

**Sunday, November 16, 2025 - Order of Service**  
**Children's Sunday**

**Light the Christ Candle**

**Welcome** -adapted, P.Chenweth, Cochrane, AB -from United Church of Canada The Gathering, Pentecost 2, 2025, p. 31

Welcome in the name of the One who calls us to gather on this day, Children's Sunday. May the One who calls us be praised and may our children, families, and community be strengthened in the words, prayers, and songs we share, pray, and sing today.

**Ministry of Music** **Peace Like a River/Kum Ba Ya**

**Acknowledgement** -adapted from an Acknowledgement written by Laura J Turnbull, Penticton, BC, published in UCC The Gathering, Pentecost 2, 2025 issue, p.30

On this Children's Sunday, before we begin our worship, I wish to acknowledge that residential schools shattered the relationships between the children and their Elders, families, and communities. As we gather, I am mindful that the schools interrupted and hurt the Indigenous peoples' way of life and, by not allowing the children access to their languages, customs, faiths, and histories, the schools damaged multiple generations.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 says: "So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind."

This Sunday's Service is Children's Sunday, and the message is clear: all children need encouraging words that will build them up, not tear them down.

**Music Video** **Encourage One Another** <https://youtu.be/SHa51GW5eoo>)

As responsible, faithful people, we need to listen, pay attention, learn, and work toward making things right. May the Creator, God, Father help us in doing this.

**Announcements**

**Hymn** **The Butterfly Song**

If I were a butterfly  
I'd thank you, Lord,  
for giving me wings.  
And if I were a robin in a tree  
I'd thank you, Lord,  
that I could sing.  
And if I were a fish in the sea  
I'd wiggle my tail,  
and I'd giggle with glee.  
And I just thank you Father  
for making me "me"

Refrain  
'Cause you gave me a heart  
and you gave me a smile.  
You gave me Jesus  
and you made me your child  
and I just thank you Father  
for making me "me"

If I were an elephant  
I'd thank you, Lord,  
by raising my trunk.  
And if I were a kangaroo  
I'd just hop right up to you.  
And if I were an octopus  
I'd thank you, Lord,  
for my good looks.  
And I just thank you Father  
for making me "me"

Refrain

If I were a wiggly worm  
I'd thank you, Lord,  
that I could squirm.  
And if I were a crocodile  
I'd thank you Lord  
for my big smile.  
And if I were a fuzzy wuzzy  
bear  
I'd thank you Lord  
for my fuzzy wuzzy hair.  
And I just thank you Father  
for making me "me"

Refrain

**A Creed** *The 1998 Confirmation Class, shared in UCC The Gathering, Pentecost 2, p. 71*

We are all God's children.  
We live together in God's family.  
God is our Father, our Mother, our Parent,  
Our Creator, our mentor, and our eternal Lord.  
Jesus is our brother, our Saviour, our teacher,  
And our friend.

The Holy Spirit is within us, our guide,  
Our conscience, and the source of life.  
The church is our home, where we find  
Acceptance, forgiveness, hope, and belonging.  
We are all God's children. We each have our own  
Special place in God's family.

**Call to Worship** -adapted, Heather Tober, St. Paul's UC, Oxbow, SK

**L:** Holy Spirit, on this Children's Sunday, be with us. Wrap us in your love. Help us to feel your warmth.

**P: We welcome the warmth of God's love.**

**L:** Like the sun that does its work happily every day, help us to do your work. Remind us of the blessings surrounding us so that we may be a blessing to others.

**P: We delight in sharing the warmth of God's love.**

**L:** When the shadows of evil drift into our minds, be the breeze that pushes them away. Allow smiles and gratitude to shine from us, for we know that

**P: God's love is warmth, a warmth we want to share. Amen.**

**Hymn** **Jesus Loves Me**, VU # 365

Jesus loves me, this I know  
For the Bible tells me so  
Little ones to Him belong  
They are weak, but He is  
strong.

Refrain  
Yes, Jesus loves me.  
Yes, Jesus loves me.  
Yes, Jesus loves me,  
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves, this I know,  
As he loved so long ago,  
Taking children on his knee,  
Saying « Let them come to me.

