahio went in front of the ark.

David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; and when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

David danced before the LORD with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

They brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the LORD.

When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts, and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

2nd Reading Ephesians 1:3-14 Mike Russell

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

3rd Reading Mark 6:14-29

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him." But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old." But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her.

For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee.

When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom."

She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

RESPONSE

Hear the Wisdom told to us through the Ages.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN MV 42 "Praise God for This Holy Ground"

Praise God for this holy ground, place and people, sight and sound. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God's goodness is eternal.

Though praise ends, praise is begun, where God's will is gladly done. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God's goodness is eternal.

SERMON "Dancing Before the Land"

The Rev. Dr. John Joseph Mastandrea

SILENT REFLECTION

SOLO "Lord of the Dance" Glenn Seville

COMMUNION

Communion is a holy sacrament for followers of Christ. In the United Church, we practice an Open Table: all are welcome to partake in communion, there is no requirement of baptism or membership.

God is with us!

We are not alone!

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

In every time and every age, O God,
your steadfast love endures forever. In your compassion you gave us
Christ Jesus,
who frees us from darkness
and lights our path. And so, with all of creation,
with all the needy and hungry ones,
with all those who have enough and plenty,
with creatures large and small, we praise your name and join their
unending hymn:

HYMN MV 203 “Holy, Holy, Holy”

**O holy, holy, holy God,
O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav’n,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears your name al-ways!**

By your power and love you continue
to deliver your people from bondage, show the way.
You came among us to feed and heal and teach.

We remember Jesus took bread and gave thanks,
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
And again, after supper, he took the cup
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood
shed for you and for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
We proclaim the mystery of faith.

HYMN MV 204 “Memorial Acclamation”

**Sing Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!**

**Sing Christ has died,
and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!**

Blessed are you, come now, O Prince of Peace,
Spirit of Love, Breath of Life.
Bring to all this hurting world the joy that the disciples knew.

**HYMN MV 205 “Great Amen”
Amen, Amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and Amen!
Amen, Amen, O Holy One!
Hosanna and Amen!**

The body of Christ,
The bread of life.
The lifeblood of Christ,
The cup of blessing.
The gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!
SHARING THE MEAL

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Gracious God, we give you these gifts as symbols of our lives.
Receive them with love, bless them with grace, and use them according to your will.
We go now into the world filled with your joy, graced with your presence and dancing in your Spirit, in the name and the love of Christ. **Amen**

OFFERING OF OUR LIFE AND WORK

OFFERTORY INSTRUMENTAL

**RESPONSE VU 541 “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”
Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God, all creatures high and low,
give thanks to God in love made known,
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.**

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Gracious God, we thank you for the mystery that you give yourself to us, this mystery in which you have given yourself to us.

Help us to be a force for good in the world, and to join you in the work of healing and justice for the sake of the blessing of all Creation, in the name of Christ. Amen

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.

Lift up your heads, **God who rules in glory enters our hearts**

RESPONSE MV 91 “Cradle Me in Your Arms”

Cradle me in your arms, cherish and comfort me.

O Jesus, source of healing love, in your presence I am free.

Holy Abba of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who sends the Holy Spirit
to help us in our praying,

Let us be the voice of prayer

open our senses to your creation
and our hearts to the needs of others.

Let us see with your eyes.

Grant us faith, hope, and imagination
to see your vision of the fullness of time
when weapons will be crushed by peace,
stomachs will be filled by abundant
harvests generously shared,

Let us bring the food for the table

and thirsts quenched by pure rain
falling from clean skies;

diseases will be healed,

minds made clear,

and bodies made new,

so that all things reveal oneness in Christ.

Even now, Abba,

empower us by the Spirit to serve Christ in love

by sharing your vision

and working in the world

Let our hands be the tools to heal today.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As a mother nurtures her children. Let us pray:

Eternal Spirit,

Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

**Loving God, in whom is Heaven, the hallowing of your name
echoes through the universe!**

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your Heavenly will be done by all created beings!

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustains our hope
and comes on Earth.**

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and testing, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and
forever. Amen**

HYMN VU 296 "This is God's Wondrous World"

**This is God's wondrous world, and to my listening ears
all nature sings, and round rings the music of the spheres.**

**This is God's wondrous world, I rest me in the thought of rocks
and trees, of skies and seas, God's hand the wonders wrought.**

**This God's wondrous world. O let me ne'er forget
that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the ruler yet.
This is God's wondrous world. Why should my heart be sad?
Let voices sing, let the heavens ring. God's reigns, let earth be
glad.**

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

RESPONSE MV 215 "Peace Be With You"

**Peace be with you, peace forever, peace be with you, my friends,
Till we meet again, may God be with you. Peace, peace, peace.**

DIVERSITY CREED

"I keep reaching for rainbows.

Thinking one God's morning

I will wake up with rainbow ribbons in my hair,

**With hurts painted over in hues that only angel wings could
brush,
Shadows obliterated, chaos hurled beyond the rainbow and my
vision,**

The world created in a myriad of colors: the hungry fed,
The dying held, the maimed walking,
The neuro diverse welcomed, the angry stroked,
The violent calmed, the oppressors changed,
And every tear wiped away.

**I keep reaching for rainbows,
But instead of colors in our storm,
Gray and black infiltrate, dirtying the sky,
And I hear human voices wailing in the darkness,
The never-ending darkness....**

Just the same, I know the promise of the rainbow.

**I keep thinking I'll turn a corner one day
And find a litany of rainbow
Flung across the sky.**

Hosanna-ing back and forth, Through all the ages and
Out into eternity forever amen!

Every tear wiped away

It's a promise

When we become rainbows to each other."

- Ann Weems, Reaching for Rainbows

POSTLUDE

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