

**Hybrid Worship for June 12, 2022
Pride Sunday**

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: "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 and Opening Prayer

One: We, of many backgrounds and identities, personalities, and ideas,
gather collectively in shared pursuit of the Sacred.

All: Together, we make up the body of Christ.

One: Wherever one of us is in pain,

All: our whole body aches.

One: Whenever one of us is cut off,

All: The whole body is wounded.

One: Whoever is kept away by discriminatory policies or practices or prejudices,

All: Our collective soul suffers the loss of their presence.

One: We need one another in order to be whole,

All: God make us the body of Christ as you envisioned.

One: May we become your presence enfleshed,
in service to the world and one another.

Let us pray:

**All: God, we look for you all around us but always,
you are as close as our own breath.**

You linger in our very flesh.

**Forgive us for our struggles to remember you linger, also,
in the flesh of all our neighbors.**

**The ones attacked, the ones policed, the ones condemned,
the ones who are hungry, the ones turned away.**

**In those we wound, you are wounded also,
but when we honor the flesh of another,
you are honored too. May it be so in us, Amen.**

Opening Hymn: "Sing a New World into Being" Tune VU 232

Sing a new world into being.

Sound a bold and hopeful theme.

Find a tune for silent yearnings.

Lend your voice and dare to dream:

dream a church where all who worship
find their lives and loves belong.
Sing a new world into being.
Sing as Christ inspires your song!

Sing a new world into being
where each gender class and race
brings its rainbow gifts and colours
to God's limitless embrace;
where the lines that once divided
form instead the ties that bind.
Sing a new world into being:
risk transforming heart and mind!

Sing a new world into being
where the homeless find a home;
where no children ever hunger
but are filled with God's shalom;
where all people work for justice,
where all hate and vengeance cease.
Sing a new world into being:
raise the harmonies of peace.

Sing a new world into being.
Join the ancient prophet's cry
for a time of health and plenty
when all tears have been wiped dry;
when compassion flows like waters,
pouring balm for all who grieve.
Sing a new world into being;
live the promise you believe!

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Prayer for Reflection and Revelation *'A Prayer for Pride Month' by Jordan Sullivan*

Oh, Love that will not let us go...

Our hearts are filled and overflowing with joy, deep love, and gratitude.

We are thankful, for the gifts of all Affirming Ministries and communities of faith who open their churches, their homes and their hearts to Two-Spirit and LGBTQ+ people and all their intersecting identities. for music, friendship, and for family.

We are thankful for the Love that will not let us go.

We are thankful, for Pride Marches and Pride Month, for all those who publicly, intentionally, and explicitly affirm that 2S-LGBTQ+ people are children of God.

We are thankful most of all, for the blessing of a Love that is and always has been there for us.

The truth at the heart of our faith – that you are Love - echoes today in words and in music, in friendships and family, in our hearts and minds, and continues to challenge us to Love.

We pray for our hearts and minds to be open to our own homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia, to be open to our own racism, sexism, ableism, sizeism, and all the ways we fear those who are different from us.

We pray to learn how to recognize the kinship between our souls and the souls of those who, to us, are strangers.

We pray that we will never cease in our journey to learn how to Love more radically.

We pray in the name of the Love that flips tables and cracks whips, the Love that heals those judged by religious leaders and powers, the Love who lives and loves among the marginalized and outcast.

In Jesus name. Amen.

Sung Response: “There is Room for All” MV 62

There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing;
there is room for all sheltered in God's love.
And I rejoice and sing,
"My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."
There is room for all, there is room for all.

Scripture Readings:

Psalm 8 *The Inclusive Bible*

YHWH, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your Name in all the earth!
You have placed your glory above the heavens!
From the lips of infants and children
you bring forth words of power and praise,
to answer your adversaries
and to silence the hostile and vengeful.

When I behold your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars which you set in place –
what is humanity that you should be mindful of us?
Who are we that you should care for us?
You have made us barely less than God,
and crowned us with glory and honour.
You have made us responsible
for the works of your hands,
putting all things at our feet –
all sheep and all oxen, yes, even the beasts of the field,
the birds of the air, the fish of the sea
and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

YHWH, our Sovereign, how majestic is your Name in all the earth!

