

Sunday, June 07, 2026 - LGBTQ+ & Pride

Light the Christ Candle & Rainbow Candle As light is a spectrum of many colours, some visible and some beyond our capacity to experience or comprehend, so you, O God, have created humanity in a great and broad spectrum of possibilities and filled us with the light of your presence. May this Christ Candle and Rainbow Candle remind us that you are with all of us, whom you have made in your image and who are loved by you. May we remove all barriers that cover your light and let your light shine out through us for your glory. You know this song, "This Little Light of Mine", but this version has new lyrics, written specifically for this Sunday, Pride Sunday.

Gathering Hymn -new lyrics by Ivan Gregan

This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!	LGBTQ and more, come let your bright light shine,	In God's image we are made, come let your bright light shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!	French and English, many more, come let your bright light shine.	Tall and thin and short and round, come let your bright light shine.
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine!	Paired and single, some hoping still, come let your bright light shine,	In God's house we all are found, come let your bright light shine,
Everywhere, any time, let it shine!	Everywhere, any time, let it shine!	Everywhere, any time, let it shine.

Welcome -by Tabitha Carey, Dorchester UC, Dorchester, ON

As we gather, we come from different places, times, experiences. In this space, we are called to accept one another, just as Christ accepted us. We all have failures and doubts, and yet in Jesus we are made new. We are completely known and loved by God. We acknowledge differences. We celebrate diversity. We want everyone to be welcome: Shorts and flip-flops, or a suit and tie, coming as a group, as individuals, or in relationship. He, she, they. Rich or poor. Born and raised in this community or not. Wherever you came from to this space today, we want you to feel you belong, feel safe. We remain open to learning from you how to make this space safe for all, and we invite you to share what would make you feel safe. You belong. You have been created by God, and you have been given gifts and talents only you have. In this space, we want to celebrate all of God's people. In this space, you are dearly loved and we welcome you to journey with us as we all grow in the grace of the One we bear the image of. In this space, your troubles are not too big, your differences are not too great. In this space, you are welcome just as you are.

Acknowledgement -by Rev. Emma Seamone

As we prepare for worship, take a moment to think of where you are. Acknowledge to yourself where and with whom you live. Think about the relationship you do or do not have with the land, the people, the treaties. Think about what your responsibilities are to the land, the people, and the treaties. How will you honour that, today, and every day?

Announcements

Prayer of Affirmation Loving Creator, I praise you for making me wonderfully and beautifully made. Thank you for the courage to show up in the world exactly as I am. I affirm the sacred diversity of your creation and celebrate my unique identity. Remove shame, doubt and fear from my heart. Remind me daily that my soul is infused with divine love. Fill me with the strength to live boldly, the compassion to embrace others, and the joy of walking in my authentic truth. Amen.

Hymn **O Take Me As I Am**, MVU # 85

Take, O take me as I am;
Summon out what I shall be;

Set your seal upon my heart
And live in me.

Call to Worship Come, you who have been created, knitted together in the depths of the earth. Come, you who have been searched and accompanied by God all your days. Come, you who have been known and loved by God. All who are fearfully and wonderfully made, come and worship our God.

Ministry of Music

Opening Prayer -by Rev. Cindy Bourgeois

L: Creating God - God beyond gender,

P: Who makes no mistakes, who surprises us always, who molded the first person both male and female, who molded the first non-gendered human, who loves all creation.

L: Help us love the diversity of your creation.

P: Help us accept the varieties of gender in ourselves and in others.

L: Help us celebrate those who are different from us.

P: That we may learn to love each other as you love us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, both human and divine. Amen.

Hymn Help Us Accept Each Other, Songs for a Gospel People, # 8

Help us accept each other
as Christ accepted us;
Teach us s sister, brother,
each person to embrace.
Be present, God, among us
and bring us to believe
We are ourselves accepted
and meant to love and live.

Teach us, O God, your lessons,
As in our daily life
We struggle to be human
And search for hope and faith.
Teach us to care for people,
For all, not just for some,
To love them as we find them
Or as they may become.

