November 15, 2026 - Order of Service - Children's Sunday with Rev. Richard Golden

Light The Christ Candle *-by Jim McKean, at Severn Shores UC, Severn, ON*
L: As we light this candle…
P: may we be ever mindful of the light of Christ in our collective lives, and in our personal life as well.
L: May the Christ light shine **…**
P: to peel away the gloom and expose us to Christ's love, so we too may shine today and always.

Life & Work of the Church – Announcements

Land Acknowledgement Dunwich United Church acknowledges that the lands on which we gather are the ancestral lands of the Chippewas of the Thames first nation, Munsee Delaware Nation, and the Oneida Nation of the Thames.

Ministry of Music ***I Believe***

Call To Worship
L: As the apprentice looks to his craftsperson,
P: so, we look to you, O God.
L: As a child looks to her mother or father,
P: so, we look to you, O God.
L: As the loved one looks to their cherished partner,
P: so, we look to you, O God.
L: As the seeker looks to a wise, faithful one,
P: so, we look to you, O God.
L: As Jesus looked to the one he called "Abba," Father,
P: so, we look to you, O God.

Gathering Hymn In Loving Partnership We Come, VU # 603 (tune 529)

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.

Gathering Prayer
L: Living God, you are always concerned for your people, for you gave the slaves in Egypt Moses, the leader, to inspire them.
P: Holy God, you sought salvation for your people by giving the people Deborah, the prophet, to bring them hope.
L: Loving God, you came through when all seemed lost for your people for you proved your love in Jesus, who rose from the death of crucifixion.
P: Ever-present God, you are with your people still for you give us saints, courageous and unsung, to meet the challenge of the times; you will never leave us! Amen.

Hymn ***Your Work O God, Needs Many Hands***, VU # 537

Your work, O God, needs many hands
to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve
unless our gifts we share.

Because we love you and your work,
our offering now we make:
be pleased to use it as your own,
we ask for Jesus' sake.

Children's Ministry Do you have an image of what God is like? What is God like for you? Can you imagine God as being very rich, along with being loving and caring? What if you had a dream of God giving you a very large amount of money telling you that God wanted you to take care of it for God and God would be back one day to collect it. What would you do?

God has given us large gifts; God has given each of us different talents and abilities. What do you think God wants us to do with what God has given us?

God wants us to discover what we are talented at. What are you good at that you know so far? Is it to play hockey or sports, how about cook, farm the land, be a tour guide, explore the science of life, care for others or a host of other things?

God wants you to take your talent and use it to help others, letting and encouraging what God has given you grow and expand to touch others, sparking in them the desire to use their talents to help many others in love and kindness.

Let us pray: Gracious and loving God, help us learn those things we are good at and help us develop our talents and abilities to better serve you, ourselves, and those around us. This we pray in Jesus' name, the same Jesus who taught us to pray saying, …

The Lord's Prayer
Children leave for Sunday School

Prayer of Confession O great, and generous God, you call us to use the talents you have given, so when we deny their existence, alert us to the insight of friends and loved ones. When we are afraid of what people will say, give us the confidence to risk. When we would keep them to ourselves, open our eyes to the increasing circles of need. When we hold back from a generous response, lift our eyes to Jesus and his cross. *(silent reflection)*

Words of Assurance
L: You will be our partner in adventure, as we use fresh gifts and talents, O God.
P: In the joy of success, and in the hard place of failure, we know you will be there.
L: We will find you in the encouragement of a companion and know you in the compassion of a stranger;
P: For at the end of the day, you will be there, the source of affirmation and peace.
L: Yes, renewed courage and peace will be ours.
P: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Offering Invitation God has invested in you. John Wesley the founder of what came to be known as Methodism had this philosophy, earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can. We now have our opportunity to give; our offerings will now be received.

Doxology ***Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow***, VU # 541

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; give thanks to God in love made known:
praise God, all creatures high and low; Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

Dedication of the Offering You call on us, O God, to appreciate and use the array of talents with which you have equipped us; We combine them with the time and the treasure that is ours and use them in your service. The power of the faith community is formidable, when time, talent, and treasure are used together for good, for the striving church, here and overseas, and the shadowed world, is crying out for these gifts of faith. Living God, bless them! Amen.

