

Hybrid Worship for July 17, 2022

Sixth after Pentecost

*(*please stand in body or spirit*

bold print *is for all to share)*

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.

Centering Music: “Come and Fill Our Hearts” MV 16

Come and fill our hearts with your peace.

You alone, O God*, are holy.

Come and fill our hearts with your peace,

alleluia!

*** Call to Worship and Opening Prayer**

One: God calls to us while we are busy -

All: working, studying, cooking, tidying or planning.

One: God calls to us while we are distracted -

All: worrying, traveling, ‘Googleing’ or playing.

One: Come, says, God, and sit at my feet.

All: Come, says Jesus, and learn of my ways.

One: And so we come – sometimes reluctantly,
sometimes joyfully, sometimes with curiosity,
sometimes resentfully.

**All: And so we come – as God’s people,
as God’s church, as followers of Jesus.**

One: We have answered the call to worship – let’s pray together:

**All: Living, Loving and Patient God,
open in us - in this time and space -
a place for us to experience your presence.
Empty out our anxious thoughts,
soothe our aching hearts,
still our wandering spirits.
Fill our busy minds with your peace,
fill our hearts with your compassion,**

fill our spirits with openness.

**So that we can focus on you – on your love for us and all,
so that we can focus on learning and growing,
so that we can centre ourselves in you.**

**We pray as your Beloved Community,
and in the name of your Beloved One.**

Amen

*** Opening Hymn:** “We Praise You, O God” VU 218

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name: glad praises we sing.

We worship you, God of our mothers and fathers,
through trial and tempest, companion and guide.
When perils o’ertake us, you will not forsake us,
but faithful to your promise, you walk by our side.

With voices united our praises we offer,
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation: “Opening Our Hearts to You” from *‘Prayers for All Seasons Year C’*

May we open our hearts to you, O God,
moving beyond all that clutters our lives
and all that is waiting for our attention.

May your Spirit calm us amid the chaos,
and tune our ears to hear your voice above all else;
calling us to find our centre in you.

May your Spirit guide us in our busyness -
the expectations of community,
the needs of others,
the necessary demands of ministry -
help us to let them be for a while.

Move us deeper into your presence
where we can be fully attentive
to the depth of Jesus' teaching,
the stirring of your spirit,
the gift of your listening.

May we create space within our lives
to meet you, O God,
and to know your more.
Amen.

Sung Response: “Be Still and Know” MV 77

Be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God,
be still and know that I am God.

Scripture Readings:

Colossians 1:15–20 *The Inclusive Bible*

Christ is the image of the unseen God
and the firstborn of all creation,
for in Christ were created
all things in heaven and on earth:
everything visible and invisible,
Thrones, Dominations, Sovereignities, Powers—
all things were created through Christ and for Christ.
Before anything was created, Christ existed,
and all things hold together in Christ.
The church is the body;
Christ is its head.
Christ is the Beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
and so Christ is first in every way.
God wanted all perfection to be found in Christ,
and all things to be reconciled to God through Christ -
everything in heaven and everything on earth –
when Christ made peace
by dying on the cross.

Luke 10:38–42

Jesus Visits Martha and Mary

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.’

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

All: Thanks be to God.

Musical Offering: “My Soul is Thirsting for You” Sophie Cook

Reflection: “To feed or to be fed – is that the question?”

***Hymn: “Jesus, Teacher, Brave and Bold” VU 60**

Jesus, teacher, brave and bold let us serve you, young and old.
Let us faith filled workers be
all around your wisdom see. Let us play and
dance and since, your goodness find in everything.

Jesus, friend, so strong and true, show us good, brave
work to do. Show us those who need a friend,
all things broken help us mend. Free our minds and
stretch our care, teach us to serve you everywhere.

Offering Prayer:

**All: We bring our gifts to you, God,
in grateful response to your many gifts to us.
Here is the work of our hands,
and here is the love of our hearts.
Accept them and use them,
bless them and multiply them
to bring hope, justice and love
to the world in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

*** Hymn of Dedication: MV 104**

Know that God is good, know that God is good,
know that God is good, God is good, God is good.

Prayers of the People

One: Creating God, in each of us you have made space
for your presence and your grace.

Two: *We thank you for those opportunities we are given
to grow our faith, and open those spaces.*

One: We are grateful for study groups and sermons,
for open conversations with friends and family,
for this time of worship with our faith community.

Two: *We thank you, God, for those moments and places
where we feel your touch in our lives and the world –
as we walk along the water, or along the streets of our city,
as we listen to birdsong or the sounds of children playing,
as we taste fresh fruit and vegetables
from our own gardens or grown by others.*

One: We pray our thanks for moments of stillness when we

feel you near as we listen to music or sit in silence.

We pray our thanks when you are present in the busyness of daily work and routines.