Jesus loves me still today,  
Walking with me on my way,  
Wanting as a friend to give  
Light and love to all who live.  
Refrain

**Gathering Prayer** -adapted, *Celebrate God's Presence*, page 30

L: O God, where children's hearts are fearful and confined,

**P: Grant freedom and daring.**

L: Where children's anxiety is infectious and widening,

**P: Grant peace and reassurance.**

L: Where impossibilities close every door and window,

**P: Grant them imagination and resistance.**

L: Where distrust reshapes their every understanding,

**P: Grant healing and transformation.**

L: Where spirits are daunted and dimmed,

**P: Grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams.**

**Hymn** *This Little Light of Mine*

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.	Hide it under a bushel? NO! I'm going to let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? NO! I'm going to let it shine. Hide it under a bushel? NO! I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.	Don't let anyone blow it out I'm going to let it shine. Don't let anyone blow it out I'm going to let it shine. Don't let anyone blow it out I'm going to let it shine. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
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**Offertory Prayer** -adapted, *Celebrate God's Presence*, page 49

God of all peoples and God of all places, we present these offerings, that they may be used to extend your liberating reign. With them, we offer our varied ministries, that each of us may be part of your answer to the cries of the children. Amen.

**Children's Ministry** This video is a story about a man. This man is just doing the normal things you do in a day, but the people he meets keep telling him that he is "no good", "stupid", and "worthless". These are words that too many children hear about themselves. For them, like the man you will see, that becomes a problem because they will start to believe them and the words will turn into labels that they will plaster onto their souls. This is a story about the power of the words we use and the ultimate power of love.

**Power of love video** [https://youtu.be/hNS\\_D-pw8y4](https://youtu.be/hNS_D-pw8y4)

Imagine the power of the words of love ... the labels on his coat fall away, and, feeling better about himself, he passes the love on to another stranger. Our job right now is to share some nice thoughts with everyone in this room. Please pass these baskets around. The baskets are filled with positive words that you can believe about yourself. You can pin your nice label to your coats or shirts.

*Children hand out "You are special" slips.*

**Prayer** Dear God. Please help the children in this world find a place where they feel safe and loved. If there are any children in this world feeling scared God, please be with them. Please make sure adults look after children. Please help people to be kind. Thank you for the people who love us. Thank you for our home. We love you God. Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer** -Primary School's version of *The Lord's Prayer* (Source Unknown)

Our Father in heaven, you are awesome!	inside.
Show us who you are and how you want us to be.	Help us to let other people off and move on.
Make earth more like heaven.	Keep us from bad stuff.
Please give us what we need to keep going each day.	You're in charge!
Help us when we are wrong and clean us up on the	You're strong and powerful and always there.
	Forever! Amen.

**The Lord's Prayer** sung

*Children Leave for Sunday School*

**Scripture Readings**

*Luke 21:5-19 Destruction of Temple and Signs of End Times (NIV)*

Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven."

"But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. Stand firm, and you will win life.

### **Responsive Psalm**     *Psalm 127, VU # 851*

**L:** Truly children are a gift from God and offspring a reward from God's hand.

**P:** **Like arrows in a warrior's hand, so indeed are the children of one's youth.**

**L:** Happy are those who have their quiver full of them,

**P:** **They will not be put to shame when they meet their adversaries at the gate.**

### **Reflection** -adapted, *UCC's Children's Sunday, 2019: It's Not Fair*, the Rev. Alexa Gilmour & Adrian Marchuk

The Maasai people of Kenya retain much of their traditional ways and cultural heritage. For as long as anyone can remember, their warriors used to greet each other with the words, "How are the children?" It is the most widely used greeting by the whole community. The traditional response is always, "The children are well."

Nelson Mandela once said, "There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." The Maasai are not simply asking after the health of the children but also the state of their community. "If the children are well, the world is well. If the children are unwell, the whole world is sick."

The World Council of Churches affirms that children's dignity comes from their creation in God's own image. They are precious human beings with rights that need to be guaranteed and protected by our families, our societies, and our churches. When Jesus called a child and put that child in the centre (Matthew 18:1–5), he not only demonstrated extraordinary respect for children, but he upheld their inherent human dignity.

Jesus touched the children, blessing them with the love and grace of God. With that blessing comes the sense that one is important and valued for who they are in that moment, not for who they might become. It is a reminder of the blessing you received at baptism, that you are a beloved child of God, and that you must have the opportunity to continue to discover the gift of that identity.

