

Sunday, July 27, 2025 - Order of Service

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE Oh, warm and comforting flame, sparkle, sparkle now! Guide us into safe soul refuge. Though shadows prevail, in mood or mind, we follow the light into the calm. How we long for and look for this light, and flickering, here it is. Christ - the light of day - the bright and comforting twinkling night light, the infinite and lovely flame of serenity. We welcome you, Light of Christ. The candle is lit.

WELCOME -by Stephanie Richmond, Greenbank-Seagrave PC, Greenbank, ON

L: As we gather here today, may the peace of Christ be upon this house of worship.

P: As we come together, may God's peace rest on us as we listen to the message, sing songs of praise, and give thanks.

L: May our time together ignite in us a desire to go out and share the peace and love of Christ with others.

PRAISE HYMN **I Will Raise You Up**, VU # 808

You who dwell in the shelter of our God, Who abide in this shadow for life, Say to the Lord,: "My refuge, my Rock in whom I trust!"	Refrain And I will raise you up on eagle's wings, Bear you on the breath of dawn, Make you to shine like the sun, And hold you in the palm of my hand."	The snare of the fowler will never capture you, And famine will bring you no fear: Under God's wings your refuge, God's faithfulness your shield. Refrain	You need not fear the terror of the night, Nor the arrow that flies by day; Thought thousands fall around you, Near you it shall not come. Refrain	For to God's angels is given a command To guard you in all your ways; Upon their hands they will bear you up, Lest you dash you foot against a stone. Refrain
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING HYMN **Breathe on Me Breath of God**, VU # 382

Breathe on me, breath of God, Fill me with life anew, That I may love what thou doest love, And do what thou wouldst do.	Breathe on me, breath of God, Until my heart is pure, Until my will is one with thine, To do and to endure.	Breathe on me, breath of God, 'til I am wholly thine, Until this earthly part of me Glow with thy fire divine.	Breathe on me, breath of God: So shall I never die, But live with thee the perfect life Of thine eternity.
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CALL TO WORSHIP -by Gord Dunbar, Kincardine PC, Kincardine, ON

L: We come, yearning, seeking, anticipating.

P: We come yearning for teaching. We come seeking healing for our brokenness. We come anticipating connection and meaning.

L: We come to be embraced by Jesus' compassion.

P: We come hungry for the bread of life, yearning to share intimately and fully with the Spirit.

L: We come like a tossed salad of variety – different histories, different geographies different ages, different abilities, different connections – together.

P: We come united in Christ, blessed by wonder and overwhelmed by bounty, a people encountering the Divine in the unexpected.

L: We come to pray together:

P: Form us as one people this morning, we pray, O God, that we may learn to cherish our unique wholeness, as we find in you the root of our faithful living.

L: Christ ached for us all, choosing to give himself unconditionally for hope, trusting in God's transformation.

P: We trust you, O God, that by your transformation of us, you have adopted us, giving us the promise of new life, bringing us to a place of forgiveness, and offering us new perspectives.

L: We become whole in you, O Christ, sharing your covenant of self-giving love.

P: You put flesh on the skeleton hands of our dreams, enlivening us for your mission in the world.

GATHERING PRAYER -by Stephanie Richmond, Greenbank-Seagrave PC, Greenbank, ON

Let us worship God, singing and praising God's wonderful love for all.

HYMN **Be Thou My Vision**, VU # 642 V1, 2, 4, & 5

Be thou my vision,	Be thou my wisdom,	Riches I heed not,	Great God of heaven,
O joy of my heart;	my calm in all strife;	Nor vain empty praise,	After victory won,
Naught be all else to me	I ever with thee,	Thou mine inheritance,	May I reach heaven's
Save that thou art,	And thou in my life;	Now and always;	joys
Thou my best thought,	Thou loving parent,	Thou and thou only,	O bright heaven's sun!
By day or by night,	Thy child may I be,	The first in my heart,	Heart of my own heart
Waking or sleeping,	Thou in me dwelling,	Great God of heaven,	Whatever befall,
Thy presence my light.	And I, one with thee.	my treasure thou art.	Still be my vision,
			O ruler of all.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION -by Gord Dunbar, Kincardine PC, Kincardine, ON

Based on Psalm 139

L: God searches us and knows us through and through.