- Two: We know, Holy and Caring God, that we do not always make room for you in our days, and that we can be easily distracted by worries and cares.*
- So we pray for one another – and especially for those whose lives are so filled with the distractions of pain, loss, illness or calamity that there is no space to know your care.*
- One: We pray for those who worry over financial concerns, those who worry about how they will be treated because of how they look, or who they love, or how they live.*
- Two: We pray for the wounded ones, the lonely ones, the burdened ones, the hungry ones.*
- One: Fill us, God, with compassion and care, with the desire to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.*
- Two: We pray in Jesus' name as we sing the words he shared with his disciples in ancient times.*

The Lord's Prayer (sung) VU 959

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

***Closing Hymn: "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say" VU 626**

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Come unto me and rest;
 lay down, O weary one,
 lay down your head upon my breast."
 I came to Jesus as I was,
 so weary, worn, and sad;
 I found in him a resting place,
 and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 "Behold, I freely give
 the living water, thirsty one;
 stoop down and drink and live."

I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream'
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light.
Look unto me; your morn shall rise
and all your day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till trav'ling days are done

***Commissioning /Blessing**

May God, who sang the universe in being, go with you.
May Christ, who is God's love song to the world, attend you.
May the Holy Spirit continue to sing God's love
into each and every heart, each and every day.

***Sung Amen VU 974**

Amen! Amen! Hallelujah, Amen!
Amen! Amen! Hallelujah, Amen!

Rev. Joanne's Reflection

I remember clearly as a teen being assigned chores at home, taking turns with my sister and step-sister, and also feeling a great injustice when I had to do their chores because they were studying, or at some school event. I'm sure many of us can recall a scenario when we've felt as if we've been left with all the work while others seemed to be doing nothing much at all. Or perhaps we have been the 'Marys' rather than the 'Marthas' in our own stories.

This visit Jesus makes to the home of the two sisters is such a small passage, just a few sentences, which only appear in the gospel of Luke. Generally, we assume that these are same Mary and Martha who are sisters of Lazarus in John's gospel – and this is the same Mary who anoints Jesus with costly oil. In today's scripture story, Martha is the one who offers Jesus hospitality, perhaps after hearing him speak, or perhaps because they have known each other for some time. Martha is busy with the tasks of that hospitality – of showing her care for Jesus. Perhaps she is preparing food as welcome – which would have been part of her tradition. Perhaps she is readying towels and basins for her guest, and perhaps for the others who probably accompanied him. Her tasks are distracting her, keeping her from listening to Jesus as she worries if the olives are ripe enough, the bread fresh enough.

Mary has welcomed Jesus in another way, not through busyness, but with attentiveness. She sits at his feet, as a disciple, as a student. Rather than focusing on preparations to feed him, she is focusing on what he teaches, on allowing herself to be fed by the presence of God in him. Martha, in her distractedness, with her worries about offering the best hospitality, cannot see the value in Mary's form of welcome.

Have you had that experience as a guest in someone's home, or even at a church event? A time when your hosts were so busy preparing or creating just the right meal or atmosphere that they could not simply sit and enjoy your company?

Jesus values Mary's attentiveness, and her desire to enter into a time of God-centeredness. The Lucan gospel places this visit to Mary and Martha immediately after the sharing of the parable of the Good Samaritan, which focuses on the second part of what we call the 'great commandment' to love God with all we are, and love our neighbours. At Martha and Mary's home, it seems that Jesus now draws our attention to the first part of that commandment – love God with all your attention, without distraction or the worries of tradition or convention. That is the one thing worth doing, the 'better part' that Mary partakes of and that cannot be taken from her.

There have been times that this passage has been used as an example of the debate over the worth of work (we might use the word activism) compared to contemplation. Jesus' words seem to support the notion that contemplation is somehow more valued, more Godly, than work. Yet just a few verses – and perhaps a few hours or days - before this story begins, Jesus tells the law expert who had questioned him about neighbours to GO and DO as that compassionate Samaritan had done. Clearly action is important to Jesus – his own and the action of others like the 70 he sent out at the beginning of this chapter in Luke.

Obviously, we are to be busy with God's work, which does indeed include radical acts of hospitality. I think it is important to note that it isn't Martha's busyness that Jesus remarks upon, but her distractedness and her worries – her preoccupied busyness with no time to sit with God, no time to learn and grow in faith. Her frustrated outburst that Mary isn't helping, her self-focused lament that she is doing all the work highlights that even our Godly work can be tiresome when we lack that God-centeredness.

Jesus reminds them both that loving God with all we have includes time to contemplate, time to learn, and time to search out the reasons for our actions. Sit with God, then go and do! Think on God and God's way for us that Jesus showed us, and then take action. Hospitality can be offered in many ways, says Jesus, not only in what you do, but in the attention you give to others. Know God in and through your work, because you have taken time to let God be present with you, he seems to say.

Feed or be fed? Both! When in loving community all our work is God-centered, and when we take the time to serve each other at a potluck dinner, and then serve each other in a study group as we share thoughts and faith, we are both Mary and a less distracted Martha. When we share a prayer at the beginning of our committee meetings, then we are welcoming God-centeredness into our work. If we were to study together about community needs before accepting donations at a charity drive, our work becomes an expression of our learning and our faith.

In one small story of one small moment in the lives of two women who encountered Jesus, we are shown the value of spending time with God, giving our attention to what God may reveal to us. May we find our own God-centeredness in the work we do, in the moments of stillness and focus we allow ourselves, and know that we are experiencing the 'better part' of God's love and grace.