

**ZOOM Worship for August 8, 2021  
11th 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:** "Jesus, Stand among Us" VU 396

Jesus, stand among us  
in your risen power;  
let this time of worship  
be a hallowed hour.

Breathe the Holy Spirit  
into every heart;  
bid the fears and sorrows  
from each soul depart.

Lead our hearts to wisdom  
till our doubting cease,  
and to all assembled  
speak your word of peace.

**Call to Worship:**

One: In faith, Abraham and Sarah set out for a new land.

Two: In faith, we seek to follow God in our lives.

One: In faith, the church continually seeks to understand what tasks God has set before us at the present moment.

Two: In faith, we gather to worship, knowing that as we reach out to God, God will make us new.

One: Give us the faith, O God, to go forward and embrace the newness to which you call us.

**Opening Prayer:**

One: Creating, loving God, you promise us a life full of blessing,

Two: but we do not always believe.

One: You incite us to hope,

Two: but we fall back into fear.

One: You urge us to give freely,

Two: but we cling to what we have.

One: You call us to watch at all times for you,

Two: but we grow lazy and self-absorbed.

One: Forgive us, God.

Two: Increase our hope, enlarge our hearts, and keep us alert to the wonders you work in this moment and in the world every day. For the sake of Jesus we pray. Amen.

**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: "We Are One" VU 402 Vs 1, 2, 4**

We are one as we come,  
as we come, joyful to be here,  
in the praise on our lips  
there's a sense that God is near.  
We are one as we sing,  
as we seek, we are found;  
and we come needful of God's grace  
as we meet, together in this place.

We are one as we share,  
as we share brokenness and fear,  
in the touch of a hand  
there's a sense that God is here.  
We are one as we care,  
as we heal, we are healed;  
and we share warmth in God's embrace  
as we pray together in this place.

We are one as we hear,  
as we hear, heart and hand unite;  
in the word we receive  
there's a sense that God is light.  
We are one as we leave,  
as we love, we are loved;  
and we seek justice in God's ways  
as we move together from this place.

**Scripture reading:**

Hebrews 11: 1 – 16

**The Meaning of Faith**

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

### **The Examples of Abel, Enoch, and Noah**

By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain's. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death; and 'he was not found, because God had taken him.' For it was attested before he was taken away that 'he had pleased God.' And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

### **The Faith of Abraham**

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

**Music for Reflection:** "Seek Ye First"

**Reflection:** "By Faith . . ."

**Hymn:** "Fairest Lord Jesus" VU 341

Fairest Lord Jesus, ruler of all nature,  
O thou of God to earth come down:  
thee will I cherish, thee will I honour,  
thou my soul's glory, joy, and crown.

Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,  
robed in the blooming garb of spring;  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,  
who makes the troubled heart to sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,  
and fair the twinkling, starry host;  
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer  
than all the angels heaven can boast.

All fairest beauty heavenly and earthly,  
wondrously, Jesus, is found in thee;  
none can be nearer, fairer or dearer  
than thou, my Saviour, art to me.

**Offering Invitation:**

One: We have been blessed;

Two: let us give that the blessings may be shared.

**Prayer of Dedication:**

One: As people called by Jesus Christ to a life of faith, trust, compassion and generosity,

Two: we dedicate what we have offered for the loving transformation of this world. Amen.

**Prayers of the People**

**Closing Hymn:** "Who Is My Mother" MV 178

Who is my mother, who is my brother?

All those who gather round Jesus Christ:

Spirit blown people born from the Gospel

sit at the table, round Jesus Christ.

Differently abled, differently labeled,

widen the circle round Jesus Christ:

crutches and stigmas, culture's enigmas,

all come together round Jesus Christ.

Love will relate us colour or status

can't segregate us, round Jesus Christ:

family failings, human derailings

all are accepted round Jesus Christ.

Bound by one vision, met for one mission

we claim each other, round Jesus Christ:

here is my mother, here is my brother,

kindred in spirit, through Jesus Christ.

