

Welcome & Announcements

Creation Connection Imagine worms, buzzards or germs as Good Samaritans on our planet!

Lighting the Christ Candle

L: As we light this Christ candle, we remember that Jesus is the light of the world, and we are called to let our light shine before others, bringing hope and love into the darkness.

All: We will let Christ's light shine through us in all that we say and all that we do. Amen

Gathering Hymn O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing, VU # 326

O for a thousand tongues to sing	Jesus! The name that charms our fears,	He speaks, and listening to his voice,	Hear him, you deaf, you voiceless one,	My gracious Master and my God,
My great Redeemer's praise,	That bids our sorrows cease;	New life the dead receive;	Your tongues again employ;	Assist me to proclaim, To spread through all the earth abroad
The glories of my God and King,	'tis music in the sinner's ears,	The mournful broken hearts rejoice,	You blind, behold your Saviour comes,	The honours of your name.
The triumphs of God's grace.	'tis life and health and peace.	The humble poor believe.	And leap, you lame, for joy!	

Call to Worship

L: Enter God's gates with thanksgiving!

P: Enter God's church with praise!

L: Let us sing with voices united,

P: and seek a common purpose which will lead us to be healers,

L: and helpers. As Mr. Rogers said, "when there are problems in our world, look for the helpers; the helpers will always come to where the hurting is."

P: Help us, O God, to offer up for healing the hurts in our own hearts and minds this day.

L: Enable us to be open to the cooling and healing balm of Your love for us,

ALL: Empower us to make reaching out to others who are in pain, to assist them and to make their burdens easier to carry today, and every day.

Opening Prayer How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear! It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds, and drives away our fear. It makes the wounded spirit whole and calms the troubled breast; 'tis manna to the hungry soul, and to the weary, rest. O Jesus, shepherd, guardian, friend, my Prophet, Priest, and King, my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End, accept the praise I bring. Amen. *John Newton, 1799*

Ministry of Music Deep in our Hearts, sung by Rev Larry

Children's Ministry God is our plumb line.

The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

Hymn O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts, VU # 472

O Jesus, joy of loving hearts,	Your truth unchanged has ever	We taste your ever-living	O Jesus, ever with us stay;
The fount of life, the light of all	stood;	bread,	Make all our moments calm
From every bliss that earth	You plead with all to call on	And long to feast upon you	and bright;
imparts	you;	still;	Chase the bleak night of sin
We turn, unfilled, to hear your	To those who seek you, you	We drink of you, the	away;
call.	are good,	fountainhead,	Shed o'er the world your holy
	To those who find you, life is	Our thirsting souls from you we	light.
	new.	fill.	

Offering Invitation & Prayer Whether you find yourself dancing before the Lord today, or with heavy burdens you wish to set down, in this moment, you are invited to call upon God's abundant love and respond generously. Together, our financial gifts support the ministry of Dunwich United Church. This community acknowledges joy and pain, marks rites of passage, and walks together in the Way of Jesus. Please share generously.

God of the dance, accept these gifts, and help our community steward them to inspire meaning in the world. We pray that you bless us, and the multitude of ways we generously share ourselves, with the aim to bring about your kin-dom. Amen.

Responsive Psalm Psalm 82, VU # 799

L: God stands in the council of heaven, in the midst of the gods gives judgement:

P: "How long will you judge unjustly, and favour the cause of the wicked?"

L: Give justice to the weak and the orphan, maintain the right of the lowly and destitute.

P: Rescue the weak and the needy, save them from the hands of the wicked.

Sung Response Salvation is from God, our God.

L: You neither know nor understand;

P: You go about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

L: I say then to you: "Gods you all may be, and offspring of the Most High;

P: But you shall die like mortals, and fall like any of the mighty."

L: Rise up, O God, and judge the earth,

P: And take all the nations as your possession!

Sung Response Salvation is from God, our God.

Colossians 1: 1-14

"From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Timothy, to the holy and faithful sisters and brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace and peace to you from our Loving God. We always give thanks to the Abba God of our Saviour Jesus Christ whenever we pray for you, ever since we heard about your faith in Christ Jesus and the love you show toward heaven. It is only recently that you heard of this, when it was announced in the message of the truth. The Good News which has reached you is spreading all over the world; it is producing the same fruit there as it did among you, ever since you heard about God's grace and understood what it really is. Epaphras, who taught you, is one of our closest coworkers and a faithful labourer of Christ on our behalf, and it was he who told us all about your love in the Spirit.

Therefore, since the day we heard about you, we've been praying for you unceasingly and asking that you attain the full knowledge of God's will, in perfect wisdom and spiritual understanding. Then you will lead a life worthy and pleasing to our God in every way. You will multiply good works of every sort and grow in the knowledge of God. And by the might of God's glory you will be endowed with the strength needed to stand fast and endure joyfully whatever may happen.

