

**ZOOM Worship for August 15, 2021
12th Sunday after Pentecost**

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Announcements

Centering Music: "Come into the Presence"

Come oh holy Spirit, Come we pray
Come and move among us, come today.
Speak to us and teach us, of your perfect way
Change us and renew us, to be like Christ each day.
Come oh holy Spirit, come today
Come and move among us, this we pray.

Call to Worship:

One: Here we come to experience the presence of God.
Two: Here we seek to be inspired for the week ahead.
One: Here we come looking to be transformed by the Holy Spirit.
Two: Here we gather to feel the winds of God
One: to sense the power of the Holy Spirit
Two: to find the truth of Jesus Christ for our lives.

Opening Prayer:

One: God, raise our expectations as we worship today.
Two: Do not leave us to be content to settle for a feel-good moment,
One: for a tidbit of useful wisdom
Two: for a momentary easing of stress.
One: Let us come seeking an encounter with the risen Christ
Two: so that we may be transformed to become his living body for the world.
One: In that holy name we pray:

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

Opening Hymn: “Come In, Come In and Sit Down” VU 395 Vs 1, Vs 2

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

You know the reason why you came,
yet no reason can explain;
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,
for we are a part of the family.

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

God is with us in this place,
like a mother's warm embrace.
We're all forgiven by God's grace,
for we are a part of the family.

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

Scripture reading: 1 John 3: 1 - 18

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God. The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters.

Love One Another

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. We must not be like Cain who was from the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. Do not be astonished, brothers and sisters, that the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death. All who hate a brother or sister are murderers, and you know that murderers do not have eternal life abiding in them. We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.
All: Thanks be to God.

Choir: "Simple Gifts" (Traditional Arr. Carl Strommen)

Reflection: "Children of God Is What We Are"

Hymn: "I Come With Joy" VU 477 Vs 1, 4, 5

I come with joy, a child of God,
forgiven, loved and free,
the life of Jesus to recall
in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.

The Spirit of the risen Christ,
unseen, but ever near,
is in such friendship better known,
alive among us here,
alive among us here.

Together met, together bound
by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world
the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one.

Offering Invitation:

One: We have been blessed;
Two: let us give that the blessings may be shared.

Prayer of Dedication:

One: Gracious God, your hand is open to us:
Two: from you we have learned to be generous.
One: As we open our hearts and hands to you now,
Two: receive our offerings and multiply them so that they may bless others.
One: May our giving always bring glory to you alone. In Jesus' name we ask. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Closing Hymn: "Take Up His Song" MV 213

Take up his song of peace and go into the world.
Take up his song of peace in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey, we're laying down our lives;
Lay them down, in peace, lay them down, and take up his song.

Take up his song of love and go into the world.
Take up his song of love in ev'ry moment.
In ev'ry moment of the journey, we're laying down our lives;
Lay them down, in love, lay them down, and take up his song.

Commissioning: Sheryl McLeod, Admaston, Ont.

One: God blesses us in so many ways.

Two: As God's beloved, we know God's love, we follow Christ's way and are sustained by the Holy Spirit's persistence.

One: Now go into the world extravagantly scattering God's seeds of love. Amen.

Musical Postlude

Reflection

"CHILDREN OF GOD IS WHAT WE ARE"

(Scripture: 1 John 3: 1 – 18)

On July 22, 2011 Anders Breivik murdered 77 people in Norway. Most of the people killed were teenagers attending a summer camp. Breivik said that the purpose of his murderous rampage was to alert Europeans to the loss of their culture. He said at his trial that he had to prepare and train himself to be able to do what he did.

People have been deported from the GTA back to countries such as Germany and Rwanda for actions or atrocities they committed to protect their cultures.

Saul, who became Paul, persecuted Christians to protect his heritage and culture. After his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus he became a very zealous Christian. I hope he exhibited love in his new life.

It is easy to hate, to go over to the dark side. Change, loss, differences, betrayal, injustice, perceived favoritism, can easily lead us to hate someone or something. There are a lot of good haters around.

A member at a previous congregation was telling me how hard she found it to interact with people whose views she strongly disagreed with.

The message from the beginning has been that we should love one another. To love even in precarious and dangerous times. We know whether or not we are feeling love for others.

Daily, hate, anger, spills out from "shout outs" in magazines and twitter. Two weeks ago a large segment of Raptor basketball fan base, including myself, reacted badly to the Raptor organization's choice of one particular draft pick over another. One person responded that he hoped that all the frustration and anger being put forth would not be directed at the 19 year old who was selected whose dream had come true. This past week an article came out pertaining to one player the Raptors received in the trade for Kyle Lowry with the headline "Raptor fans mad that someone they didn't want doesn't want to be here." On this matter another sports commentator commented "And many of you thought I should stop **sports-hating** this man."

Some of the messages are directed at organizations but many of the messages are directed at individuals. Some are positive but many are venomous.

People are personally targeted. "You wearing the red coat . . . The person who sits across from me on the GO train putting your makeup on, do it at home. You who snore on the train. Stop it." Most people sit quietly on the GO but the electronic messages they send out betray their inner feelings. According to the writer of the Gospel of John they are haters.

A hater is referred to in our biblical text as a murderer.

We read, **“He or she who does not love, abides in death.”** We are told quite clearly not everyone abides in love.

John writes, **“Little children, let us not love in word and speech but in deed and truth.”** I think we all have a good idea what it means to love in deed but we are also called to **“love in truth.”** That calls us to be honest about our thoughts, views and inclinations. Are they really loving?”

Children of God is what we are. We are learners. We are learning how to live in relationship with God. Learning to live with other followers of Jesus. Learning to live within the wider world community.

You and I have come a long way in responding to change in culture diversity and lifestyles within the church and community. The United Church of Canada has been at the forefront calling for living in “right relationships” with other cultures, religions, members of the LGBTQ2S community, indigenous people in Canada and around the world.

While our daughter was teaching in Taiwan our family visited an aboriginal community in the interior of Taiwan. Taiwan has 16 different aboriginal groups who face similar challenges from the broader community as they do in Canada. A member of the community we visited when he found out that I was a minister in the United Church of Canada told me one of our Moderators had visited their community.

Some will say, who has time for something so frivolous as love? Why waste time on love when there is money to be made, pandemics to be faced, economies to be saved, wars to be fought, nations to be rebuilt?

Children of God, let us keep on loving. Let us not get derailed by someone or something so that we stop loving. We have numerous examples which show us that hatred can easily invade an individual and community’s life.

In order to keep on loving, we need the Holy Spirit’s help. We need to pray daily, **“Help me to be a loving person.”** And we must place deeds of love into our lives everyday.

Children of God, we are called to be lovers, even in dangerous times. The world, our world, God’s world, is in desperate need of lovers.

August 15, 2021
Rev. Dale Burkart