

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Welcome

Announcements -please see the bulletin for all announcements

Introduction of Guest Minister Welcome back to Rev. Joan Golden. Thank you for coming to lead us in Worship again this week. We are looking forward to praising Him with you.

Acknowledgement of the Land The United Church of Canada has begun the practice of starting each meeting and worship with an acknowledgement that the territory where we gather was once that of Indigenous Peoples who traditionally called it home for thousands of years. It is a way to continue to live out the church's Apologies to the First Peoples of North America. And it is one way we can work toward Right Relations, repudiating the Doctrine of Discovery that assumed the land was empty when European explorers, traders, and settlers first came. It is in that humble, thankful appreciation of our history and our nation that we gather here, on the traditional territory situated within the ancestral beaver hunting grounds of the Algonquin, Haudenosaunee, and Attawandaron peoples, the traditional and unceded lands of the Anishinaabe Peoples of the Thames, the settled peoples of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy at the Thames, and the Leni Lenape Delaware peoples at Moraviantown and of Muncey.

Call to Worship

L: We come to give thanks for the Spirit that draws us together;

P: **For the fresh breeze of summer, the rain that nourishes new life, the warmth of the sun that gives health to our living;**

L: For holidays and holy days, for friends and family, for a world at play;

P: **And for the faith that reminds us of the precious quality of life.**

L: We celebrate the presence of God in all things.

P: **We come to worship God in joy with song, scripture and prayer. Amen**

Ministry of Music *In the Garden*

Some history behind *In the Garden*: This hymn was sung at the Antler River Watershed Regional Council Spring meeting. It surprised me that an older song was sung, but it was sung with such feeling, many commenting on it later at lunch – being known as “my grandma’s favourite hymn”. It is one of the most requested songs at nursing homes that I provide worship, most sing it “by heart” not needing a songbook with words.

Choir Gospel composer C. Austin Miles (1868–1946) was originally educated and trained as a pharmacist, but after achieving some success as a songwriter, he became a full-time music editor for the Hall-Mack Publishing Company in 1898. This Miles’ most famous song. He provided this story of the song’s composition to one of his colleagues, George W. Sanville:

One day in March 1912, I was seated in the dark-room, where I kept my photographic equipment and organ. I drew my Bible toward me; it opened at my favorite chapter, John 20 whether by chance or inspiration – let the reader decide. That meeting of Jesus and Mary had lost none of its power to charm. As I read it that day, I seemed to be part of the scene. I became a silent witness to that dramatic moment in Mary’s life, when she knelt before her Lord, and cried, “Rabboni!”

My hands were resting on the Bible while I stared at the light blue wall. As the light faded, I seemed to be standing at the entrance of a garden, looking down a gently winding path, shaded by olive branches. A woman in white, with head bowed, hand clasping her throat, as if to choke back her sobs, walked slowly into the shadows. It was Mary. As she came to the tomb, upon which she placed her hand, she bent over to look in and hurried away. John, in flowing robe, appeared, looking at the tomb; then came Peter, who entered the tomb, followed slowly by John.

As they departed, Mary reappeared, leaning her head upon her arm at the tomb, she wept. Turning herself, she saw Jesus standing, so did I. I knew it was He. She knelt before Him, with arms outstretched and looking into His face cried, “Rabboni!”

I awakened in full light, gripping the Bible, with muscles tense and nerves vibrating. Under the inspiration of this vision I wrote as quickly as the words could be formed the poem exactly as it has since appeared. That same evening, I wrote the music.

The hymn was not appreciated at first; it was felt that the music was not “reverend enough” more like a waltz music. Yet it was published in more than 200 hymn books and brings comfort to many generations.

Gathering Prayer

All: Ever living Creator God, we come together as Your children. We come as a praising people, singing Your goodness; we come as a praying people, bringing our needs, our concerns and our joys. We come as a listening people, opening to Your Word. Fill us with Your love and empower us for faithful living, we pray. Amen.