Let your acceptance changes
us,
So that we may be moved
In living situations
To do the truth in love;
To practise your acceptance
Until we know by heart
The table of forgiveness
And laughter's healing art.

Lord, for today's encounters
With all who are in need,
Who hunger for acceptance,
For righteousness and bread,
We need new eyes for seeing,
New hands for holding on:
Renew us with your Spirit;
Come, free us, make us one!

Prayer of Confession God of all worlds, we live in a world of lines, lines that divide and lines that encircle, lines that are never crossed and lines that go on forever. You open our eyes to notice the lines around us, to notice the borders and barriers that imprison us and poison us. From the fringe, from the frontiers of fear, you call out to us and give us courage to approach the lines, to breach the walls, to cross the chasm and build bridges of understanding. You take us into the places where we've never dared go before and you open the doors to worlds beyond those lines. Forgive us when we are fearful, pardon us when we fail, restore us when we repent, and strengthen us when we are on the right path. Receive our prayers and give us your Spirit to accomplish your will, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Words of Assurance

L: Love fills you with courage. Christ sends you out with the message of hope. The Spirit gives you gentleness in your ministry. Go ahead – colour outside the lines.

P: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn My Love Colours Outside the Lines, MVU # 138

My love colours outside the
lines,
Exploring paths that few could
ever find;
And takes me into places where
I've never been before,
And opens doors to worlds
outside the lines.

My Lord colours outside the
lines,
Turns wounds to blessings,
water into wine;
And takes me into places where
I've never been before
And opens doors to worlds
outside the lines.

We'll never walk on water if
we're not prepared to drown,
Body and soul need a soaking
from time to time.
And we'll never move the
gravestone stones
if we're not prepared to die,
And realize there are worlds
outside the lines.

My soul longs to colour outside
the lines,
Tear back the curtains, sun,
come in and shine;
I want to walk beyond the
boundaries
Where I've never been before,
Throw open doors to worlds
outside the lines.

Offering Invitation & Prayer We, as Christians, can help comfort a hurting world by sharing our gifts so that others in the world can flourish. No matter what we think of the gifts we give, God will help us share them far beyond anything we could do ourselves. Let us present them now.

Caring God, we thank you for the opportunity to care for others through our gifts. We pray that you will use these gifts, and those given through PAR and online, to continue sharing Christ's love. Amen.

Hymn In Loving Partnership, We Come, VU # 603

In loving partnership we come,
Seeking, O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now
receive,
We freely offer them to you.

We are the hands and feet of
Christ,
Serving by grace each other's
need.
We dare to risk and sacrifice
With truthful word and faithful
deed.

Loving community we seek;
Your hope and strength within
us move.
The poor and rich, the strong
and weak
Are brought together in your
love.

In loving partnership, O God,
Help us your future to proclaim.
Justice and peace be our desire,
We humbly pray in Jesus' name.

Children's Ministry Rajah Finds His Wisdom

Hymn Come and Seek the Ways of Wisdom, MVU # 10

Come and seek the ways of Wisdom,
She who danced when earth was new.
Follow closely what she teaches,
For her words are right and true.
Wisdom clears the path to justice,
Showing us what love must do.

Listen to the voice of Wisdom,
Crying in the marketplace.
Hear the Word made flesh among us,
Full of glory, truth, and grace.
When the word takes root and ripens,
Peace and righteousness embrace.

Sister Wisdom, come, assist us;
Nurture all who seek rebirth.
Spirit-guide and close companion,
Bring to light our sacred worth.
Free us to become your people,
Holy friends of God and earth.

Children's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

Children Leave for Sunday School

Scripture Readings

Psalm 139 A Psalm of David (NIV)

You have searched me, Lord, and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely. You

hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand - when I awake, I am still with you.

Ephesians 3:14-21 A Prayer for the Ephesians (NIV)

For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom every family[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Reflection *-by Denise Noddin*

Harvey Milk, an American activist and San Francisco elected official, once said, "Every gay person must come out. Once they realize we are indeed their children, we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all." His call to activism was part of a rallying cry at time when the 2SLGBTQ+ peoples were stepping forward into a life committed to community, family and safety for all. It was time to step from the proverbial closet. People were tired of being victimized and discriminated against.