**Commissioning:**

One: In faith, let us go forth, in the name of Jesus, accompanied by the Spirit,

Two: to make a difference in our world. Amen.

**Choral Benediction:** "A Quiet Blessing of Peace"

**Reflection**

"By Faith . . ."

(Scripture: Hebrews 11)

Faith can be like being a participant on the old television show "Let's Make a Deal." Host Monty Hall would hand someone in the audience some money and ask them if they wanted to keep the money or take what was behind curtain number 1. Behind curtain 1 may be a new car or a can of tomato soup.

What am I going to do? Play it safe or risk it all?

Most of the time we prefer to stay with what we already have. With what we are familiar with. For the most part we are not about to trade that for some uncertain future.

Yet in the Bible time and time again we are shown that faith means saying goodbye to the familiar and setting out in faith in some new direction. A direction God wants us to go in.

Story of my mentor, the Rev. Dr. Allen Churchill, called to leave the RCMP and serve God in ministry

Faith is one of those words we often hear when we hang around church. There is a part of faith that is somewhere inside us that allows us to put our trust in a God that we have never seen with our eyes. Yet if we really have faith it is going to show up on the outside of us as well. It is going to show up in what we do with our lives, i.e. Terry Fox.

Hebrews 11 has been referred to as the “Westminster Abbey of the Bible.” Presumably because of the parade of dead saints lined up in the Abbey and in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews.

Faith is definitely the theme of this chapter in the book of Hebrews. We read about Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, David, and many others. These people were fallible people. We read in scripture of their personal limitations which includes murder in the cases of Moses and David. In the list is a prostitute. And yet their faith shines through their fallibility and their acts of faith were effective in spite of their personal limitations.

Through their faith in God these people were able to persevere and overcome obstacles. To break out of social structures. To stand alone when necessary. But not just for themselves but for the well-being of the whole community.

Persecution often accompanies someone living out their faith, their beliefs. We read that even through their suffering these people in their lifetime did not receive all that was promised to them by God.

One challenge to us all when we have faith and are willing to say yes to following God is that we can never be too sure which way it is that God is going to point us. Even if we stay in one place God calls us to move on to new ventures.

We know the shortest direction between two points is a straight line. But for some reason God is not a big fan of straight lines. As time goes by God does eventually get us from A to B but often it is by a route that we would have never imagined.

Faith requires patience. In our lives there are times when we are tempted to give up on God. Even when we remain faithful to God there are occasions when it does not look like we are making any progress. In fact at times it may seem like we are moving backwards. Especially in those times scripture calls us to have faith. i.e. Neighbour and her dead horse - “You’ve Got To Have Faith.”

A woman celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday was asked by a reporter “Do you have any children?” “Not yet!” she replied.

“Not yet” describes the way that God’s plans have been fulfilled in our lives. Perhaps we have experienced glimpses of what God is trying to accomplish through us yet there is still more to come including one day being in the presence of God.

What future is God trying to lead you toward? i.e. Retired engineer volunteering at The Compass in Mississauga

Ask, "If I lived up to the goal God has for me, what would my life look like." It may look no different or . . . If Applewood United lived up to the goal God has for it, what would this community of faith look like? It may look no different or . . .

Sometimes we busy ourselves with the routine day-to-day matters of life so that we fail to spend much time considering the "bigger picture" of what God might have in mind for us.

What is God calling us to say goodbye to? For Abraham and Sarah it was their homeland. For some disciples, boats and nets.

Is there some destructive habit we need to turn away from? Is God calling us to make a change in our employment or in what we are doing with our free time? In each of our lives we need to consider what is holding us back from living more fully and faithfully for God.

Life with God is an adventuresome journey. God is not finished with any of us yet. God can use us even from a hospital bed in the way we treat hospital staff and other patients. Life is much bigger than we often imagine when we recognize that we are pilgrims on a journey with God in this life and the life to come. Walk on with God.

April 8, 2021

Rev. Dale Burkart