

**Sunday, July 5, 2026 - Order of Service**  
**Guest Speaker: Elder Bruce Elijah, Oneida Nation of the Thames**

**Welcome** Please come into this place of worship where you can join with others who want to honour God. This is a place where you are free to explore your faith in your own way. Your relationship with God is personal. It's between you and the Divine. Come in and may your connection with God flourish. You are welcome here.

**Lighting of the Christ Candle & Acknowledgement** -by Wanda Winfield, Tupperville PC, Tupperville,, ON (edited), Gathering, Lent/Easter, 2024, and Whitney Bruno, Little Current & Sheguiandah UC, Little Current, ON  
As we light this candle today, we remember and honour the sacred fires around which First Nations peoples have gathered to receive stories of the Creator from Elders. There are more sacred stories linked to this place. In the hope that all the people after us may know the true history of this land, may we weave these stories into our lives as people who call this place home. We are all sacred people, beloved children of the Holy One. May we treat one another as such, in truth and reconciliation. The Christ Candle is lit.

**Introduction of Guest Speaker** Please join me in welcoming our Guest Speaker this morning, Elder Bruce Elijah. He is Haudenosaunee, from Oneida Nation of the Thames, and he is here to share with us some wisdom from his culture. He will speak to us during the Reflection.

**Call to Worship** Often called the "heart berry", in many indigenous cultures across North America, the strawberry represents peace, love, emotional balance, and compassion. It is considered to be the first fruit of the season and therefore also symbolizes forgiveness and renewal. Today, we invite you to reflect on these teachings of many Indigenous nations as they are also the teachings of Jesus.

**Ministry of Music** Bill Graham

**Gathering Prayer** -by Karen Boivin, Carp/Dunrobin PC, Carp, ON  
Loving God, we thank you for our friends here. We are grateful for their caring and their wisdom, their humour, and the talents they generously share with us. We thank you for new friends in our midst, friends like Elder Bruce Elijah. We are excited for the opportunity to get to know all new friends better. May our service today make us ever closer companions on the Christian journey. Amen.

**Gathering Hymn** **Come In, Come In and Sit Down**, Songs for a Gospel People, # 44

Refrain	You know the reason why	God is with us in this	There's rest for the weary
Come in, come in and sit	you came,	place,	and health for us all;
down,	yet no reason can explain;	Like a mother's warm	there's a yoke that is easy,
you are a part of the	So, share in the laughter	embrace.	and a burden that's small.
family.	and cry in the pain,	We're all forgiven by God's	So come in and worship
We are lost and we are	for we are a part of the	grace,	and answer the call,
found,	family.	for we are a part of the	for we are a part of the
and we are a part of the	Refrain	family.	family.
family.		Refrain	Refrain

**Children's Ministry** *The Sun and the North Wind – an Aesop's Fable*

Discuss how being nice, kind, and thoughtful and treating others with love and respect not only makes you a better person, but the people you meet will feel good about themselves too.

**Children's Prayer** Dear God, please help us be like the sun and shine our warmth onto other people. Please remind us that there is strength in being kind and gentle. We thank you for your example of treating people and the earth with respect. We are grateful to you and love you. Please bless our friends, families, and community. Amen.

**Ministry of Music** Doug Schell will premiere his new arrangement of The Lord's Prayer.

**The Lord's Prayer (spoken)**

**Prayer of Confession** -by Francis Flook, Emmo/Devlin PC, Emo, ON

There are times that we wish to control God's presence in our world, and in our lives. But that is a foolish attempt that will only leave us disappointed and broken. Let us turn to God, confessing our arrogance and praying for the grace to let go.

**Words of Assurance** -by Cindy Randall, Humbervale UC, Etobicoke, ON

L: New days, new dawns, new beginnings. Our God offers forgiveness and gives us the chance to begin again.