Members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community weren't criminals or to be feared. We aren't known to lie or cheat or steal any more than the population as a whole. The struggle wasn't born because of violence or hateful acts of aggression. It came because of who we choose to love.

Rainy Lu, a second year Medical Science student at Western wrote an essay about Pride and suggests that during June, we should reflect on more than rainbows and parades. There is both a celebratory and tragic history that precedes the annual Pride events; it's a time of education and the hope for a future grounded in equality and acceptance.

Without a doubt, same sex relationships have existed since the beginning of time. For example, ancient Romans, Greeks, and Egyptians captured images of these relationships in ancient texts, on pottery and in the art of the time. Modern scholars studying Biblical texts have questioned the relationships of Ruth and Naomi and David and Jonathan. Indigenous peoples recognize two spirited people as embodying both a masculine and feminine spirit. The term can describe their gender and/or their sexual and spiritual identity.

You may have heard about the Stonewall Riots at the Stonewall Inn, in Greenwich Village, in New York, in the United States. Law enforcement regularly rousted patrons at gay bars, roughing people up and arresting them. Same-sex relationships were still considered illegal. May 15th, 1969, the people fought back. What you may not have heard is that in Canada, one day earlier, homosexual acts were decriminalized between consenting adults. Then, Justice Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau had proposed amendments to the Criminal Code that would relax laws against homosexuality.

In February of 1981, about 300 men were arrested following raids on bath houses in Toronto. The following night, about 3000 people marched in protest in what has come to be called "Canada's Stonewall".

A report by The Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights outlined the high levels of harassment, violence, abuse, oppression and hate propaganda that homosexuals endure. This marked the beginning of change in the Canadian Human Rights Act to make it illegal to discriminate on the grounds of sexual orientation.

Stacia and I once had the privilege of hearing Rev. Troy Perry speak. He's the founder of the Metropolitan Community Church, a Christian place of worship and safety that has a global presence with 250 congregations in 26 countries. He started the church because the outcast members of traditional churches had been raised in faith and felt like they had been abandoned by their religious upbringings. Many had been exiled by their families and their churches. They still believed in God; they still had faith. Rev. Perry started his church to provide a spiritual home for members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. During his presentation, he talked about the early beginnings of the church and the adversity he had faced.

In June of 1973, a congregation in the French Quarter of New Orleans, meeting upstairs over a tavern, the Upstairs Lounge, was locked into the building when it was set ablaze by arsonists. 32 people died and many more were injured. The ones who escaped were emotionally scarred by tragedy of it all. At the time it was the largest massacre of a gay community in North America. Then came the PULSE nightclub massacre in Orlando when 49 people were gunned down and 53 wounded, for no other wrongdoing except being there when the gunman decided to strike. The gay community should not live in fear.

Rev. Perry spoke about a time when the church was receiving threats if they went ahead with a Sunday service. He was planning to continue with the service but didn't know how to keep the congregation safe in light of the fire in New Orleans. Suddenly there was the roar of motorcycles and when he looked out, the church was surrounded by a group of women on motorcycles, known as Dykes on Bikes, a group of more masculine-leaning women. They stood guard during the service to protect the congregation.

In the early days of the AIDS crisis, when people were led to believe that it was merely the gay community inflicted, for the most part, they didn't care. As the numbers grew and the virus rapidly spread through the community-at-large, people started taking note. In the early days, hospital staff were fearful about getting it. They would leave patient meals out in the hallway, so they didn't have to enter a patient's room and come into contact. The gay community and the church itself stepped up to help those afflicted die with dignity.

Stacia and I were blessed to hear Rev. Brent Hawkes speak, a strong advocate for marriage equality in Canada. He has ministered to the 2SLGBTQ+ community for 40 plus years as part of the Metropolitan Community Church. January 14, 2001, he officiated at the first legal same-sex marriage in the world, in Toronto. He has received the Order of Canada and founded Rainbow Faith and Freedom, group working to decrease religious-based discrimination around the globe. There were times of turbulence in Canada when people protested the idea of equality and specifically marriage equality, but with strength and prayer and perseverance, the battle moved on. Every day we

should be thankful that the church, the congregants, and the community have moved forward in love, mutual respect, and the belief that we should extend our hand to our neighbours.

