

**ZOOM Worship for October 24, 2021
22nd 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.

Centering Music: "Take, O Take Me as I Am" MV 85

Take, O take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart
and live in me.

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

One: Come into this time of worship -
Two: bring your coffee mug and your slippers,
One: bring your worries and your disappointments,
Two: bring your joys and celebrations.
One: Come into this virtual sacred space as we listen for God –
Two: who seeks us out, who knows our lives,
Two: who loves us, and renews us, and calls us together.
One: Come to be refreshed, come to be restored -
Two: in body, mind and spirit,
One: in heart and soul, in community and as individuals.
Two: Come and worship God!
One: God, we bring our thanks for all you provide
in the rich harvests of fields and of minds -
the wealth of wisdom
the gifts of science
the tastes of fall apples and squashes
the feel of fallen leaves under our feet.
Be with us in this time of worship,
in words and music,
in the faces and voices of our community shared.
Restore in us a sense of wonder,
a sense of purpose
a sense of belonging
as we continue to walk together in these pandemic days
when we seem to have lost so much.
Amen

Opening Hymn: “Joyful, Joyful” VU 232 verses 1 - 3

Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.

All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.

You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation “A Job Profile” by Tom Gordon

Tested by Satan, so we’re led to believe,
you stood firm.
Now that’s quite something!
How did you manage to face down the Devil
and survive?

You lost your children and your wealth,
and you didn’t buckle.
Now, that’s astonishing!
How did you manage to cope with grief and loss
and keep going?

Friends came and gave you false comfort,
and you kept up the dialogue.
Now that’s incredible!
How did you stay patient with their myriad of words
and not explode?

You broke your silence and complained to God –

and still believed.
Now that's quite marvellous!
How could you be angry and believing at the same time –
and not lose faith?

And, in the end, you praised the wisdom of your God
and trusted all the more.
Now, that's fantastic!
How could you come through all this
and live?

Stand with me, Job,
as I try to survive the devil's wily ways.
Walk with me, Job,
as I seek comfort in my loss and grief.
Sit with me, Job,
as I need to be patient with my false comforters.
Wait with me, Job,
as I struggle to make sense of the anger and belief of my faith.
Stay with me, Job,
as I find new wisdom in your God – and mine.

Sung Response: "Behold, Behold" MV 115

Behold, (behold,) behold (behold,) I make all things new,
beginning with you and starting from today.
Behold, (behold,) behold (behold,) I make all things new,
my promise is true, for I am Christ the way.

Scripture Readings:

Job 42:1–6, 10–17 *The Inclusive Bible*

Then Job answered God:

I know that you can do all things:

You have only to think something and it is done.

"Who is this obscuring my plans with such ignorant words?" you asked.

"That was me. I've been spouting off about things I can't understand, about wonders beyond my experience and knowledge.

"Listen now, and I will speak; I will ask the questions and you will answer me!" you said.

Formerly I knew you only by word of mouth, but now I see you with my own eyes.

And so I now take back all that I said, and repent in dust and ashes.

After Job had prayed for his friends, YHWH restored Job's prosperity, blessing him with twice as much as he had before. Then all his sisters and brothers and everyone who had known him before visited Job and sat down and dined with him. They sympathized with him and comforted Job for all the evil YHWH had heaped upon him. Each of them gave Job a piece of silver and a gold ring.

"YHWH blessed Job's latter days even more than his former life: he came to own 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 yoke of oxen, and 1,000 donkeys.

He also went on to have three daughters and seven sons. He named the daughters Jemimah, Keziah and Kerenhappuch. In all the land there were no women as esteemed as the daughters of Job. And Job gave his daughters and sons equal shares of his inheritance.

After this Job lived on to the age of 140 years, and he saw his children and his children's up to the fourth generation.

And when Job died, he was old and full of days.

Mark 10:46–52 *NRSV*

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus

They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart; get up, he is calling you.' So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said to him, 'My teacher, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your faith has made you well.' Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Music Offering: "Tender Shepherd, El Shadai"

Reflection: "Restoration"

Hymn: "When We Are Tested" MV 65 (Tune: *Slane*)

When we are tested and wrestle alone,
famished for bread when the world offers stone,
nourish us, God, by your word and your way,
food that sustains us by night and by day.

When in the desert we cry for relief,
pleading for paths marked by certain belief,
lift us to love you beyond sign and test,
trusting your presence, our only true rest.

When we are tempted to barter our souls,
trading the truth for power to control,
teach us to worship and praise only you,
seeking your will in the work that we do.

When we have struggled and searched through the night,
sorting and sifting the wrong from the right,
Savior, surround us with circles of care,
angels of healing, of hope, and of prayer.

Virtual Offering:

One: What we offer of ourselves In God's name makes a difference in the world.

Skills and knowledge can open doors and opportunities,
faithful leadership can help our church to thrive,
and our financial contributions keep our ministry alive.

*Two: Restoring God, may all that we offer be a reflection of your love,
building hope, creating community, offering help to the vulnerable.
Amen*

Sung Response: "I'm Gonna Shout, Shout" MV 183

I'm gonna shout, shout, shout out my love
for Jesus, for Jesus!
I'm gonna shout, shout, shout out my love
for God's most holy child!
For whatever I might do today,
at home, at school, at work, at play,
I've got Jesus' love deep down inside of me!