**P: Thanks be to God for restoring us to the fullness of life!**

**Offertory Prayer** -by Jim McKean, Orillia, ON

L: Lord of all experiences,

**P: Today we pray for the coming of your Holy Spirit to bless these gifts we offer. May she, the Holy Spirit, bring us wisdom. May she bring us enlightenment. May she bring the betterment of all Creation. May she, the Holy Spirit, surround us and these gifts in faith for your work in this community and in the world. Amen.**

**Hymn** **Holy Spirit, Truth Divine**, VU # 368

Holy spirit, truth divine,	Holy Spirit, love divine,	Holy spirit, power divine,	Holy Spirit, law divine,	Holy spirit, peace divine,	Holy Spirit, joy divine,
Dawn upon this soul of mine.	Glow within this heart of mine.	Fill and nerve this will of mine.	Reign within this soul of mine.	Still this restless heart of mine.	Gladden now this heart of mine.
Voice of God and inward light,	Kindle every high desire,	Boldly may I always live,	Be my law and I shall be	Speak to calm this tossing sea,	In the desert ways I sing,
Wake my Spirit, clear my sight.	Purify me with your fire.	Bravely serve and gladly give.	Firmly bound, forever free.	Grant me your tranquility.	Spring, O living water, spring.

**Scripture Readings**

Responsive Psalm 24, VU # 751

L: The earth is God's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live upon it.

**P: For God founded it upon the seas, planted it firm over the waters beneath.**

L: Who may ascend the mountain of God? Who may stand in God's holy place?

**P: Those who have clean hands and a pure heart, who have not set their minds on deceit, nor made false promises,**

L: They shall receive God's blessing, righteousness from the God who will save them.

Galatians 5:22-23 (The Message)

But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard - things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

**Hymn** **For the Fruit of All Creation**, VU # 227

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.	In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.	For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.
For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.	In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done.	For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.
For the ploughing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping, future needs in earth's safe keeping, thanks be to God.	In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing, in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.	For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us, most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

**Reflection** Guest Speaker Elder Bruce Elijah.

-Indigenous people have been on the land since the beginning of time -cared for, grown crops, respected the land as gifts

-learn teachings of our people at a young age and expected to maintain and live by those teachings

-many different teachings and ways -have had the honour to travel world-wide and meet Indigenous people, share my teachings

- try to understand world as we know it -many beliefs, many governance systems
- fluent in his language -actually spoke in his language “words given to us in the beginning of time -share as widely as possible”
- strawberries are the first fruit of the season
- Indigenous story about the Tree of Life -it had been uprooted in the garden -a young girl was warned not to go near the Tree of Life but she couldn't resist -she went up close and saw a large hole where the tree roots had been, lost her balance, and fell into the hole -she could grab only two things before she was pulled out: sacred tobacco and strawberries
- we hold a ceremony to honour the strawberry as the first fruit of the harvest -usually the middle of June -climate change has pushed that to near the end of June now
- our teachings included a foretelling of climate change -no money or government can stop it or change it -we must listen to our teachings -need to understand how our teaching fit into our world today
- teachings also tell us that someday strawberries will no longer come -if no strawberries, also no other fruits and lots of illnesses and diseases will follow
- as a young boy, learned about the three sister crops: corn, beans, squash -that was the Indigenous diet when Brother Elijah was young -prior to the 1940s our people had no cancer, no diabetes and lived well into our hundreds of years, no signs of memory loss
- All Elder Elijah shared is from the teachings of his youth -when people lose their beliefs, they fail
- women are closest to the earth “Mother Earth” “Grandmother Moon” -every living species is controlled by the moon -phases of the moon, 28 days -when Brother Elijah had questions as a youth, he would take tobacco, offer to share with the elders, and ask questions, seek guidance -sacred tobacco is to honour the elders and guests
- in Indigenous teachings the woman is head “Clan Mother” -chooses leaders
- when talk about life -today if open mind and heart (space between is very little) will hear something or see something or feel something never heard/seen/felt before
- know where you belong -create awareness
- reminder we live on what Indigenous call Turtle Island (North America)
- attended a UN conference and asked: Where does man sit? Where does the fish sit? What about the winged ones? Who speaks on their behalf in our world? -make room for all who speak on behalf of water, air, light, all animals
- no life can exist without water -many Indigenous communities don't have clean drinking water -government is in control of that -want to keep us down by denying a human right
- Mission Brother Elijah has in talking around the world is to spread the teachings of his youth to as many as possible