Scripture Reading
Matthew 25:14-30 - The parable of the talents

For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.'

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.'

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return, I would have received what was my own with interest. So, take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Reflection *Sharing God's Love*

Fear, we are all afraid of something. For some it is spiders, or snakes, maybe heights, flying, crowds, being wrong or looking foolish are but a few of the things we may be afraid of. All of us are afraid of something whether we know it or not. We live with it every day to a greater or lesser degree. For some it is a mild annoyance, or maybe it adds that spice to life with bungee jumping, parachuting, or massive stock trading on a daily basis; for others it adds sharpness. At school it was taught that the day anyone steps into the pulpit without a few butterflies in their stomach is the day to get out of ministry because that is the day, they have lost their respect and caring for those they serve, it is a fear of not doing their best, a fear of letting God, you, and themselves down. A bit of fear like any potent spice when used in moderation can be and is good.

Yet fear can also be debilitating. It can hold us back from so much of life; it can also hold us back from becoming all that we can be, all that God wants us to be. That last sentence was written much the way most preachers do using the word, "you," rather than us and we, as if the person standing up here talking to you was exempt or had it all mastered. I cannot lie to you because I don't and I imagine you would have seen right through it. If not, it was as if asking you to believe something that is not true. Like you, I am striving to be the best I can be, yet fear often grips me, the fear that what is to be said might not be good enough, that it might be a waste of your time on a Sunday morning, so fear, debilitating fear can keep me from putting the words together

because they may not be perfect, or just right, but then the greater fear of not having anything to say arises and the pressure produces something which I pray that with the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit is acceptable.

It was with all that background that the scripture was read today. In the parable of the talents, there is the feeling that the last servant received a bad rap. That servant wasn't intentionally wicked or lazy. That servant did not embezzle the funds of the master, rather fear overwhelmed that servant. Fear of failure, fear of a downturn in the markets and losing all that the master had entrusted him with. Fear overwhelmed him, he also did not seek the advice of the two other servants, it is also very apparent that he knew he was in way over his head and so did the wrong thing.

It is all too easy to see this parable as being about needing to take risks with success being the only yardstick by which to measure it. It would have been interesting to see how the parable could have turned out, if for instance the second servant had experienced a downturn in his investing and either lost the master's money through no fault of his own or even broke even. Yet that did not happen. A subtle sub message here is that if you are being faithful, trusting in God, doing your absolute best, not letting fear keep you from doing anything, success will be yours. It is a test of faith; do you trust that God knows what God is doing by placing those talents in your hands? That is what this all about. That is why the last servant was so roundly berated, and treated so badly, because the servant out of fear did nothing with the talent the master had given him to care for.

It is interesting that the translation of what the servants received to care for is called talents rather than dollars, francs, marks, pounds, or some other currency denomination, but talents, which has a double meaning, totally fitting for this parable. At our birth God gave each and every one of us talents and innate natural abilities. Do we with courage develop those abilities, or with fear bury them thinking they might cost too much to develop in terms of time, available talent for training, and material, time with family and friends, is there available talent in terms of coaching, teaching and encouragement for you to develop what you have been blessed with, and lastly material be it community resources in training facilities, schools, arenas, and opportunities to practice your talent or mostly financially especially if from a financially strapped household.

In years past many of us might know of individuals who were taken from school at a young age to work on the farm, or at a business of some sort with the death of a parent, and never were able to develop talents and abilities which might have included a need to read and write beyond an early grade level. I worked for a number of years with an individual who at the death of his father was taken out of Grade 2 to work on the farm for the survival of the family depended on it. He never did learn to read or write, but no one could beat him at mechanical repair work.

I am sure that the first two servants had a healthy dose of fear upon being blessed with the responsibility of caring for such vast amounts of wealth in their 5 and 2 talents respectively. They were well aware of what their master was like and knew that doing nothing was the biggest mistake they could make. Those in the marketplace knew that if they did not deal fairly with these two servants they would have to answer to the master. Also, to do well with all that they had been given was an exciting challenge and it could show what they were capable of. The third servant was consumed with fear of losing the money, and by doing nothing, made the worst possible choice, to bury it as it was, to not acknowledge and honour the responsibility placed in his hands by the master.