Hymn of Praise **Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You**, VU # 232

Joyful, Joyful we adore you, God of glory, life and love; hearts unfold like flowers before you, opening to the sun above. Melt the clouds of sin and sadness, drive the gloom of doubt away, giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.	All your works with joy surround you, earth and heaven reflect your rays, stars and angels sing around you, centre of unbroken praise. Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea, chanting bird and flowing fountain, sound their praise eternally.	You are giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest, well-spring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest! Source of grace and fount of blessing, let your light upon us shine, teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.	Mortals join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began, God's own love is reigning o'er us, joining people hand in hand. Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife, joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.
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Prayer of Confession God of love, we come before you and confess our faults. For anger, impatience and quickness to misunderstand - forgive us. For thoughtlessness, indifference, and self-centering - forgive us. For unkindness and lack of kindness - forgive us. For not speaking out against injustice and suffering - forgive us. For all the times we have not followed Jesus in the way of love - forgive, heal, and transform us into a people showing our love and compassion.

Silence is kept

Words of Assurance *-inspired by Ephesians 4:32*

L: Let us follow the call to be kind, to be gentle towards each other, and to those we don't know.

P: May we be open to reach out, to forgive as God has forgiven us.

L: We are God's beloved children and are called to model God's grace and love in our words and actions.

P: Thanks be to God! We are forgiven! Amen.

Invitation for Offering This is the time we can reach out to others as we give of ourselves. With joy, let us present our offerings of commitment and support for the work of this Community of Faith and into the wider world.

Offertory Hymn **Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow**, VU # 541

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures high and low;

Give thanks to God in love made known:
Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

Dedication of Offering God of Hope, your promises sometimes feel distant amid the brokenness of this world. Open our eyes to the needs of others and awaken us to your call. Use these gifts to spread the good news that your love and word is for everyone.

Children's Hymn **Jesus Loves Me**, VU # 365

Jesus loves me, this I know for the Bible tells me so; little ones to Him belong, in his love we shall be strong.	Refrain Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.
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Jesus loves me, this I know, as he loved so long ago, taking children on his knee, saying, "Let them come to me."	Refrain 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
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Children's Ministry **Ways to show courage**

Gerald the Giraffe was a little awkward, but he could eat leaves off high trees. Many things he could do that other animal's couldn't. When the animals had a dance he tried to dance. His legs got tangled as he tried and everyone laughed at him. So Gerald headed home missing the fun of the dance.

Along the way a cricket told him to just sway with the sounds of the forest. Then the cricket played a violin. Gerald did as the cricket told him and found himself swaying at first to the sounds around him. Then Gerald began to dance twirling and flipping – to the music of also the cricket's violin, having such a good time.

The other animals on their way home from the dance, saw Gerald dancing. They thought he was the best dancer they had ever seen. They asked him how he learned to dance like that. Gerald simply said "We all can dance, when we find the music that we love"

Yes, Gerald is right - we are capable of so much. We need to encourage other's like the cricket and take the time to listen to the messages around us. We are all special!!

Children's Prayer

All: Dear God, thank You for making every single person special. Help us to be kind to everyone we meet, just as You welcome us with open arms. Help us to share Your love with our friends, our families, and the whole world. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Scripture Reading

Matthew 15:10-20, 21-18 A Canaanite mother challenges Jesus

Matthew 15:21-28 The Canaanite Woman's Faith

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.'

He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.'

She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.'

Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

Hymn Walls that Divide, VU # 691

Though ancient walls may still stand proud and racial strife be fact, though boundaries may be lines of hate, proclaim God's saving act!	Refrain Walls that divide are broken down; Christ is our unity! Chains that enslave are thrown aside; Christ is our liberty!	Though ancient walls may still stand proud and racial strife be fact, though boundaries may be lines of hate, proclaim God's saving act! Refrain	The truth we seek in varied scheme, the life that we pursue, unites us in a common quest of self and world made new. Refrain	The church divided seeks that grace, that newness we proclaim, a unity of serving love that lives praise to God's name. Refrain	This broken world seeks lasting health and vital unity. God's people, by God's Word renewed, cast off all slavery. Refrain
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Reflection Jesus is Challenged by a Mother's Love