John 16:12-15 *The Inclusive Bible*

I have much more to tell you,
but you can't bear to hear it now.
When the Spirit of truth comes,
she will guide you into all truth.
She won't speak on her own initiative;
rather, she'll speak only what she hears,
and she'll announce to you
things that are yet to come.
In doing this, the Spirit will give glory to me,
for she will take what is mine
and reveal it to you.
Everything that Abba God has
belongs to me.
This is why I said that
the Spirit will take what is mine
and reveal it to you.

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

All: Thanks be to God.

Choir: "Hymn to Freedom"

Reflection: Proud

*** Hymn: "You, Creator God, Have Searched Me" MV 131**

You, Creator God, have searched me
and you know my ways.
You perfectly understand me.
It's my cause of praise.

I cannot escape your presence
in air, land or sea.
Your arms of love and protection
are always with me.

Chorus

You know me, O God, you have made me.
I am proud I'm the work of your hand.
In my waking and sleeping moments,
with my being I will praise your name.

You created light and darkness
and you love them both.
You blessed the womb of my mother,
you brought me to birth.

In your image and your likeness
wonderfully made.
I will lift my voice to praise you,
you are God indeed.

Chorus

You know me, O God, you have made me.
I am proud I'm the work of your hand.
In my waking and sleeping moments,
with my being I will praise your name.

Offering:

*** Hymn of Dedication:** *MV 104 as the Communion elements are brought forward*
Know that God is good, know that God is good,
know that God is good, God is good, God is good.

*** Prayer of Dedication:** (together)

All: **God, we know there are bodies aching with hunger today.**
 There are bodies bearing scars of discrimination.
 There are bodies living in social isolation.
 We long to be a part of your healing work
 wherever there is pain or brokenness.
 Receive our offerings and bless them and our lives
 to the service of all your people. Amen.

Sacrament of Communion

One: The Holy One be with you

All: **And also with you**

One: Open your hearts to the One who is Love

All: **We open our hearts to you, O God**

One: Let us give thanks to God who shapes our world

All: **For every creature and creation, we give you thanks, O God!**

One: Indeed, we give you thanks, our Divine Creator.
 You declared from the beginning that we were created in your image,
 a reflection of what is holy, each, in our own way, a glimpse of you.
 We praise the works of your creative hand that fills our life with beauty.
 Every flower that blooms, every animal that delights,
 every body of water that sustains our life – all part of your good works.
 And so with all creatures, all creation, we sing your praise:

All: (sung) MV 203

**O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space,
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the one who comes
and bears your name always.**

- Two: Despite the abundance of life around us,
we still turn to destruction.
Each in our own ways, we have failed to embrace you
by failing to embrace all your people,
especially those different than us.
We have, at times, sided with political and religious powers
that refuse to recognize your image in all people.
- One: And so we turn to Jesus, who showed us what it looks like
to live into our true selves as people of God.
He was humble yet grounded in your love for him.
He sought out the despised and made them friends.
He confronted every power that belittled, marginalized, and oppressed.
His commitment to living out the image of God enfleshed
could not be swayed, even in the face of death.
- Two: On the night of his arrest, he gathered around table with his companions.
He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said,
“This is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”
He did the same with the cup after the supper, saying,
“This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”
- Even in death, O God, your love prevailed.
Through you Spirit, Christ was raised from the grave.
No person, no institution, no force of evil could extinguish the work of your hand.
- One: And so, by the same Spirit, bless these gifts of bread and cup
that they may be the living Christ within us today;
compelling us to be agents of love,
uncompromising on our commitment to protecting
every one of your creatures and creations.
- Two: At this time, we also remember all those
with whom you would have us share your feast.
We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain . . .
all who are ill or alone . . .
all who live with fear, oppression, or hunger . . .
all whom the world counts as last and least . . .
We pray for your church and its varied ministries . . .
for the nations as they strive for peace and justice . . .
for the earth, and the fragile web of life we share . . .
for our families and friends . . .

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 glory are yours
now and forever. Amen

One: Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory is yours, God most holy,
now and forever. Amen.

Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup

(If you are worshipping with us virtually, the moment to consume your bread and juice will be announced, and you might say the words "Jesus Christ the True Vine" and "Jesus Christ the Bread of Life." If you are worshipping in the sanctuary, your elements will be delivered to you, and we ask that you wait until the servers have returned to the communion table before you lift your mask and consume them.)

