

Zoom Worship for July 11, 2021
7th 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: "Holy Sacred Spirit" MV 15

Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your breathe on us.

Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your life in us.

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Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your life in us.

Call to Worship:

One: We join together this morning to worship our God:

Two: calm Presence in our times of confusion, Comforter in our nights of struggle.

One: We come together as fellow pilgrims as we seek to follow Jesus:

Two: Friend to those swamped by fears, to those overwhelmed with loss.

One: We are brought together by the Spirit who lives in the depths of our souls:

Two: the Serenity who travels with us on this up-and-down journey we call life.

Opening Prayer: - Nancy Townley

One: Mighty God, who speaks a word of peace to calm our troubled sea;

Two: Caring God, who nudges us away from fear and towards faith;

One: Ever-present God, who fills us with awe but also raises many questions without easy answers;

Two: Open our eyes to see you in our boat – today,

One: Strengthen our hearts for the challenges that lie ahead,

Two: Open our ears this hour to hear the word you speak, this we pray in Jesus' name and continue to pray as we are taught,

The Lord's Prayer: (said together)

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: "Draw the Circle Wide" MV 145

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

God the still-point of the circle,
round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Scripture reading:

Mark 4:35 - 41

Jesus Stills a Storm

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'

Choir: "Stand By Me" (Larry Shackley)

Reflection: "It was a Dark and Stormy Night"

Hymn: "Come and Find the Quiet Centre" VU 374

Come and find the quiet centre
in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us,
cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!

Offering Invitation:

- Beth Johnston, Nipawin, Sask.

One: We have been blessed;

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

Prayer of Dedication:

- Tabitha Carey, Dorchester, Ont.

One: God, you have called us to join you as co-workers and co-heirs of your kingdom.

Two: We take this opportunity to demonstrate our allegiance to you.

One: We proclaim you Lord of all. You are Lord of our families, our finances, and our future.

Two: May our offerings bring hope and healing to our world. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Closing Hymn: "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" VU 651 Vs 1,2

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.

Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

Commssioning: - Kate Crawford, Grand Bend, Ont.

One: Give your hearts to the One who made them.

Two: Give your spirits to the One who delights in them.

One: Give your souls to the One who strengthens them,

Two: and follow in the way of Jesus Christ,

One: this day and every day. Amen.

Closing Music: "Go Now in Peace" (Besig/Price)

Reflection

"IT WAS A DARK AND STORMY NIGHT"

(Scripture: Mark 4: 35 – 41)

The story of Jesus and his disciples in a boat on the Sea of Galilee speaks of times in life when a storm suddenly appears and puts us in peril.

Our storms are the telephone call that rings in the night relaying bad news. Or a relationship in crisis. Or ongoing battles with depression. A diagnosis of a terminal illness like cancer where the natural workings of cells somehow goes out of control and reproduce like mad oblivious to the checks and balances of the body.

One day our body may seem like a placid lake and the next it is an angry, raging sea. Our storms take many forms: physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, they all rage in our lives from time to time.

So what can **we** learn from this boat ride in the storm?

Mark tells the story in such a way as to invite identification with those in the boat. Things may be going along smoothly in our lives and out of nowhere a storm suddenly appears.

It hits us so hard that we lose our sense of peace and well-being. We are terrified. Things are out of control. It is real. I'm going under and God is asleep.

We all know about storms and fear and the sleepiness of God?

We cry out **“Why me Lord? Do you not care if I perish?”**

Dennis Kizziar in his book, **“How to Survive the Storms of Life”** suggests that whether the impact of a storm deforms or transforms someone’s life rests with the nurture of faith and a relationship with God.

Back to the boat story. Jesus asks his disciples after the storm has been quieted, **“Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?”**

How are we to answer the faith question? “Well yes, a little. I guess not yet. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. What type of faith do we have?”

American psychologist Gordon Allport, one of the founding figures of personality psychology, in relation to faith, speaks of two types of faith. Extrinsic faith, a group membership thing, and intrinsic faith, something that is internalized.

With Jesus’ questions a new storm arises inside us, the primary locale of the original storm.

Do we trust this Jesus sleeping in the stern?

When we pray, **“Deliver us from evil”** as we did this morning, do we really expect God to hear, to care, to act?” Or are we only talking to ourselves?”

How are you preparing yourself to meet these storms?

We can all use examples of people who have shown us the way.

Naomi Judd, survivor of domestic violence, single mom on welfare with no health insurance, diagnosed with Hepatitis C after she had turned things around and sold over 20 million albums and videos ending her musical career with her daughter Wynonna, has had to overcome numerous and sometimes violent storms. She attributes her survival strength to her “song of faith” – her belief that no matter what crisis confronts her, she can reach out and touch the hand of God. Naomi now lives a life of service which include anti-violence programs, Women’s World Peace Initiative, MADD, American Liver Foundation, women’s health concerns, Parents Television Council, promoting a program pushing volunteer work, etc.

Michael J. Fox born in Edmonton, Alberta moved to Los Angeles when he was 18. He made it big in acting in the TV series Family Ties and then in movies such as Back to the Future. Fox’s life has been impacted big time with the onset of Parkinson’s Disease. Out of a lot of anger even at times directed at those close to him he has found peace and support. With his family’s support and his spiritual faith he no longer worries about failure or when something bad happens. He says, “What’s courage but having faith instead of fear?” And he quotes St. Augustine, “Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe.”

Recently Portland Trail Blazers’ superstar Damien Lillard has been taking a lot of flak from members of the media and fans. He endorsed a candidate for Portland’s vacant coaching position who it turns out some years ago raped a woman. Lillard claims he did not know of the incident and he was only 8 or 9 years of age when it happened. But media and even some Portland fans are not forgiving his endorsement of the coaching candidate. Lillard is not giving into the hate being directed at him. This

past week he posted on twitter **“Who should I love? And how often? Everybody always.”** Where does that wisdom come from?

I offer you this morning that in Jesus there is calm. With Jesus there is courage. Under Jesus there is confidence.

The storms of life can be met with more grace and determination when we have a relationship with Jesus leading up to these storms. When we have invited him into our lives and done the hard work of letting him shape us, walk with us, when we have followed his example, listened to his words, engaged him in prayer and have come to know that we do not walk alone.

We need to open ourselves up to God’s grace and mercy and we will receive strength to support us in all dangers.

Choose to live as a partner with Jesus Christ and face the storms that come your way together.

Rev. Dale Burkart
July 11, 2021