The Canaanite woman cries out wanting Jesus to help her daughter. She is not seeking anything for herself – but for her daughter. She challenges the teacher, the one who can help her. She was risking that she would not be taken away and silenced. There's a crisis in her life and she needs help; she takes the risk of angering Jesus – it's certainly a frantic call because her life is in crisis. Henel Bruch Pearson in her book called "Do What You Have the Power To Do" credits this woman who challenges Jesus as "the woman who extended the Lord's table." She made Jesus see that he came for all – not just the house of Israel – but for all who believed.

Jesus in the gospel lesson, demonstrates humanness. The first part of Matthew 15 takes place with Jesus confronting the Jewish law watchers. Those who watched for every little infraction of rituals of washing and eating, that was part of keeping the law. Jesus was not impressed with those who wanted to exclude anyone because certain rituals weren't performed 'right'. He points out its not those things that matter – he explains that it is not how a person washes a certain way what we eat that makes us unclean.

He goes into fairly graphic bodily functions of eating and the end result coming from our bodies is not the unclean part of us. It's our actions and thoughts that make us unclean. it's what comes from the heart and mind that matters. It not about what we eat or touch that makes us unclean, but those thoughts that come from our hearts and that leave our mouths as words that hurt. That is what defiles us and everything around us. Arguments, murders, thefts, lies, hate, power that crushes others – all of these start in the heart before they become deeds.

What are some of the hurts that begin in our thoughts and heart – revenge, gossip, thinking we know better than others – they may be one's we might catch ourselves doing.

Then there are hurts to others that we may be completely unaware of and the result of what we have learned, the result of our culture – suspicion of others, thinking someone is not worthy, forming an opinion of someone before we get to know them and their circumstances – judging from one's appearance without finding out about their hopes and dreams.

I am reminded of a time with Richard in Toronto, when he was studying at Emmanuel for his Masters of Divinity. We were walking into a building and a man rushed to the door to open it for us.

Thinking back on this, yes I judged, in my eyes he probably lived on the streets. He opened the door with such a grand gesture, like you would see a doorman in a movie open the door with such a smile. It's been many years since this happened, but I still remember that smile.

I did have some money in my pocket and gave it to him. He did not have a can out, or his hand – but did accept it with a smile. He didn't have a uniform on as a doorman at a hotel, but he did that gesture for everyone. I still wonder about his story.

Downtown London, we see many wandering on the streets, some even in our neighborhood. How did this happen to them? What was their early life like? Did some have professions at one time and somehow fell into circumstances and/or addictions that changed their lives.

I actually recognized a man on the corner of Wharncliffe and Commissioners. He is a man with one arm. The same man that offered to help me years ago when I had a flat tire in the parking lot at Angel's Diner. I had just come out of the restaurant with a friend after lunch and saw my flat tire. I called CAA for assistance

There were many in the parking lot that day, but only this man approached and offered his assistance. I told him I had called CAA, but he insisted he could help at least get the "donut" out of the trunk, which we did. He had been waiting at the bus stop and I didn't want him to miss the bus. I didn't get to know him, but what I do remember is his immediate offer to help. CAA did come and the tire was patched after a large nail was extracted. You never know who will offer to help, even someone you would think couldn't help. So many lessons to be learned.

Jesus talked to the Canaanite woman as a 'less than the others' person. He shows us how they talked to other cultures. People use mean names for those different from themselves. She was not stopped with unkindness – but persisted and Jesus

listened to her. She made Jesus see, that he was different but she had faith and was willing to take even the leftovers that others would leave.

This scripture in Matthew appears after the feeding of 5,000 believers. I think this also connects to the fact that there were leftovers from the hillside feeding of multitudes. They weren't left for the animals – they were put into 12 baskets and collected to be distributed for those who needed them.

Another miracle that occurred in this passage is the divineness in Jesus overcame the humanness. The divineness saw and recognized the woman's faithfulness. This is the last time in Matthew's gospel that Jesus ever excluded anyone who was different.