Prayer after Communion

**All: God of abundance, we give you thanks for the grace we experience at your Table.
For forgiveness.
For connection.
For sustenance.
For a renewed vision of who we are.
Our gratitude abounds. Amen.**

Closing Hymn: "Deep in Our Hearts" MV 154

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
deep in our hearts there is a common song;
deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
justice and peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
deep in our hearts there is a common current,
flowing to freedom like a stream.

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
deep in our hearts there is a common song;
deep in our hearts there is a common story,
telling Creation that we are one.

Commissioning /Blessing

May God, who sang the universe into 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

Our Call to Worship and Opening Prayer, Prayer of Dedication and Communion liturgy provided through enfleshed.com, and we are grateful for their ministry of creative word and worship.

Rev. Joanne's Reflection Proud

YHWH, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your Name in all the earth!

You have made us barely less than God,
and crowned us with glory and honour.

Strong and powerful words from our psalm writer today – God's name lifted up, and the assertion that God is proud of God's creation – willing to crown us with glory and honour, and recognizing our worth.

We have many names for God in this present time, thousands of years after the Hebrew people began to record and explore their relationship with God. With the youth who participated in our spirituality program this spring, we talked about names like Mother, Father, Creator, Lord, Friend, Healer, Sustainer. In our worship together I sometimes use names like Source of All, Holy One, or Divine Mystery. We encounter the name YHWH (pronounced *Yahweh*) in our psalm, and throughout the Old Testament. The original meaning and pronunciation have been lost to history, but these four letters, known as the Tetragrammaton were eventually translated to LORD in English. Most observant Jews do not speak this name aloud.

Other names for God are included in our biblical texts – Adonai, Elohim, El Shaddai, Alpha and Omega and of course the great "I AM" from Moses' encounter with God in Exodus. Some of these names describe our own relationship with God, how we experience God in our lives, some try to name some aspect of God's identity for us. All God's names are meaningful, significant, and as Psalm 8 reminds us, magnificent.

We all can have many names that describe us, tell others something about us, or help others to know us more fully. The name my parents gave me is Joanne Helen Finlay. When I married, I took my husband's last name, and that is how you know me. I am cisgendered, which means that I identify with my gender assigned at birth, so I also name myself female and I use the pronouns she and her. I am a widow, a Shodan (which is the first Black Belt ranking in my martial arts community), a grandmother and a Christian. It has not been difficult for me to be proud of many of these names, because I am also a white person of European descent in a culture which treats that identity as dominant. I am free to choose how I am named and what I am called.

Openly proclaiming our many names, our identity, has not always been safe or even possible for members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Until 1969 in Canada, being part of that community was

essentially criminalized. To name your true self was to risk losing your job, your home, your freedom, and perhaps your life. Today there are still seventy countries around the world that criminalize 2SLGBTQ+ people, some of which include the death penalty. So when our siblings declare their true names, when they stand proud – when they celebrate Pride – they are turning away from the shame and social stigma imposed by others. They are affirming their God-given names, they are reminding us all that God did not impose boundaries on who was created to be “barely less than God.”

So we ALL need to celebrate pride – be proud of our siblings who claim their names and their identities openly, and to remember that we did not always want to allow them the dignity of pride. We can remember that while some of us celebrate wedding anniversaries that encompass decades, gay marriage has only been legal in Canada for seventeen years and in Ontario for nineteen. We can remember that some churches still will not ordain members of this community, and that even though our denomination does ordain all people, the United Church decision was not made until 1988, and we did not ordain our first openly transgendered minister until 2010. We can remember to name our pronouns regularly at meetings, so that those who need or want to share are not single out.

We can all mark this Pride month, standing in solidarity and allyship with those who dare to be proud, dare to name their truth, dare to share all their names. God has many names and many identities – YHWH, Creator, Christ; Spirit, Comforter, Mystery – and we control none of them. Those names can be used by anyone who is searching, anyone who is open to God’s presence and God’s love. We can share those names, share our own names for God, and continue to widen our understanding and our experience of the Divine.

So this month – and every month - let’s make sure that in our faith community and in our neighbourhoods, our 2SLGBTQ+ siblings can be proud of their names, their identities, their lives. Let’s celebrate with them, support them, and name them as they choose to be named, and let’s also name ourselves proudly – as Christians, as followers of Jesus, as part of the beloved community of God that includes everyone.