

Hybrid Worship for June 26, 2022

Third after Pentecost

(* please stand in body or in 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: "Open Our Hearts" MV 21

Open our hearts, open our minds.

Open our lives to you O loving God.

Open our hearts, open our minds.

Open our lives to you O loving God.

*** Call to Worship and Opening Prayer**

One: Today, we gather to worship God.

**All: Today, we answer the call to share our faith
in prayer and praise.**

One: Today, we are called to be disciples.

**All: Today, we answer the call to share our faith
in song and story.**

One: Today, we gather to inspire and be inspired.

All: Today, we celebrate God's presence with us.

One: Let us pray:

**All: God, you are our strength and our hope.
As you have inspired and led our fore parents in faith,
lead us to take up the mantle of discipleship.
Give us the courage we need to face injustice,
cope with uncertainty, and speak truth.
Give us the patience and humility to encourage others,
as we follow Jesus who is always showing us a new way.
Amen**

*** Opening Hymn: "God, We Praise You for the Morning" VU 415**

God, we praise you for the morning;

hope springs forth with each new day,

new beginning, prayer, and promise,
joy in work and in play.

God, we praise you for creation,
mountains, seas, and prairie land.
Waking souls find joy and healing
in your bountiful hand.

God, we praise you for compassion,
all the loving that you show;
human touching, tears, and laughter,
help your children to grow.

God, we praise you for your Spirit,
Comforter and daily friend,
restless searcher, gentle teacher,
strength and courage you send.

God, we praise you for the Saviour,
come that we may know your ways.
In his loving, dying, rising,
Christ is Lord of our days.

Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Christ is Lord of our days!

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation: “Make a Difference in the World” *source unknown,*
often attributed to the early Franciscans

May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths,
and superficial relationships,
so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with anger at injustice,
oppression, and exploitation of people,
so that we may work for justice, equity, and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain,
rejection, starvation and war,
so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and
change their pain to joy.

And may God bless us with the foolishness
to think we can make a difference in the world,
so that we can do the things that others tell you cannot be done.

Sung Response: “And When You Call For Me” MV 96

And when you call for me,
I have already answered.

And when you call for me,
I am already there.

Scripture Readings:

2 Kings 2:1–2, 6–14

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’ So they went down to Bethel. Then Elijah said to him, ‘Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.’ But he said, ‘As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.’ So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.’ Elisha said, ‘Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.’ He responded, ‘You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.’ As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. Elisha kept watching and crying out, ‘Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!’ But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

He picked up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, ‘Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?’ When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over.

Luke 9:51-62

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, ‘Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’ But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Choir: "I Want To Walk as a Child of the Light"

Reflection: Passing the Torch

*** Hymn: "It Only Takes a Spark" VU 289**

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing:
that's how it is with God's love,
once you've experienced it:
you spread God's love to everyone,
you want to pass it on.

What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees
are budding,
the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;
that's how it is with God's love,
once you've experienced it:
you want to sing, it's fresh like spring,
you want to pass it on.

I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I've found -
on God you can depend, it matters not where
you're bound;
I'll shout it from the mountain top;
I want my world to know:
the Lord of love has come to me,
I want to pass it on.

Offering Prayer:

**All: God of all peoples and God of all places,
we present our offerings,
so that they may be used to extend your love and justice.**

**With them, we offer ourselves and our varied ministries,
so that each of us may be part of your answer
to the worries of the world.
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: Loving God of our days and seasons,
we bring our thanks on this first Sunday of summer.
We thank you for brilliant sunshine and warm breezes,
for blooming gardens and pollinating insects.
- Two: *We offer our prayers for all creation –
for wildlife affected by summer drought and by flood,
for people whose lives and livelihoods are at risk as fluctuating
weather patterns and climate change create uncertainty,
for insects and other creatures whose habitat is shrinking.*
- One: We thank you, God, for the days of rest that summer can bring,
for holidays and recreation, for time to spend with family and friends.
- Two: *We pray, loving God, for those who don't have work this summer,
and for those whose work places too many demands on their lives.
We pray for those whose economic circumstances would not allow
them a holiday, and those who will be hungry this summer.*
- One: We thank you, God, for the joyful sounds of children playing in the sun,
for the special feeling of warm evening walks along the lakeshore,
for the fragrance of June blossoms and freshly cut grass.
- Two: *We remember in our prayers all those who cannot find joy
in this time – those who are ill in body, mind or spirit,
those who are worried or stressed, those who are grieving,
those who feel alone and isolated.*
- One: We thank you, Creator God, for the changing seasons,
for the diversity they represent, and the beauty we encounter
as our streets and neighbourhoods are transformed by summer rains or winter snow.
- Two: *We offer our prayers, God, for those who are fearful of change,
for those who are without secure housing,
those around the world who have been devastated by change beyond their control/*
- One: We thank you, God, that you listen to our prayers,
that you find ways to answer them in and through us.
We continue to pray together in the way Jesus taught us

The Lord's Prayer in Paraphrase: *(The Disciples Prayer, enfleshed.com)*

**Mother of us all,
who dwells within and beyond,
Sacred is your name.**

**May your holy vision for collective flourishing
come to fruition among us.**

May your dreams of justice, love, compassion, and connection be enfolded on earth.

Provide us today with what we need to be nourished in body, soul, and heart.

Forgive us for the harm we cause as we seek to forgive those who have harmed us.