When the children cry out in anguish, what is a faithful response? Some of us will say,

- The situation is complicated,
- I feel bad, but there is nothing I can do,
- The children are not in our path but far away,
- I have enough trouble helping my own family,
- There will always be those who suffer.

Jesus would have no time for those thoughts or comments. The children are in front of us, every night on our television screens or even closer, hungry, sad, and afraid, in our communities. They are screaming for our love. What will happen to the children if we do not speak up and help them?

The painful truth is that we have been here before, and by the grace of God, Christ has always showed us the way through. Faithful Christians who took seriously the call to love their neighbour took an active role and closed residential schools. They have worked hard in putting an end to child labour practices, child brides, and child soldiers around the world. Good and courageous people acted to establish laws to protect children from neglect or abuse.

Today's reading of Psalm 127:4 states, "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth." This verse emphasizes the value of children, likening them to arrows that can be directed and used effectively by a strong individual. The metaphor implies that parents are responsible for training and preparing their children to be used for good in the world, much like a warrior prepares his arrows for a certain purpose. It also reflects the idea that children are a blessing, highlighting the importance of nurturing them with kindness, compassion, and encouragement.

### **Baseball video** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jT6hSFAsrhY&list=PPSV>

Your words do matter. And actions don't have to be complicated or complex. Like the video story of the man with nasty labels on his coat, all it takes is a kind or encouraging word to utterly change a person's outlook in life and alter their view of themselves. Jesus once said that when the angels in heaven look down, they see the face of God in the children (Matthew 18:10). He said we must not let the children suffer. He knew, like the Maasai People of Kenya, that the health of our society is rooted in how well the children are doing. Let us work toward creating a world where the children are free to thrive, not just survive.

On the night before he died, Jesus told us not to be afraid, for he was sending an advocate. The Spirit would come upon us, and we would do even greater things than Jesus did in his lifetime (John 14:12–14). It is time to live into that promise. Here, now, this day, it is our moment to shine with the love of Christ and care for God's children. They are depending on us. When God asks us, "how are the children," let us be able to answer, "the children are well." Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

We pray for children who sneak popsicles before supper, who erase holes in math workbooks, who can never find their shoes. And we pray for those who stare at photographers from behind barbed wire, who can't bound down the street in a new pair of sneakers, who are born in places we wouldn't be caught dead. Who never go to the circus, who live in an X-rated world. We pray for children who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money. And we pray for those who never get dessert, who have no safe blanket to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who

can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser, whose monsters are real. We pray for children who spend all their allowance before Tuesday, who throw tantrums in the grocery store and pick at their food, who like ghost stories, who shove dirty clothes under the bed, and never rinse out the tub, who get visits from the tooth fairy, who don't like to be kissed in front of the carpool, who squirm in church or temple and scream in the phone, whose tears we sometimes laugh at, and whose smiles can make us cry. And we pray for those whose nightmares come in the daytime, who have never seen a dentist, who aren't spoiled by anybody, who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep, who live and move but have no being. We pray for children who want to be carried, and for those who must be, for those we never give up on, and for those who don't get a second chance. For those we smother with attention and for those who will grab the hand of anybody kind enough to offer it. O God, we pray for all your children. Amen.

**Parting Hymn** 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!
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**Parting Thoughts** Wherever Children Are -source unknown

Where there are children, flowers grow ... to fill the world with cheer ...	Children have magic power ... that causes hearts to smile ...	A house without the patter ... of little childish feet ...
For little ones convey to us ... the fact that God is near ...	Wherever there are children ... life always seems worthwhile ...	Lacks the main ingredient ... to make it all complete ...
Children are like rosebuds ... bursting into bloom ...	They vex us and perplex us ... with difference things they do ...	There's merriment and laughter ... that reaches near and far ...
Because their mannerisms seem ... to disperse worldly gloom.	But when the skies are filled with rain ... they make the sun come through ...	Yes, life is truly wonderful ... wherever children are.

**Commissioning**

L: Heavenly Father, receive, we pray, the prayers of your people.  
**P: Grant that we may not only understand the things we ought to do, but have the grace and power faithfully to do them.  
This we pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**Benediction** Go forth remembering who you are and to whom you belong. Go forth, for the love of God is yours to share, the peace of Christ is yours to extend, the power of the Holy Spirit is yours to offer.

**Choral Amen**

**Extinguish the Christ Candle**