

Sunday, September 21, 2025 – Order of Service
Guest: Susan McCullough, Occupied Territory

WELCOME Your life's path has led you here this morning. This is a place where all will find acceptance ... no, that word isn't strong enough. All will find unconditional love. It is the same love that Jesus bestows upon us. We are all children of God. Please know that you are welcome here.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE -by *Laura J. Turnbull, Penticton, BC*

In this time of crisis and grief, we need the Christ light as a beacon of promise and hope. We are reminded that Jesus is the Light of the World who has always pointed toward the way of peace and justice. The candle is lit.

MINISTRY OF MUSIC *The Name of the Lord*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prayer-inspired by Honarine Scott's Orange Shirt Day blog, adapted.

L: Next week we invite you to wear orange.

P: **Orange to remember and honour all the Indigenous children who went to residential schools.**

L: Next week we'll wear orange, and we'll pray.

P: **Pray for the residential school survivors who are suffering and the people struggling from the intergenerational trauma.**

L: Next week we'll wear orange, and we'll be thankful.

P: **Thankful for those who speak the truth, and those who work to shine a light on injustice.**

L: Next week we invite you to wear orange in the name of compassion and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

P: **Next week, we will ask God to help us. Help us to listen to and believe the survivors, their families, and communities. Ask God to give us the grace to be humble in realizing that we have a lot to learn and un-learn. Pledge to remember these lessons, and act on them every day. Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE *I, The Lord of Sea and Sky*, 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?	Refrain 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 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? Refrain	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, 'til their hearts be satisfied. I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send? Refrain
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CALL TO WORSHIP -by *Richard Bott, Grace UC, Burlington, ON*

L: In times of war, in times of peace,

P: **The Creator is present.**

L: On the battlefield, at the peace table,

P: **The Christ is present.**

L: With the wounded and the dying, and with those who wait,

P: **The Spirit is present.**

L: And what is God doing?

P: **Grieving over the injustice. Grieving over the brokenness. Grieving over the loss.**

L: And?

P: **And calling us back to repentance, to renewal, to life abundant, to peace.**

L: So today, in our songs, in our prayers,

P: Let us worship the One who is with All, no matter what.

GATHERING PRAYER -by Alydia Smith

As relentless as the rising sun, may we, steadfast God, pray relentlessly, until the violence, war, and bloodshed in Gaza ends. Give us the fortitude to pray, without ceasing, until the safety, well-being, and dignity of all people is cherished and held as sacred; and until elected officials and those in positions of power safeguard the most vulnerable and protect the human rights and dignity of people in Palestine and Israel. Give us the courage to pray boldly with our hearts, our words, our actions, and our resources until all people in Palestine and Israel can enjoy freedom, justice, and peace in abundance. May it be so, Amen.

GATHERING HYMN When Pain of the World, VU # 598

When pain of the world surrounds us With darkness and despair, When searching just confounds us With false hopes everywhere, When lives are starved for meaning And destiny is bare, We are called to follow Jesus And let God's healing flow through us.	We see with fear and trembling Our aching world in need, Confessing to each other Our wastefulness and greed. May we, with steadfast caring, The hungry children feed. We are called to follow Jesus and let God's justice flow through us.	The church is a holy vessel the living waters fill To nourish all its people, God's purpose to fulfill. May we, with humble courage, be open to God's will. We are called to follow Jesus and let God's spirit flow through us.	We praise you for our journey and your abundant grace, Your saving word that guided a struggling human race. O God, with all creation, your future we embrace. We are called to follow Jesus and let God's changes flow through us.
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OFFERING INVITATION & PRAYER -by Bill Steadman, Goulais River UC, Goulais River, ON

L: In the example of Jesus Christ, who shows us the way,

P: we offer these gifts that they may support the work of all who seek peace and blessings in this congregation, this community, and beyond. Amen.

OFFERTORY HYMN Jesus, Friend of Little Children, VU # 340

Jesus, friend of little children, Let me be one too; Take my hand, and ever keep me Close to you.	Teach me how to grow in goodness, Daily as I grow. You have been a child, And surely you must know.	Never leave me, nor forsake me; Ever be my friend; For I need you, from life's dawning To it's end.
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CHILDREN'S MINISTRY What Is Peace? Faith & Izzy share acting and reading this story

CHILDREN'S PRAYER Dear God. We love you. We need your help today. The world needs peace. We are all your children, everyone is born in your image, born to love and be loved. But God, some of your children are fighting. They can't find peace in their world. Please help them find a different way of being in this world. Help them find your way. Your way is one of compassion, kindness, and we need you to help them change their ways. We promise we will be patient, but God, please fill our patience with your love and grant us the strength to do what you want us to do. This we pray. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER spoken
Children leave for Sunday School

SCRIPTURE

Amos 8:4-7 from Revised Standard Version

Hear this, you who trample upon the needy, and bring the poor of the land to an end, saying, "When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain? And the sabbath, that we may offer wheat for sale, that we may make the ephah small and the shekel great, and deal deceitfully with false balances, that we may buy the poor for silver

and the needy for a pair of sandals, and sell the refuse of the wheat?" The Lord has sworn by the pride of Jacob: "Surely, I will never forget any of their deeds.