Lead us away from everything that destroys and liberate us from the hands of evil.

For you are the ultimate source of hope.

Your power-with exceeds all power-over.

Your presence incites eternal wonder.

All praise to you, our comfort and strength.

Amen.

*** Closing Hymn: "Here I Am, Lord" VU 509**

I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard my people cry.

All who dwell in deepest sin my hand will save.

I who made the stars of night,

I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear my light to them?

Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

I have heard you calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,

I have borne my people's pain,

I have wept for love of them; they turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone,

give them hearts for love alone.

I will speak my word to them.

Whom shall I send? R

I, the Lord of wind and flame,

I will tend the poor and lame,

I will set a feast for them; my hand will save.

Finest bread I will provide

till their hearts be satisfied.

I will give my life to them.

Whom shall I send? R

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**Rev. Joanne's Reflection****Passing the Torch**

The late Steve Jobs was co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Apple; the chairman and majority shareholder of Pixar; a member of The Walt Disney Company's board of directors following its acquisition of Pixar; and the founder, chairman, and CEO of NeXT. He is widely recognized as a pioneer of the personal computer revolution of the 1970s and 1980s, along with his early business partner and fellow Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak. He also believed in passing on the torch of his work and vision. Before he stepped down as CEO of Apple, he prepared his succession plan in the form of Apple University. Founded in 2008, Apple University has a leadership curriculum with content and materials based off of Job's experiences. Its purpose is to "teach Apple employees how to think like Steve Jobs and make decisions that he would make."

This kind of leadership planning is often related to the business world, but in my training and education to become an ordained minister in the United Church, we were encouraged to look for those who might also discern a call to ministry, who might have the gifts and skills, and calling, to follow the same path that we followed. In our churches, nominating committees often filled that role of searching for those who might be called to positions of leadership and discipleship.

Elijah and Elisha don't have this issue of planning! Elijah, called to be a prophet, performer of miracles and defender of the Hebrew faith. Elijah, hearing God's still small voice, also hears from God that his successor will be Elisha. So Elijah goes to find him, and encounters Elisha working with his family and helping to lead a team of oxen. He places his cloak on Elisha's shoulders – a symbolic gesture perhaps only really understood by Elijah and Elisha themselves, but certainly signifying God's naming of Elisha as future prophet who will succeed Elijah. In a dramatic and meaningful act of closure, Elisha slaughters the oxen and prepares a final feast for his family before becoming Elijah's attendant and his protégé – his disciple.

We heard the end of their story today – that moment when the torch of God's prophet Elijah is passed to Elisha, in the form of what we presume is that same cloak, that same mantle representing the prophet's work and blessings. It is another dramatic tale – Elijah repeatedly telling his apprentice to stay, Elisha refusing to be separated from his master. Water parting reminiscent of Moses and the Red Sea, Elisha's plea to be giving a double portion of Elijah's spirit, just as the eldest son in a family would receive a double portion of his father's inheritance. The appearance of a fiery chariot that takes Elijah directly to God, and Elisha's own coming to prophetic power as he takes up Elijah's mantle and himself parts the waters, going on in his life to perform twice the miracles that Elijah did in his lifetime.

The point here is that for both Elijah and Elisha, there was something important, something sacred, to be passed along. Although we are not given the details, we assume that Elijah prepared his disciple for the role of God's prophet in many ways, and that at the very least Elisha was able to learn by observing

Elijah's work. I believe we share this aspect of their story – we all have something sacred, something important, to pass along to those who may come after us in our journeys of faith. We can take the time to share what we have learned, and be watchful for and encouraging to those who may offer themselves.

I think it is also significant that Elijah did not choose Elisha, nor did he try to persuade or cajole. He simply listened to God, and offered Elisha a choice, which he accepted. We too can listen for God – for those moments when the Spirit may prompt us to action, to asking and offering opportunity.

My own call to ministry at Applewood came, I believe, as such an invitation. I was looking for a change in ministry, and had read the advertisement for the position here. I did not know your church family, even though I had spent 25 years in both music and student ministry in the city, playing and later preaching in supply positions at many of Mississauga's United Churches, so I had dismissed and I thought had forgotten about the opening. One morning, just as I was waking, I heard a very clear voice telling me to get up and apply for ministry with you all, and we continue to walk and work and share leadership together eight years later.

Jesus offered many opportunities to follow to those he encountered, including the individuals he meets in today's scriptures. We know that his closest disciples literally dropped their nets and changed their lives, even though I don't think any of them believed they would eventually take up the mantle of Jesus' ministry in spreading God's reign of love. We know, like the individual who needed to bury his father or say goodbye to his family, that it is not always easy to change direction, change focus, and give our full attention to following God's way.

I say we continue to ask anyway, despite the busyness and distractions in people's lives. I say we continue to be open to God's nudges, to the opportunities not just to pass the torch of our work or responsibilities, but to pass on the mantle of our faith, of our sense that God is alive and active in our lives. We might not create a rather narcissistic school to teach people to be like *us*, but we can support our community as it creates a space where people can learn to live and lead in a God-centered way.

Because, my friends, Jesus has passed his mantle to all of us – the mantle of justice-seeking and right relationship, the torch of compassion and inclusion, the sacred cloak of connection with God. May we find that his mantle settles on us in ways that move us to share, encourage us to lead, and perhaps make us uncomfortable enough to act in God's name.