

Zoom Worship for July 18, 2021

8th 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: "Lord Prepare Me" MV 18

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy tried and true;
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living
sanctuary for you.

Call to Worship:

One: May God be gracious to us, and bless us, and cover us with the radiance of grace.

Two: May your way be known everywhere God: in the hidden places of our hearts; in the comforts of our homes; in every corner of our world; in the farthest reaches of creation.

One: You transform us; you heal our lives;

Two: you renew the earth and every creature;

One: Let our praise for you bind us together in love for you, one another, and the world.

Opening Prayer:

One: God, we remember with wonder and joy that your Spirit is reaching everywhere:

Two: rejoicing in the liveliness of all living things;

One: touching what is wounded or ill with healing power;

Two: gathering in the lonely, the lost, the least;

One: calling for the soothing of ancient animosities;

Two: creating and recreating a vision of hope.

One: Come now, Holy Spirit. Let our worship rejoice in you, and lift our hearts, and bind us in one family of loving grace. We ask in Jesus' name and pray together as he taught us:

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The Lord's Prayer: (spoken)

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: "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing" VU 326

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of God's grace.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

He speaks, and listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive,
the mournful broken-hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Hear him, you deaf; you voiceless ones,
your tongues again employ;
you blind, behold your Saviour comes,
and leap, you lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of your name.

Scripture reading:

John 5:1-9

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered him, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.' Jesus said to him, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk.' At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a sabbath.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Choir: Morning Has Broken (Trad. Gaelic, Lyrics by Eleanor Farjeon)

Reflection: "I Have No One to Help Me!"

Hymn: "Healer of Our Every Ill" VU 619

Healer of our every ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness.
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. R

In the pain and joy beholding,
how your grace is still unfolding.
Give us all your vision, God of love. R

Give us strength to love each other,
every sister, every brother.
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. R

You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing.
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. R

Offering Invitation

Prayer of Dedication:

Jim McKean, Orillia, Ont.

One: Holy Spirit, we give thanks for all the blessings that have come our way.

Two: We give thanks for the blessings and love that we have received.

One: May our offerings be a blessing for many and a love offering for all. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Closing Hymn: "Go, make a Diff'rence" MV 209

Go make a diff'rence.
We can make a diff'rence.
Go make a diff'rence in the world.
Go make a diff'rence.
We can make a diff'rence.
Go make a diff'rence in the world.

We are the salt of the earth,
called to let the people see
the love of God in you and me.
We are the light of the world,
not to be hidden but be seen.
Go make a diff'rence in the world. R

We are the hands of Christ
reaching out to those in need,
the face of God for all to see.
We are the spirit of hope;
we are the voice of peace.
Go make a difference in the world. R

So let your love shine on,
Let it shine for all to see.
Go make a difference in the world.
And the spirit of Christ will be with us as we go.
Go make a difference in the world. R

Commissioning/Blessing

Reflection

“I HAVE NO ONE TO HELP ME!” – “DO YOU WANT TO BE HEALED?”

(Scripture: John 5: 1 – 9)

For centuries, the existence of a pool with five porches in Jerusalem was deemed fictional. In the 19th century a German archeologist named Conrad Schick uncovered a large pool within the old city walls of Jerusalem. Excavation work at the site in the 1960s revealed that there were actually two pools with numerous columns.

Today there is still water in one of the pools of Bethesda. Bethesda means “house of mercy.” A Byzantine church [the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Orthodox) ruled Palestine from 395 to 1453] was built over portions of the pools but that church now lies in ruins.

The site is located in the Muslim quarter of the walled Old City of Jerusalem and beside the site is found the intact Church of St. Anne built in the 1138 A.D. by Crusaders. According to Byzantine tradition the crypt enshrines the home of Mary and her parents Anne and Joachim. A claim is made that this is where Mary the mother of Jesus was born.

The pools were originally a shrine/temple complex to the Greek/Roman god of healing, Asclepius. A snake intertwined on a pole symbolizing healing is referred to as the “Rod of Asclepius” and is used today by Medical and Dental Associations.

Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine and healing had a big following and temples dedicated to him sprung up all across the Roman world. These temples were often located near springs or wells that were believed to have healing powers. People would come to these temples in search of healing like our unnamed man in John 5. People today still travel to bodies of water, springs, like the sulphuric waters of the Banff Hot Springs, Lake Manitou “Lake of Healing Waters” a salt water lake in northern Saskatchewan, the Dead Sea in Israel, seeking healing.

Jesus has once again journeyed from the northern region of Galilee to participate in a Jewish festival in the centre of the Jewish world, Jerusalem, with its Jewish temple.

For some reason on this trip we find Jesus visiting this pagan site to which people with various health problems have come.

Jesus speaks to one man of whom we strangely read “Jesus knew that he had been lying there for a long time.” Did Jesus know this from times he visited his grandparents’ house next to this Roman temple?

My brother’s Jewish Israeli tour guide to this site insisted this man is Jewish in the midst of non-Jews. That possibly is the reason why Jesus sought him out. This man was likely willing to seek help/healing from any source, pagan or Jewish.

Jesus asks the man, “Do you want to be healed?” Jesus did not ask whether the man believed in him. He did not ask the man to renounce Asclepius. He simply asked him, “Do you want to be healed?” A healed life calls for major changes, new ways of thinking, living, action, risk-taking. [Annie Lamott, Phil] Do you want to be healed?

The man does not know who is speaking to him and does not answer Jesus’ question but tells Jesus about his inability to beat others into the pool when there is movement in the water. Movement in the water was connected with a potency in the water to bring about healing. Unlike the incapacitated man in the Gospel of Luke whose four friends tore up a house roof to lower him down to Jesus for healing this man had no one to assist him. He was alone. He did not know Jesus nor Jesus’ reputation.

None of us can make it on our own. We all need assistance. For some it is very difficult to admit the need for help. Some don’t want the change associated with new life and a new way of being. Some don’t want God to be part of their life.

In this story Jesus is acting with Creator like authority. A simple word of command gives the man strength and motion. This man was healed because of who Jesus was. What is good news for the incapacitated man is good news for us too. We too are recipients of God’s grace and lasting presence in Jesus.

We as disciples of Jesus are called to offer people our friendship, presence and support but we are also called to offer people Jesus for he is a friend like no other. In his poem “What a Friend We Have in Jesus” Joseph Scriven, tagged over a century ago as the Good Samaritan of Port Hope, Ontario outlines the many facets of Jesus’ friendship. Things such as faithfulness, sharing of sorrows and grief, bearing of sins, peace and refuge.

God invites us once again to accept the hand of Jesus and be led into the fullness of life.

Let us pause for a moment of silent prayer.

You may now want to pray, “God I have been limping around here for a long time and I haven’t gotten any better. Won’t you please touch my life and help me to start leaping. Amen.”

July 18, 2021

By: Rev. Dale Burkart