### **Prayers of the People**

L: The fruits of the Spirit, as outlined in Galatians 5:22-23, are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Love - A selfless, unconditional concern for others, reflecting God's love for humanity (1 John 4:7-8).

**P: God, be with us as we show love to all your children.**

L: Joy - Joy is a deep, abiding gladness rooted in one's relationship with God, independent of circumstances (Romans 15:13).

**P: Holy One, please strengthen our connection to you so that we will know true joy.**

L: Peace - An inner tranquility and harmony that comes from reconciliation with God (Philippians 4:7).

**P: We thank you for forgiving our faults and allowing us to move forward with a full heart.**

L: Patience - The ability to endure difficult situations and show restraint towards others (Ephesians 4:2).

**P: Jesus, you have shown us by your example how to be tolerant of hardships we experience and also understanding in our interactions with others.**

L: Kindness - A disposition to be considerate and helpful towards others (Titus 3:4).

**P: We ask that you continue to influence us by your example so that we can put your Good Words into actions.**

L: Goodness - Moral integrity and a commitment to doing what is right (Galatians 6:10).

**P: We love that you are a constant example of how to be moral in this ever-changing and difficult world.**

L: Faithfulness - Loyalty and trustworthiness in relationships with God and others (1 Corinthians 4:2).

**P: As you are loyal with us, be with us as we show loyalty and honesty towards you and others.**

L: Gentleness - A humble and considerate approach to others, characterized by meekness (Philippians 4:5).

**P: Lamb of God, being humble is sometimes hard, please accompany us on this journey and reinforce in us this trait of being thoughtful with others.**

L: Self-Control - The ability to manage one's desires and impulses, exercising discipline (1 Corinthians 9:25).

**P: Holy Spirit, you have been a great model for us in managing our passions and idiosyncrasies. May we follow your lead.**

L: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, please fortify these fruits in us, encourage our spiritual growth, and align us with your will. Amen.

**Parting Hymn I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy**

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart! I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart to stay.	I have the peace that passes understanding Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart I have the peace that passes understanding Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart to stay!	I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart! - Where? Down in my heart! I've got the love of Jesus, love of Jesus Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart to stay.	I've got the faithfulness of God and Jesus Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart! I've got the faithfulness of God and Jesus Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart to stay.	I've got the gentle strength of the Spirit Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart! I've got the gentle strength of the Spirit Down in my heart - Where? Down in my heart to stay.
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**Commissioning -by Anna Atkinson, Cedar UC, Nanaimo, BC**

L: Divinely created, we are also called to be creating:

**P: We are called by name!**

L: Anointed by Christ's love, we are called to be companions to all Creation.

**P: We are called by name!**

L: Inspired by the Spirit, we are called to renewal and repair of the world.

**P: We are called by name!**

L: Called by love, anointed by love, and inspired by love,

**P: we go forth into a world with a mission to love and cherish, to garden and build, to seek and sing, to dance and pray.**

L: Let us go in faith, in service, and in gratitude, knowing that we do not go alone, but that God who is Creator, Connector, and Inspirer is with us every step of the way.

**P: Amen!**

**Sung Benediction May God's Sheltering Wings, MVU # 214**

May God's sheltering wings, His gathering wings protect you.

May God's nurturing arms, His cradling arms sustain you.

And hold you in His love, and hold you in His love.

**Choral Amen**

**Extinguish of the Christ Candle**