

SOUTH CAYUGA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Of

THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA

Welcome to our Service this Morning

Aug 7th 2022 @ 10:00 am

Pastor Dawn Ballantyne, DLM

V.A.M. – Joan Willis -- V.A.M – Rev. Bryan Melick

Pianist: Silken Ricker

Music Leader: Donna Mulder

Summer Squabbles

Welcome & Territory Acknowledgement

In the spirit of respect and truth, we acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Missassauga people. We acknowledge all nations, Indigenous and non, who currently live upon the land covered by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant. This sacred gathering place provides us with an opportunity to engage in and demonstrate leadership on reconciliation. Thank you for your enthusiasm and commitment in working towards a greater understanding of the effects of colonialism and how we might live into right relationship with all.

Announcements

Lighting of the Christ Candle

I invite you to take a moment and focus on the light of the Christ candle flame, take a deep breath and be still. Be present. In your bulletin you will find the words to *Spirit, Open My Heart*, Silken will play through it once and I invite you to join in singing after that. Please remain seated, let's just take a moment to center ourselves for worship here this morning.

Centering Song

Spirit, Open My Heart

MV 79

Spirit open my heart to the joy and pain of living.

As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.

Spirit, open my heart.

God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender

All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender

Spirit open my heart to the joy and pain of living.

As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.

Spirit open my heart.

**Write your love upon my stony heart as my law, my goal,
my story**

In each thought, word, and deed, may my living bring you glory

Spirit open my heart to the joy and pain of living.

As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.

Spirit open my heart.

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May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother,

In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another.

Spirit open my heart to the joy and pain of living.

As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving.

Spirit open my heart.

Call to Worship

With open hearts we gather to worship.

Whether in the shared space of this sanctuary, or through printed word, or through the gift of technology, we are a community of faith.

Here we seek renewal and connection.

Come, let us worship our Creator.

Opening Prayer

Creator God, here we are. We breathe in the peace and calm of this place and time and we exhale the tension we carry between our shoulder blades and upon our furrowed brow. We breathe in the hope that comes through meeting you here and we breathe out the heaviness of the world that weighs us down. We breathe in your unconditional love and everlasting promise, and we release all that blocks us from trusting what we know to be true, deep in our hearts. Holy God, we gather here in Jesus' name, ready and open for what you would have us hear and feel today. Amen.

Scripture assorted Proverbs

11:9 With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors,
but through knowledge the righteous escape.

15:4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life,
but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

16:24 Gracious words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

18:21 The tongue has the power of life and death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

18:4 The words of the mouth are deep waters,
but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing stream.

12:18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Opening Hymn *Wonderful Words of Life*

Sing them over again to me, Wonderful words of Life;

Let me more of their beauty see, Wonderful words of Life;

Words of life and beauty, Teach me faith and duty

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life

Christ, the blessed one gives to all, Wonderful words of Life;

Sinner, list to the loving call, Wonderful words of Life;

All so freshly given, Wooing us to heaven:

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life

Sweetly echo the gospel call, Wonderful words of Life;

Offer pardon and peace to all, Wonderful words of Life;

Jesus, only Savior, Sanctify forever;

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life

Beautiful words, wonderful words, Wonderful words of Life

Theme Time

There is a 19th century folktale about a young fellow who went about town slandering the town's wise man. One day, he went to the wise man's home and asked for forgiveness. The wise man, realizing that this man had not internalized the gravity of his transgressions, told him that he would forgive him on one condition: that he go home, take a feather pillow from his house, cut it up, and scatter the feathers to the wind. After he had done so, he should then return to the wise man's house.

Though puzzled by this strange request, the young man was happy to be let off with so easy a penance. He quickly cut up the pillow, scattered the feathers, and returned to the house.

"Am I now forgiven?" he asked.

"Just one more thing," the wise man said. "Go now and gather up all the feathers."

"But that's impossible. The wind has already scattered them."

"Precisely," he answered. "And though you may truly wish to correct the evil you have done, it is as impossible to repair the damage done by your words as it is to recover the feathers. Your words are out there in the marketplace, spreading hate, even as we speak."

Scripture**Isaiah 1:10-20**

Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom;

listen to the instruction of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!

¹¹ "The multitude of your sacrifices—
what are they to me?" says the LORD.

"I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
of rams and the fat of fattened animals;

I have no pleasure
in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me,
who has asked this of you,
this trampling of my courts?

¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
Your incense is detestable to me.

New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.