P: So what's the point of confessing? God knows it all anyway: knows what we'll say before we even utter the words, knows our thoughts even before we form them, knows the pains, dilemmas, and choices we face, knows us all from the inside out.

L: Is such knowledge too wonderful for us? Is it too difficult to wrap our minds around such understanding?

P: It's like we're in prison bounded by God's peering eyes. There's no safety, no privacy, no freedom to be yourself.

L: Are we afraid of God, of what God discovers in us? Have we looked within? Are we afraid?

P: Yes, and we're not comfortable letting God know. We want to be different; we want to change. First, we want to find a place of healing.

L: Then come into God's loving embrace. Come into the silence to find wholeness. (silent prayer)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

L: God's love is always with us, even when we try to hide.

P: We're not afraid of that anymore, for that kind of love that accepts us as we are and gifts us with the way of transformation in Jesus, is a love we wish not to refuse.

L: So, are you willing to become vulnerable with God?

P: We receive God's call to wholeness and answer, "Yes!"

L: Journey, then, into new life with Jesus. Find the Spirit as companion and guide.

P: Thanks and praise be to God, whose abundant grace lifts us to celebration and joy.

OFFERING PRAYER -by Wanda Winfield, Blenheim UC, Blenheim, ON

It's not what we give, but how we give it. Even a cup of cold water is enough to earn God's thanks. Let us give with grateful hearts.

CHILDREN'S TIME

Story & Discussion Knock, knock! Who's there?

I'm sure you've heard of a "Knock, Knock" joke. I have some to tell you today. Ready?

Knock, Knock. (Kids respond, "Who's there?") Boo. (Kids respond, "Boo who?") Why are you crying?

Knock, knock. (Who's there?) Tank. (Tank who?) You're welcome!

Knock, knock. (Who's there?) Canoe. (Canoe who?) Canoe come out and play?

Knock, Knock. (Who's there?) Orange. (Orange Who?) Orange you glad this is my last knock, knock joke?

The Bible tells us about a time Jesus was talking about knock, knock, knocking. (*Invite kids to make a knock, knock motion with their fists.*)

One day, Jesus was teaching His friends, the disciples, how to pray. He said, "Let's say you went to a friend's house late at night..." *(Have kids make a knock, knock motion as if knocking on a friend's door.)* "You said to your friend, 'I need to borrow some bread. I have a friend visiting and I have nothing to feed him.' " **(Luke 11:5-6)**

"What if the friend answers, 'I can't help you right now. It's late and we're already in bed.' But what if you keep knocking on the door? Jesus said, "If you knock so long that you wake everyone in the neighborhood, your friend will get up and give you some bread." **(Luke 11:7-8)**

Jesus used this story to tell His friends and us to knock on God's door by asking for what you need. He says, "Everyone who asks will get what he asks for. Everyone who looks will find what he is looking for. Everyone who knocks will have the door opened to him." **(Luke 11:9-10)**

Jesus said prayer is a way to ask, seek, and knock. Jesus even taught His disciples a way to pray. We call this prayer the Lord's Prayer, and we say or sing it every Sunday. Let's say a short prayer.

Prayer: **Dear God. We love you and we know you love us too. We know that you will always answer when "we knock" on your door. Please help us follow your teachings and choose to reach out a helping hand to those people who need comfort and support. Please protect those people that we love, and the people we don't know. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER Spoken

SCRIPTURE For today's Scripture, we have chosen to read it from The Message. Luke 11 is the Bible story in which Jesus teaches the Disciples the Lord's Prayer. So, while we just said the traditional Lord's Prayer, the version of Luke in The Message is a modern take on this Bible passage.