As more traditional churches open their welcome to members of the gay community, the need for a specific LGBT church has dwindled.

I'll leave off, as I started, with a quote by Harvey Milk: Rights are won only by those who make their voices heard." We can do that every day, with kindness, with compassion, and the goodness that comes from supporting each other, regardless of our race, our gender, or our sexual orientation.

What is PRIDE? It's a month about acceptance, equality, celebrating the work of 2SLGBTQ+ people, educating people in the history of the movement, and bringing awareness to issues. Most importantly, it's about being proud of who you are, no matter who you love.

The church opens its doors to all with a broad welcome. All are welcome here, whether it's during June with members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, during May for Asian peoples celebrations, February during Black History Month or June also for Indigenous Peoples and every other month of the year and ethnicity you can think of. All are welcome here.

Prayers of the People -by *Aydia Smith*

People of every sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity have the right to live with dignity and without persecution or discrimination. We remember in our prayers:

LGBTQ+ people of Chechnya, Uganda, Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and elsewhere who have been murdered and tortured because of who they are. We remember them and the people who love them.

We remember: LGBTQ+ refugees from around the world seeking safety and sanctuary. We remember them and the people who welcome them.

We remember: Trans and gender-diverse people in Canada, the United States, Brazil, and elsewhere, who are targeted victims of hate crimes and assaults. We remember them and the people who love them.

We remember: LGBTQ+ people whose dignity and self-esteem have been eroded by hateful systems and structures. We remember them and seek to be people who love more fully.

Individually, we each uniquely reflect your glory and express your love, but anti-gay violence, homophobia, and transphobia have blocked many from recognizing your beauty in all people. All of creation suffers from the effects of such hate, fear, and violence.

Daily, may we dedicate ourselves to building bridges of love and hope where harmful divisions have been made, making equity and equality for all people our goal, while working continually for justice, so that everyone can live fully in your love. Amen.

Parting Hymn *Open My Eyes*, VU # 371

Open my eyes, that I may see Glimpses of truth thou hast for me; Place in my hands the wonderful key That shall unclasp and set me free.	Refrain Silently now I wait for thee, Ready, my God, thy will to see. Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!	Open my ears that I may hear Voices of truth thou sendest clear; And while the wave-notes fall on my ear, Everything false will disappear. Refrain	Open my mouth, and let me bear Gladly the warm truth everywhere; Open my heart and let me prepare Love with thy children thus to share. Refrain
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Benediction

L: Loving God, we thank you for the glory of our humanity.

P: For every expression of sexual orientation and gender identity, we give you thanks. We celebrate the variety as a reflection of your abundant grace.

L: We thank you for the elders and pioneers who stood up for dignity and justice

P: for those who risked their careers, families and safety so that we could live and love out loud.

L: We pray for the LGBTQ+ people around the world who are targeted, abused or murdered because of who they are.

P: We hold up those seeking safety, sanctuary, and refuge.

L: For those who have been made to feel unwelcome in your house, God,

P: heal the aching hearts of those who have been oppressed by weaponized scripture. Remind them that they are fearfully and wonderfully made in your divine image.

L: We pray for a world where every member of the human family is free to flourish.

P: Break through homophobia and transphobia in our hearts, our families, and our institutions.

L: Strengthen the hands of advocates, community leaders, and all who work to protect the vulnerable.

P: May we always stand as allies for one another's liberation. Holy One, as you have blessed us and heard our prayers, we pray that you will now send us out in your name. Grant us joy today as we celebrate and fill us with light and strength for the work at hand. Amen.

Choral Amen

Extinguish the Christ Candle & Rainbow CandleAs the Christ Candle and the Rainbow Candle are extinguished, you are invited to name someone or a group of people who need support and hold them in your heart. While the physical flames are extinguished for safety reasons, the flame of our love and care continues.