Prayers of the People:

One: God of restoration and renewal,
today we bring our awareness and our thanks.

*Two: We are aware of the need for our earth to be restored to health,
and we thank you that we have every tool we need to accomplish this task.*

One: We are aware that racial injustices still fill our headlines,
and we thank you that we have the ability to learn a new way of thinking.

*Two: We are aware that children will go to bed hungry right here in our city,
and we thank you that we actually have the means to eradicate poverty.*

One: God of hope and justice, move us to renew the earth,
spur us on to learning, respect and acceptance,
urge us to act for the hungry ones, the lonely ones, the homeless ones.

*Two: We pray, God, aware that there are many needs in our community,
and many people who are vulnerable or afraid.
Show us the pathway to care and support.*

One: We pray, God, aware that there are many who need our prayers for support,
for inspiration, as they face health challenges and grief challenges and
life's challenges.

*Two: Restoring and renewing God, hear the prayers of your people,
those we are able to speak aloud, and those too deep for words ...*

One: Hear our prayers, God – as we sing to you with words that Jesus taught us -

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

Closing Hymn: "May the God of Hope Go with Us" VU 424

May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace,
singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

May the God of healing free the earth from fear,
freeing us for peace, both treasured and pursued.
May the God of love keep our commitment clear
to a world restored, to human life renewed.

Praying, let us work for peace,
singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Commissioning /Blessing

As we leave this time of worship, may God, who sang the universe into being, lead you,
and may Jesus Christ, God's love song to the world, attend you,
and may the Holy Spirit surround you as God's love is sung into each and every heart,
each and every day.
Amen

Choral Blessing: "Go Now In Peace"

**Reflection
"Restoration"**

I know a man who I will call Philip. He is what you might call a family man, and a business owner who is still working even though he is certainly at retirement age. He is close to his daughter and granddaughter, and is known in his neighbourhood as a caring and thoughtful person. Philip attends Mass in his community church regularly, and has a strong faith that is a part of his life, even asking his priest to bless a warehouse he opened some years ago.

But about 30 years ago, Philip lost almost everything he had. In the high-interest and turbulent economic time of the late 1980s and early 1990's, he was forced to declare bankruptcy, he lost his home and other properties, his abuse of alcohol resulted in the loss of his driving license for an extended period, and he very nearly lost his family as well.

Our two scripture stories today both speak of characters that have lost much – although unlike Philip through no actions of their own. Job's story is often a difficult one for us to read as we follow this man described as good and righteous through terrible losses – his children, his wealth, his security. His friends are little help to him, and he complains constantly of the changes in his life even as he remains in relationship with God. In our gospel reading, it is Bartimaeus who has lost not only his sight, but his ability to earn an income and to be a respected member of his community. He, too, has not given up a relationship with God despite his circumstances.

It is perhaps hard for us to imagine ourselves in any of these scenarios. What would it be like to lose so much? How would we feel? Would we maintain a relationship with God even in our anger or despair? I do know that many of us gathered here – or those reading my words alone – have suffered great losses in your lives. You have lost partners and family members; you have lost employment, or your health. Especially throughout this pandemic people have lost connection to one another, and to community, they have lost a sense of safety and they have lost the support and the nourishment of gathering together. Unlike either of our characters, we know that some of what has been lost from our lives cannot simply be restored to us.

We may, like Job, complain and weep to God. We may, like Bartimaeus, call out for God to see us. The worst outcome, I think, is when we stop calling out to God at all.

In Job's story, a recognition of who God is, a deeper and humbler understanding of the Divine, leads to his restoration. Bartimaeus, too, 'sees' Jesus and names him as Messiah, the Son of David, despite his physical blindness. Perhaps it was those words – names that even his disciples did not use and words that the crowd tried to hush – that stopped Jesus, and eventually led to the restoration of his sight. When we 'see' God, when we humbly name, or loudly declare who God is to us, then perhaps we can move towards our own restorations. Peace where there is pain, comfort where there has been loss, sight when we have been blinded by our experiences.

One of my favourite verses in the story of Bartimaeus contains Jesus question to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" We might ask that of ourselves – what do we want Jesus to do for us? What have we truly lost? What can God restore? It can lead us to also name what we deeply value, what we treasure most in our lives, but also what may be missing for us in our lives today.

Job and Bartimeus, touched by Holy Mystery in very different ways, can perhaps help us to see a path to restoration, and perhaps renovation. Trust God and don't stop calling out – expect that God will hear you, that you will get Jesus' full attention. Have faith, and allow yourself to be transformed like joyful Job who gives his new daughters silly names and gives them a rare inheritance. Be faithful and be changed and restored like blind Bartimaeus who can now see his path to follow Jesus.

I began this reflection with the story of Philip, whose health and happiness, his very life you might say, was restored. I know what Philip would say – because he has declared to me many times that his faith and trust in God that allowed him to be humble and to persevere. His faith led him to recognize what he truly treasured, and allowed him to see a path through difficult losses to a place of transformation, a place of peace and contentment that helped him to build a life once again.

In what we have lost, may we be found by God who sees us and loves us.
In our cries to God, may we know that God is listening.
In our striving to follow Jesus may we be restored, renewed and changed.