¹⁴ Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals
I hate with all my being.

They have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.

¹⁵ When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I hide my eyes from you;

even when you offer many prayers,
I am not listening.

Your hands are full of blood!

¹⁶ Wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds out of my sight;
stop doing wrong.

¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.^[a]

Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.

¹⁸ "Come now, let us settle the matter,"
says the LORD.

"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;

though they are red as crimson,
 they shall be like wool.
¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient,
 you will eat the good things of the land;
²⁰ but if you resist and rebel,
 you will be devoured by the sword.”
 For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Reflection

“Summer Squabbles”

Who likes conflict? Okay, who has an aversion to conflict? Who thinks it is better to avoid conflict? I watched a docu-series on Netflix this summer about the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and their leader Warren Jeffs called, “Keep Sweet: Pray and Obey” in which they were literally teaching the girls and women to “keep sweet.” It was literally their motto – painted on buildings, embroidered into wall hangings; they even sang about it – do not argue, do not disagree, do not have an opinion, do not stand up for yourself, simply, keep sweet.

Ridiculous. Avoiding conflict is literally bad for your health. According to healthline.com, bottling up our emotions can lead to premature death. “Laughing nervously or plastering a fake smile on our face instead of acknowledging distressing emotions can also lead to feelings of loneliness and depression. Being conflict avoidant also impacts our relationships because we’re cutting off all honest communication with the other person. While avoidance sometimes seems like the best way to deal with conflict, in the long run it ends up harming our intimacy.” (1)

There is a story of a king and Queen who ruled over a kingdom known as “Talkalot.” It’s suggested that “Fightalot” may have been a more accurate name because the King and Queen constantly, night and day through insults at one another and of course, their loyal subjects modeled themselves after the monarchy, so everyone was keen to insult and fight with one another.

Nothing was different, the day the Queen was due to give birth to their first child. The Queen and King yelled incessantly at one another until suddenly the Royal Physician couldn’t take it any longer and shouted for them both to stop; suggesting that their loud arguing was no way to bring an heir into the world. In response, the Queen screamed, “I hereby decree, from this day to eternity, the King and Queen shall quite agree, never again to disagree.” And with that, the baby princess was born. Of course, the King didn’t want to be out-decreed, so he yelled, “And I hereby declare, on behalf of my heir, no one in our kingdom fair, can utter a word of anger there.”

Then the Royal Physician was banished and the palace recalled every edition of the dictionary so words such as anger, exasperation, irritation, frustration and

annoyance, among others could all be removed. Almost immediately, the King and Queen began to struggle with indigestion. The King emitted a series of short burps and his Queen lost her tea and crumpets in a most un-regal fashion.

The citizens of Talkalot did their best to abide by the new law. They did not argue or complain but they all began to suffer quite severely with gastric eruptions. They grew more miserable each day; walking around clutching their sides and chewing on mint leaves to help settle their churning stomachs.

Eventually (after seven long years) the King and Queen realized, with the help of their princess that something needed to change and they eventually decided that it would be best to lift the ban on anger. Soon, across the kingdom, everyone was communicating with one another but what was even more incredible was what they weren't doing. They weren't burping, hiccupping or urping. And so the King and Queen lifted the edict and declared, "We hereby decree from this day to eternity, we will share what we feel, from anger to zeal, without shouting out names, meant to pester and blame, else we'll risk losing sight of, the power and might, of an unspoken intention, in the lower intestine. (2)

So not only is addressing concerns good for our health, it's also biblical. The Isaiah scripture says, "Come now, let us settle the matter," says God. Come now, let us settle the matter. Come now, let's talk about it. Let's put it all on the table. Let's find a compromise. Let's work towards a solution.

So in the very first story we heard today about feathers in the wind and in the verses from the book of Proverbs we learned that our words matter. The only way we can pay attention to what words are coming out of our mouths is if we stay calm. And that's on us as individuals – you can't tell someone to 'stay calm' and have that work. Staying calm is our own self-work – you can't control other peoples' reactions, you can only control your own.

If you are trying to resolve a conflict you want to be calm and you want to listen intently. Hopefully that will lead to you being able to identify agreements. Speak clearly and aim carefully. And I don't mean, with a weapon – I mean, with your calm and friendly words, directly at the issue at hand – not insults at the person you disagree with. Ask questions. What is the underlying reasons someone is so passionate about something? Be empathetic! Be kind. If things get off kilter, reframe the debate.