Thanks be to God for having made you worthy to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light! God rescued us from the authority of darkness and brought us into the reign of Jesus, God's only Begotten. And it is through Jesus that we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Luke 10: 25-37

An expert in the law stood up to put Jesus to the test and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?" Jesus answered, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

The expert on the Law replied: "You must love the Most High God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself."

Jesus said, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live."

But the expert on the Law, seeking self-justification, pressed Jesus further: "And just who is my neighbour?"

Jesus replied, "There was a traveler going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, who fell prey to robbers. The traveler was beaten, stripped naked, and left half-dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road; the priest saw the traveler lying beside the road but passed by on the other side. Likewise, there was a Levite who came the same way; this one, too, saw the afflicted traveller and passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan, who was taking the same road, also came upon the traveler and filled with compassion, approached the traveler and dressed the wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then the Samaritan put the wounded person on a donkey, went straight to an inn and there took care of the injured one. The next day the Samaritan took out two silver pieces and gave them to the innkeeper with the request, "Look after this person, and if there is any further expense, I'll repay you on the way back."

"Which of these three, in your opinion, was the neighbour to the traveler who fell among the robbers?"

The answer came, "The one who showed compassion."

Jesus replied, "Go and do the same."

Message Who are our neighbours?

The apostle Paul travelled throughout the middle East as his ministry, founding new Christian churches in the communities which he visited. Imagine this dusty, travel-worn man trudging down the dusty trail, walking all the way from Sheddin on a blisteringly hot day, like yesterday, with a couple of faithful companions, the clothes on his back and a small pack, coming into our mud-streeted village, then after asking around, holding a meeting of people who had perhaps heard about this Jesus person, and who were interested in learning more, or who were worn down and weary from the Roman occupation and the rule of the Temple, the taxes, and the endless rules about virtually every aspect of their behaviour; people with weighed down souls, feeling alone, undervalued and unimportant. Imagine this visionary sharing the story of this Jesus, and his message of brotherly love and hope, his relationship to God, his wise teachings, and then, surprisingly, his death at the hands of the authorities on trumped up charges, his cruel torture and crucifixion, and the miracle of Jesus' resurrection on Easter. How would you feel about this amazing Good News?

Paul goes on to invite each and every one of you to enter into this Christian community, where you will be an equal member, beloved by God and His Son, with the free gift of the Holy Spirit, the remission of your sins through repentance, and your soul and body being washed and cleansed through the sacrament of holy baptism, whereby you can shed your former self and emerge with fresh hope and newfound joy, with the promise of life everlasting. You could literally be reborn, made anew, forgiven for your past sins and errors, and freed from the restrictive chains of the Jewish Law which limited and belittled you, each and every day of your life. In order to take on this new life there were indeed huge risks, as the Jesus movement was extremely unpopular with the Roman government and the Jewish hierarchy, but wait a moment, aren't those the same entities holding you down in this hopeless life in which you have no freedoms whatsoever?! What have you got to lose, versus what have you got to gain??

Paul taught each of these groups of new converts to the Christian faith how to behave, speak, and worship, including the basics of prayer, the shared reading of scripture, and the sacraments of communion and baptism, as Jesus had taught all of the disciples before sending them out on their own on their pathways of ministry and mission. These disciples faithfully fulfilled their duties, but tragically, in the end, virtually all of them were executed for their courageous sharing of Jesus' message, and their quite real threat to the Roman and Jewish empires as thousands of people became Christians.

In this entire passage from Colossians, Paul exhorts and encourages the people of the Christian church of Colossae how privileged, blessed and fortunate they are to have been saved through Jesus Christ, and that they must remain and grow as a powerful beacon of the faith: "Thanks be to God for having made you worthy to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in light! God rescued us from the authority of darkness and brought us into the reign of Jesus, God's only Begotten. And it is through Jesus that we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

They are to be proud and devoted to God and the ministry and worship of Jesus, which saves their lives, in every way imaginable

Jesus' main commandment to us is to love our neighbours as we love ourselves, or to love God and our fellow human beings. In the very familiar parable of the Good Samaritan, our second reading for today, Luke presents Jesus as a fully formed rabbi or teacher, preaching as the Son of God, confronted by a legal expert, who demands of Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?" Jesus answered, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

The expert on the Law replied: "You must love the Most High God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." That is straightforward enough, or is it?

The man asks a very deep question, "Just who is my neighbour?" And this seemingly simple question is the one which has confounded all of us from long before Jesus' time until today. Who is our neighbour, and how should we show love for them. Jesus' wise, challenging answer is the Parable about the Good Samaritan. I am not going to review who all of the characters are in this story, and what should have been expected of them, as I and other pastors have explained hundreds of times. Rather, knowing that Samaritans were unwelcome, despised foreigners in the eyes of the Jewish people and authorities, we are fully aware that the hero of Jesus' tale, the truly kind, generous and giving person, is the one who those hearing the story would have dismissed out of hand, as some sort of sub-human, as we all so comfortably do with regard to all peoples who are not like us, unless we truly live out our time living Christ's message and approach to others, instead of making them meaningless 'others.'