This is [Luke 11:1-13](#) - "Ask for What You Need".

One day he was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said, "Master, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." So he said, "When you pray, say, Father, Reveal who you are. Set the world right. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil."

Then he said, "Imagine what would happen if you went to a friend in the middle of the night and said, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread. An old friend traveling through just showed up, and I don't have a thing on hand.' The friend answers from his bed, 'Don't bother me. The door's locked; my children are all down for the night; I can't get up to give you anything.' "But let me tell you, even if he won't get up because he's a friend, if you stand your ground, knocking and waking all the neighbours, he'll finally get up and get you whatever you need. Here's what I'm saying: "Ask and you'll get. Seek and you'll find. Knock and the door will open. Don't bargain with God. Be direct. Ask for what you need. This is not a cat-and-mouse, hide-and-seek game we're in. If your little boy asks for a serving of fish, do you scare him with a live snake on his plate? If your little girl asks for an egg, do you trick her with a spider? As bad as you are, you wouldn't think of such a thing - you're at least decent to your own children. And don't you think the Father who conceived you in love will give the Holy Spirit when you ask him?"

HYMN [Sing a Happy Hallelujah](#), VU # 224

Sing a happy hallelujah, Sing it out with heart and style, We're the echo of God's laughter, We're the image of God's smile,	Refrain Hallelujah, all creation, Hallelujah, everyone! Hallelujah, all creation, Hallelujah, everyone!	We're the proof of God's good humour, We're the twinkle in God's eye, Made to shine, reflect the glory, Given light and space to fly. Refrain	Sarah laughed at God's good timing. Mary sang and David danced, Jesus smiled and hugged the children, so I life for us enhanced. Refrain	Every day sing hallelujah! Awe are love, though so absurd, Human, foolish, chosen people; God still takes us at our word! Refrain
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MESSAGE

A small seed, nestled in the cruel, hard earth, dreams of reaching the sun. Despite a relentless drought, and despite its vulnerability, our little seed refuses to give up. It reaches down, deep inside, and draws

strength from its small roots. He pushes upwards, inch by inch, against the unforgiving soil. His effort and persistence that are required to overcome any difficulties pays off! Finally, success! A tiny sprout emerges, a testament to unwavering hope and relentless perseverance. This story demonstrates that even in the face of immense challenges, perseverance can lead to great outcomes. You can approach prayer in the same way.

In our culture of "everything now," we need more than ever to learn the value of perseverance when most products and information can now be had with the press of a button or the exchange of money, and there are fewer opportunities to work hard for something. Yet, perseverance is one important key to success in utilizing all other virtues.

The story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar who is healed by Jesus, is a powerful illustration of faith, persistence, and recognizing Jesus as the Messiah. It highlights how faith, even in the face of opposition and doubt, can lead to spiritual and physical healing. Bartimaeus's persistent cries for Jesus's mercy, even when others try to silence him, showcase the power of unwavering faith and perseverance.

To act out of goodness and for justice often requires courage, determination, and the will to keep going despite many challenges. The message of **2 Thessalonians 3:6-13** is "don't give up." Paul emphasizes the importance of "not growing weary in doing what is good," encouraging us to persevere in our Christian lives and continue to do good despite challenges and discouragement. The verses offer a message of hope and encouragement to continue in faith and good deeds, even when facing difficulties.

We too may act alone, and against all odds, but when we act from our hearts, don't give up, and are compelled by conscience and love, our continued efforts can catch the attention of others and cause something great to happen spiritually and in the world.

It is both difficult and powerful for one being to act out of conscience and love, and not to give up, despite the odds. In **Luke 18:1-8**, Jesus tells a story about a widow who repeatedly approaches a corrupt judge, seeking justice against her adversary. The judge, who neither fears God nor respects people, initially ignores her pleas. However, the widow's persistence eventually overwhelms the judge, and he grants her request.