According to Matthew, from that time Jesus' ministry included the Gentiles, beginning with this woman because of her faith and persistence. He modelled change of attitude; he models inclusiveness and openness for all. Jesus modelled that we can learn from everyone – even those we consider not worthy or not worth bothering with.

This scripture challenges us to be courageous, challenging systems, confronting the truth, and moving into forgiveness. Our need to reflect on what's in our thoughts and hearts and what comes from us? Is it kindness? Is it borderline tolerance or is it true acceptance? Does our circle really include all? or just who we feel comfortable with? Who might have we rejected in the past, who would we not reject now? How have we changed? How will we continue to change and be open to others?

We are a forgiven people. God's love is acceptance for everyone – God doesn't reject us or treat others any better than we are. It's the humanness that does that.

God can use even the worst in us to bring us to a point where we can model true love. It's a process that is happening within us, just as it happened for Jesus. We are part of breaking down of prejudices and bringing true unity into the world every time we widen our minds and open the circles to include all, to treat all with dignity and respect.

There are times that we face many challenges in our life. We may question how to we make a difference, it takes courage but to share a simple truth, it takes courage to tell our own faith story and journey.

The story is told about an occasion when Karl Barth a theologian who has written many books on his theological view. He was invited to a University of address theological students. After his lecture to the students, he was asked, "What is the most profound thought that ever entered your mind?"

After a brief moment of reflection, Barth replied, "The most profound thought I have ever known is the simple truth: Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."

May each of us think about how we share our faith and how our faith developed in our lives. Let us remember with gratitude those who were part of faith building. We are not alone. Thanks be to God!!

Prayers of the People God of Love we experience Your call to continue our journey in service to You. We hear Your voice inviting us into the unknown future ahead of us. We know Your presence is with us on our way. Guide and support us and inspire us to follow Christ in worship, and in witness.

Creator, we are your children in the great family of creation. As a gathered community in this small corner of your creation, we bring to You our hopes and fears, our joys and sorrows. We give thanks for the abundance of foods we enjoy, for clothing and housing, for loving friends and families who support us in love. Loving God, we seek a close and personal relationship with You. We know there are many ways to show our love for You and to experience Your presence with us. Open our minds to reflect on your word, and the examples given to us by the life of Christ. We give You thanks for Jesus, the Light of the world, who came to show us Your love and presence in new ways and unexpected places.

We give thanks for all those whose ministry through Christian worship, education, service, and mission makes the love of Christ known in our communities of faith, in the communities we live in and throughout the world. We thank you for Your love shown to us through Your Only Son Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer. We thank you God, for the questions, insights, and enthusiasm of children and youth as they continue their growth in faith.

As we continue to follow You ways, keep us from being fearful. Help us to be open to encountering Your presence each day. Gracious God, we lift in silence to You other hopes and prayers we carry in our hearts this morning.....(*a time of silent prayer*)

We pray for all those in need of your loving touch and their families as they too accompany in the journeys of their loved ones, through tests and waiting, through consultations and decisions of treatments, waiting times on donation list, waiting times for appointment and the journey of hope in medical treatments and new discoveries, and the journey of acceptance. May they feel your comforting presence.

Fill us with Your Spirit that we may be light for the world and help us to spread the light and hope of Your love. All of this we ask in the name of your Son Jesus who came to show us the way of transformation in Your world and taught us all about love, acceptance, justice and compassion. Amen

Parting Hymn Blest Be the Tie That Binds, VU # 602

Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love; the unity of heart and mind is like to that above.	Before our Father's throne we pour our ardent prayers; our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, our comforts and our cares.	We share each other's woes each other's burdens bear; and often for each other flows the sympathizing tear.	This glorious hope revives our courage on the way; that we shall live in perfect love in God's eternal day.
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Benediction We go in the peace of Christ, open to the surprising love and presence of God. We go forth to love and serve You, Creator God, upheld by Your grace, love and Spirit. Amen.

Choral Amen

Extinguish the Christ Candle