I am going to read a poem shared by a friend yesterday on CASA (the Spanish word for house) an online prayer group which I belong to, and for which I write and share a meditation and prayer on the 16th of each month and have done for the past ten years. Every day a different North American pastor shares thoughts, a prayer and often images, to uplift our whole community.

A reflection for July 12, On the Good Samaritan.....by: Ria Maria

We find ourselves living during a very challenging and poignant time in human history. And the gospel offers us such beautiful guidance and assistance in how to navigate these particularly stormy waters.

This Sunday, we have the story of the Good Samaritan. Perfect timing!

Jesus is counseling a man who asks, "And who is my neighbour?"

And Jesus essentially says that it doesn't matter who our neighbor is, it matters who WE are.

It doesn't matter who our neighbor is.

Even if it's a total stranger.

Even if it's someone who might appear to be kind of dirty or scary.

Even if it's someone who is outside our own social, national, ethnic, or religious group.

Even if it's someone who will never have the ability to pay us back.

Even if it's someone who might taint us in the eyes of others for helping them.

None of that matters. It only matters who WE are.

People of faith.

People who want to follow the will of God.

People who are willing to love God by loving others.

People who will share the love, and mercy, and compassion of God with another human being, simply because they are another human being, beloved by God.

People who understand and share God's heart of goodness and justice for all.

For ALL. (Who is left out of this definition? NO ONE AT ALL!!

According to Jesus, the real question isn't "Who is my neighbor?" The real question is "Who am I?"

Peace, love & blessings, Amen

Hymn When We Are Living, VU # 581

When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,	Through all our living, we, our fruits must give.	'Mid times of sorrow and in times of pain,	Across this wide world, we shall always find
And when we're dying, it is in the Lord.	Good works of service are for offering.	When sensing beauty or in love's embrace,	Those who are crying with no peace of mind,
Both in our living and in our dying,	When we are giving, or when receiving,	Whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,	But when we help them, or when we feed them,
We belong to God, we belong to God.	We belong to God, we belong to God.	We belong to God, we belong to God.	We belong to God, we belong to God.

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Concern Loving Creator God, you have blessed with the gifts of life, a brain with which to think, to solve problems, and to empathize with others. We ask today and every day that you release the prejudgments and fears from our minds that keep us apart from others, assuming the worst of them, and avoiding their sorrows and situations. If we do not seek to understand, then we can be of no assistance, especially if we assume that we know what they need, or what the best things might be for them – that is so very condescending and arrogant on our parts. We need to use our eyes to truly see, our ears to listen to the stories of others, and our hands and feet to assist them in ways which are important to them, which may be radically different from what we might assume are the needs or desires, the true causes of hurts and pain, and what their emotional state might be. When we see hurt, lead us to heal, to relieve pain and sorrow, and to with prayer and generosity of spirit offer balm, the ointment which will sooth, the solace that will reduce anxiety and fear. Inspire us to actively listen, to offer meaningful assistance, and to earnestly make a positive difference in their lives. A kind word or smile, a small gesture or a greeting, calling someone who is new to your community by name, or ask them cheerfully what their name is, and then use it the next time you meet. Show positive recognition when greeting others, with a warm smile, exuding the love, care and compassion which Jesus bids us to display and enact each day of our faithful Christian lives. Jesus is our friend, our Saviour, and the best role model that we could possibly imagine. For every problem, He has a solution, for each issue, he teaches us how to react, and for every single relationship He exhorts us how to act. Let us, Jesus' humble students and followers, be Christ's disciples in all circumstances and situations.

Parting Hymn *Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life*, VU # 681

Where cross the crowded ways of life, where sound the cries of race and clan, above the noise of selfish strife, we hear your words of life again.	In haunts of wretchedness and need, On shadowed thresholds, dark with fears, From paths where hide the lures of greed, We catch the vision of your tears.	The cup of water given for you Still holds the freshness of your grace; Yet long these multitudes to view The strong compassion of your face.	O Jesus, from the mountain side, Make haste to heal these hearts of pain; Among these restless throngs abide, And tread the city's streets again.	'Til all the world shall learn your love And follow where your feet have trod, 'til glorious from your heaven above Shall come the city of our God.
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Commissioning May God be with us today and every day as we go out into God's glorious world, seeking and greeting neighbours everywhere around us. Let our fellowship and love radiate from our faces, our voices, our gestures, and our smiles. Welcome all whom you meet, embrace those who need a hug, a kind word, or someone to truly listen. We are Jesus' hands and feet, his voice and his ears, and his loving heart to others, and to ourselves. God in peace, with a song and joy in your heart.

Choral Benediction *God Says*, MVU # 172

God says, "Be still so you may hear
The words I whisper in your ear.
If you will listen, you will know
I'm with you always where you go.

God says, "Reach out! The world's in need
And wants a word, a song, a deed.
I send you forth to speak, to sing,
To act for Christ in everything.

Choral Amen