God wants us to come and settle things. Be restored and be reconciled. Conflict (or the summer squabble) is inevitable. It is not because we are bad. Conflict is not an accident – conflict is an assignment. It's an opportunity for us to practice loving ourselves and loving our neighbours!

I'd like to conclude with the Gospel lesson today which comes from the book of Luke 12:32-40, from the version, (The Message).

29-32 "What I'm trying to do here is get you to relax, not be so preoccupied with *getting* so you can respond to God's *giving*. People who don't know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep yourself in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. You'll find all your everyday human concerns will be met. Don't be afraid of missing out. You're my dearest friends! The Father wants to give you the very kingdom itself.

33-34 "Be generous. Give to the poor. Get yourselves a bank that can't go bankrupt, a bank in heaven far from bankrobbers, safe from embezzlers, a bank you can bank on. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

35-38 "Keep your shirts on; keep the lights on! Be like house servants waiting for their master to come back from his honeymoon, awake and ready to open the door when he arrives and knocks. Lucky the servants whom the master finds on watch! He'll put on an apron, sit them at the table, and serve them a meal, sharing his wedding feast with them. It doesn't matter what time of the night he arrives; they're awake—and so blessed!

39-40 "You know that if the house owner had known what night the burglar was coming, he wouldn't have stayed out late and left the place unlocked. So don't you be lazy and careless. Just when you don't expect him, the Son of Man will show up."

The Son of Man will show up. Perhaps in the form of an old wise man, a young princess, or small, inner voice. But in everything, we are never alone. God is with us; the Holy Spirit, the advocate, the helper is with us, helping us and strengthening us, especially when we feel like we just can't take it anymore. Breathe in the peace Jesus left us with, breathe out the frustrations of human invention. Let us answer God's call to settle our conflicts, no matter how great, not letting them fester and harm us, with kindness and love.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

(1) <https://www.healthline.com/health/conflict-avoidance#how-its-harmful>

(2) Brown, Charlotte Rogers. *A Weaving of Wonder*. California:LuraMedia, 1995. p.78-87.

Together let us sing of love in action,

Prayers of the People

God of steadfast love and mercy, we join our hearts together in prayer for those close to us and around the world. We pray this morning for the staff and residents of Grandview Lodge, Edgewater Gardens, Anson Place, RVilla, Lookout Ridge and Portal Village.

We pray for those currently in care at Haldimand War Memorial Hospital and those who are receiving out-patient care from local facilities: chemotherapy, radiation, and dialysis; and we pray for those who are recovering from surgeries and ailments; and those awaiting appointments. We pray for all who work in healthcare and all who work in education. We pray with gratitude for their dedication, health, and safety.

Holy God, we pray for the children who attended Wonder Camp and we pray that the final few weeks of their summer will be safe and filled with fun and innocence. We pray for all those who are travelling and on vacation – may their time be filled with renewal and relaxation.

We pray Almighty Creator for those who are unable to travel, whether due to finances, lack of opportunity, employment or underemployment, or other circumstances. We pray for those who are lonely and longing for companionship and for those who are grieving loved ones and days gone by. We pray for those who are afraid and uncertain. We pray for those who are in transition times in their lives. We pray for those whose home is violent or unstable; and we pray for those who do not have enough to eat or anywhere to go. We pray for those living in war zones and all those awaiting moves to Canada and other countries of promise.

We offer you our thanksgiving Holy God that you are with us; that you understand and know the prayers of our hearts before we even know them ourselves. In the silence of our hearts we bring before you now, the prayers we hold dear:.....

And we continue in prayer, saying together the words Jesus taught his friends to pray,

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done on earth
 as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread
 and forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us,
 and lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn***Let There Be Light*****VU 679****Commissioning**

Go from this time of worship ready to address conflicts with kind words, a listening ear, and not allow frustrations to fester.

Though the road ahead often seems uncertain, and paths constantly changing, Go trusting that some things are as solid and secure as the ground beneath our feet:

We know that God is love. We know that Jesus' light endures. We know that we are never alone – that the Holy Spirit is within us and surrounding us – binding us to God and to one another.

Go now in peace.

**Go now in PEACE ,never be afraid
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day,
Go now in FAITH, steadfast, strong and true,
Know God will Guide you in all you do.
Go now in LOVE, and show you believe,
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there watching from above.
Go now in PEACE, in FAITH, and in LOVE.
Amen, Amen, Amen.**

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Authors: Don Besig & Nancy Price Song #274763, South Cayuga Pastoral Charge. CCLI

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