In telling the parable to His disciples, Jesus was saying that we must persistently pray, with faith and intention, even in difficult circumstances. Advocating for justice and righteousness is also essential, as shown by the persistent widow who refused to back down until obtaining a just decision from an unjust judge. He emphasizes that God, unlike the unjust judge, is eager to respond to the prayers of those who are persistent. The parable emphasizes that we should not lose heart or give up on prayer, even when facing hardship, but instead, persist in our petitions, knowing that God is willing to answer. The parable says that if an unjust judge, who definitely was an unrighteous person, will respond to persistent pleas like from the widow, then we can trust that God will respond to our prayers as well.

Working hard for something that we believe in can strengthen us spiritually. Not only do we feel true to ourselves when we persevere, but our sense of connection to others is strengthened as well.

Once upon a time, there was kindergarten teacher in Texas, who was helping one of her students put on his cowboy boots. He asked for help, and she could see why. Even with her pulling and him pushing, the little boots still didn't want to go on. By the time they got the second boot on, she had worked up a sweat. She almost cried when the little boy said, "Teacher, they're on the wrong feet." She looked, and sure enough, they were.

It wasn't any easier pulling the boots off than it was putting them on. She managed to keep her cool as together they worked to get the boots back on, this time on the right feet. He then announced, "These aren't my boots." She bit her tongue rather than get right in his face and scream, "Why didn't you say so?" Once again, she struggled to help him pull the ill-fitting boots off his little feet. No sooner had they gotten the boots off when he said, "They're my brother's boots. My mom made me wear 'em." Now she didn't know if she should laugh or cry, but she mustered up what grace, perseverance, and courage she had left to wrestle the boots on his feet again. Helping him into his coat, she asked, "Now, where are your mittens?" He said, "I stuffed 'em in the toes of my boots." The teacher probably thought, "Why me, Lord?" But she didn't give up, did she. Lesson learned.

Have you ever felt so passionate about something that you worked for it even when no one else would take a stand? Try to remember how that felt to you spiritually.

What do you feel most passionate or concerned about now? Take a moment to close your eyes and feel the passion and compassion that lives in your heart. On a more practical level, have you persevered toward a goal in life such as a career, or a cause, or with a challenging illness?

In today's reading of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight in Luke 11:5-8, Jesus teaches us that God will answer our prayers, even if we seem to be bothering Him. It emphasizes the importance of persistent and confident prayer, urging us to keep asking, seeking, and knocking, just as a friend would if they needed help at midnight. You know the parable ... A man asks a friend for bread at midnight because he and his family are hungry. The friend is asleep and annoyed by the late-night request. Despite his initial reluctance, he eventually agrees to help the man because of his persistent knocking.

It underscores the need to persevere in prayer and to not give up when we feel like God is not listening. God is not like a grumpy old man like in the movie of that name. He is not unwilling to help. Instead, He is a generous and compassionate Father who delights in answering the prayers of those who call upon Him. We should approach God with confidence and persistence, knowing that He is always ready to listen and help. We shouldn't hesitate to come to Him, even in the midst of difficulties or when we feel like we are bothering Him. While the story is a narrative, the parable teaches a broader spiritual lesson. It's about our relationship with God and how we approach Him in prayer. It encourages us to be persistent in our faith and to trust that God will answer our needs.

A final story about perseverance before we close. *A man of faith is on top of a roof during a great flood in the South. Another man comes by in a boat and says, "Get in, get in, the water is rising!" The man of faith replied, "No, sir. I have been praying and have faith in God. I know that He will answer my prayer and give me a miracle." So, the man in the boat leaves.*

Later, the water is getting higher, and a second boat comes by, and the man says, "Get in, neighbour. Get in the boat. It's flooding and the water is rising. It's already chest high. Get in the boat!"

The man of faith replied, "No, sir. I have been praying and have faith in God. I know that He will answer my prayer and give me a miracle. I still believe!" So, the man in the second boat leaves.

With the water rising dangerously higher, a helicopter shows up and throws down a rescue ladder and they tell him to get in immediately or he will drown.