1 Timothy 2:1-7 from The Message "Simple Faith and Plain Truth"

The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Savior God wants us to live.

He wants not only us, but everyone saved, you know, everyone to get to know the truth we've learned: that there's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us—Jesus, who offered himself in exchange for everyone held captive by sin, to set them all free. Eventually the news is going to get out. This and this only has been my appointed work: getting this news to those who have never heard of God and explaining how it works by simple faith and plain truth.

PRAYER BEFORE REFLECTION

L: Steadfast God, as we witness to the horrors and heartbreak in Israel and Palestine, we seek your comfort and strength, your shelter and hope, your peace and your blessings.

Sung Response Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying, VU # 400

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us power, send us grace!

L: Bless all those who continually attempt to live your teachings of compassion and reconciliation through humanitarian aid and advocacy for those most affected by the atrocities of war. These actions are clear signs of hope, even as fear, death, and grief overwhelm. Bless all those who mourn, whose heartbreak and sorrow are too deep for words. In their despair may your unshakeable roots protect and hold them in love. And provide us all with the strength to yearn "more than those who watch for morning" for a time when peace prevails globally and in the Middle East.

Sung Response Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying, VU # 400

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us power, send us grace!

L: Bless all who prayerfully seek a peace that leads toward abundant life for all people. May we honestly wrestle with our complex emotions, biases, and limited information so that we can work with others toward peace-building that is guided by justice, compassion, and mercy. Together, may we anticipate a time when Israel and Palestine will be a symbol of justice, peace, and liberation for all.

Sung Response Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying, VU # 400

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us power, send us grace!

L: Like an olive tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream, may our commitment toward a just peace in Israel and Palestine never falter, may our hope not be uprooted, may our actions bear good fruit, may our love be steadfast. Until freedom and justice for all comes, may it be so. Amen.

INTRODUCE GUEST SPEAKER Susan McCullough was always interested in the Middle East. In November 2022, she participated in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), an initiative of the World Council of Churches, a Mission & Service partner. Susan was placed in Bethlehem for three months and lived in and witnessed life under the occupation. Ecumenical Accompaniers monitor and report violations of human rights and international law, offer protection through their non-violent presence, engage in public policy advocacy, and stand in solidarity with the churches and all those struggling against the occupation.

MESSAGE Susan McCullough

VIDEOLet It Be

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE -by David Sparks, The Gathering

P: Loving God, the burden of war is a heavy burden to carry; we pray for those weighed down by warfare. We pray for those caught up in the turmoil, in the fear, in the danger, and in the stress.

L: We pray for parents and children sheltering. We pray for people in the heat of combat. We pray for the vulnerable and marginalized. We pray for those without the medication essential to their health and for those denied food. We pray for all who, exposed to the horrors of war, suffer in mind and body.

P: We pray for those who must leave home and family to escape the conflict.

L: We pray for those who travel to family or friends abroad. We pray for those who find a welcoming place to stay for a while. We pray for refugees, for those who will never be able to return to their home, in all the loss, in all the pain, in all the heartache. We pray for those separated from their loved ones, and for those who do not know where their loved ones are.

P: We pray for those who search for peace.

L: We pray for national leaders in whose hands are life and death, that the loss suffered by so many may be measured against any powerful gains. We pray for the peacemakers as they struggle to get parties to the conflict to listen to one another and to talk to each other. We acknowledge that by contacting power persons, by demonstrating, and by prayer, we may hasten the way of peace.

P: Loving God, in your strength we face the reality of war with courage, with your patience we help the war-torn compassionately, through your peace we witness old conflicts ended and new beginnings bud and bloom, through your peace we envision an end to all wars. Amen

PARTING HYMN Make Me A Channel of Your Peace, VU # 684

Make me a channel of your peace:	Refrain O Spirit, grant that I may never seek	Make me a channel of your peace:	Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love;	So much to be consoled as to console,	Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;	It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
Where there is injury, your healing power,	To be understood as to understand,	Where there is darkness, only light;	In giving to all that we receive,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.	To be loved as to love with all my soul.	And where there's sadness, ever joy.	And in dying that we're born to eternal life.
		Refrain	

BENEDICTION -by Laura J. Turnbull, while at Trinity UC, Creston, BC

L: It is time to go forth as God's people.

P: We have feasted on the sacred scripture, and we are well nourished! We have prayed fervently, and we are attuned to the power of the Holy.

L: May the God of Justice guide you in the path of peace. May the Christ of Liberation reveal to you the way of new life. May the Holy Spirit awaken in you the desire to work for harmony.

CHORAL AMEN

EXTINGUISH CANDLE -by Beth W Johnston, Bridging Waters PC, Nipawin, SK

L: In a time of change, transition, and confusion,

P: we need a source of unwavering light, we need a light to show us the way.

L: As we close this Service, may the light of Christ be this light for every one of us.

P: May it shine in our hearts all of our days.

The candle is extinguished.