Once again, the man of faith replied, "No, sir. I have been praying and have faith in God. I know that he will answer my prayer and give me a miracle. I believe that God will come through." Reluctantly, the helicopter pilot flies away.

Sure enough, the water rose higher and higher, and the man of faith drowned. He arrived at the Gates of Heaven and an angel met him at the entrance. The man of faith said, "I am glad to be in Heaven, but I thought God would give me a miracle and save my life. I believe the Lord let me down."

The angel responded and said, "I don't know what you are complaining about, sir. We sent you two boats and a helicopter!" In that story, although the drowned man had been persistent in his prayers, he did not recognize God's answer when it came.

On the other hand, many, many people have at times prayed for a cause that seems hopeless. These are people who, after a simple prayer, are inspired and compelled to do whatever it takes to change the something that they are concerned about. Even though they are just one person, often their perseverance, courage, and compassion inspire other people to help. That is how change can happen in the world and in the hearts of the people involved. God will answer us. God will help us. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE Creator God, we give you thanks and praise your name, for the amazing wonders of the universe. We watch a sunset, with its rich palette of colours splashing across the sky, and we remember that you made it. Evening turns to night, and the distant stars sparkle against their deep dark backdrop, each star a sun of another system with planets and moons, and we remember that you made all of that. Each night you whisper your love to us. You are the Creator of all things great and small who somehow cares for each of us in our tiny world. Although we find this even harder to fathom we claim it, and praise you for it.

We hunger for the Spirit of Christ in our church: the deep longing for your presence has brought us here today to feel the joy and enthusiasm as we communicate with one another and with you, Lord. We refuse to give into the spirit of materialism that stalks our culture. We have a broad vision of the church and give generously to people we will never know in countries we will never visit.

We ask your presence in the lives of those who are suffering from loss of loved ones, those who are ill, those who are waiting for test results, those who have lost their jobs and those who are hungry as we now name them in the quietness of our hearts. (Time for silent prayer).

"I am the bread of life," said your Son, Jesus. "Those who come to me will never be hungry." What do we hunger for, each one of us? We hunger for the spirit of Jesus Christ: for his trust in the Holy One; for the vision and self-confidence he displayed; for his willingness to confront unthinking leaders; for the certainty of his lifestyle choices; for his refusal to take the easy way out; for his compassionate eye, always on the lookout for downtrodden and rejected.

We remember the words of Jesus, "I am the bread of life, those who come to me will never be hungry." We are his children, blessed and loved and we give Him thanks and praise today and always. Amen.

PARTING HYMN **Go, Make a Diff'ence**, MVU # 209

Refrain	We are the salt of the	We are the hands of	So let your love shine on,
Go make a diff'ence.	earth,	Christ	Let it shine for all to see.
We can make a diff'ence.	Called to let the people	Reaching out to those in	Go make a diff'ence in
Go make a diff'ence in	see	need,	the world.
the world.	The love of God for you	The face of God for all to	And the spirit of Christ
Go make a diff'ence.	and me.	see.	Will be with us as we go.
We can make a diff'ence.	We are the light of the	We are the spirit of hope;	Go make a diff'ence in
Go make a diff'ence in	world,	We are the voice of	the world.
the world.	Not to be hidden but	peace.	Refrain
	seen.	Go make a diff'ence in	
	Go make a diff'ence in	the world.	
	the world.	Refrain	
	Refrain		

BENEDICTION -by Gord Dunbar, Port Nelson UC, Burlington, ON

L: We go to meet the worst in life,

P: knowing Christ walks with us in the struggle.

L: We go to share in the brokenness of the world,

P: knowing the Spirit brings healing and hope as helper.

L: We go to celebrate the joy and the wonder of faith,

P: knowing God's grace guides us always.

CHORAL AMEN

EXTINGUISHING THE CHRIST CANDLE The light is gleaming, spreading its arms throughout our community of faith. We came and shared in its warmth. The light is extinguished here, but by accepting God's radiant love, we carry the burning bright light into our community. Amen.