God in love has placed talents deep within us. God has given us the responsibility of developing those talents and abilities, to share our literally God given talents which came from God's love for us. God wants us to use them, to develop them to their fullest extent. By using our gifts, both the collective gifts we have as a group as well as the gifts we have as individuals we are sharing God's love. Some of us have the natural ability to coach, to teach others, to heal, to keep us safe, to grow the food for our tables, the fibres that clothe us, to use the materials around us to keep us warm and dry.

Those talents and abilities can be put to use to help others, to bring a smile to the faces of those who only know despair, to create shelter for the homeless, to feed the hungry, to teach how to do these things that all may benefit. When our talents are used, when they are invested, great returns on the investment God entrusted each of us with is the result when we overcome the fear that is holding us back. Often, we are held back by the idea that I cannot do this alone, or I don't want to stick my head out because I am only one person.

In the course of history, it takes only one person to start a movement. Rosa Parks had a long and tiring day; she did not feel like giving her seat up on the bus so a white man could use it. In Halifax, Canada Viola Desmond was also tired and did not vacate her seat in a whites-only area of a local theatre to go to the blacks only area of that theatre. By each individual act that individual is seen as starting one of the greatest social movements for racial justice and equality ever in each country. Martin Luther, one man, nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church to begin the reformation of the church. Mother Theresa, one woman, made a world of difference to many in India. Groups of people do not make a difference in the lives of others so much as one committed individual with a clear vision of the future, the drive, the courage, and the determination to make it come to pass.

Use your God given talents and abilities to make this world the heaven on earth God has always intended for it to be. That is how we share God's love. Thanks be to God, Amen.

Hymn ***Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore***, VU # 563

Jesus, you have come
to the lakeshore
looking neither for
wealthy nor wise ones;
you only asked me to
follow humbly.

Refrain
O Jesus, with
your eyes you have
searched me,
and while smiling, have
spoken my name;
now my boat's left on
the shoreline behind
me;
by your side I will seek
other seas.

You know so well my
possessions;
my boat carries no gold
and no weapons;
you will find there my
nets and labour.
Refrain

You need my hands, full
of caring
through my labours to
give others rest,
and constant love that
keeps on loving.
Refrain

You, who have fished
other oceans,
ever longed for by souls
who are waiting,
my loving friend, as thus
you call me.
Refrain

Prayers Of and For the People We love you and thank you O God, for the many talents you have entrusted us with. Help us O God to discern what they are, give us the means by which to develop them and to use them and so make this world a better place for all people, in Jesus' name we pray.

We thank you O God for families that tolerate us as we try to discover who and what we want to become whether it be a race car driver one-week, Prime Minister the next, an astronaut, ballerina, cowboy, teacher, farmer, or any of a multitude of things. Grant our families the patience and the understanding as we are trying to become all that we can be whatever our age.

We thank you O God for a world of such great and unlimited opportunity. We pray O God for those individuals who never have learned what their talents and abilities are along with where their interests lay.

We pray for all those people who are suffering be it from war, disasters both natural and human created, the death or illness of someone close to them. Help us reach out in love and caring to those in need that we may share the gift of your love with all people in Jesus' name.

We pray for all who are living in abusive or dangerous situations, all the while waiting for a space at a shelter that they may be safe from violence and intimidation.

We pray for all who are ill today, be it of body, mind or spirit, be they at home or in a care facility. We pray for all within our church family and communities who are fighting disease and illness that are in need of our prayers and support.
We raise to you now our private prayers from the depth of our hearts (time for silent prayers). All of this we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Parting Hymn ***Will You Come and Follow Me***, VU # 567

Will you come and follow me	Will you leave yourself behind	Will you let the blinded see	Will you love the 'you' you hide	Christ, your summons echoes true
if I but call your name?	if I but call your name?	if I but call your name?	if I but call your name?	when you but call my name.
Will you go where you don't know	Will you care for cruel and kind	Will you set the prisoners free	Will you quell the fear inside	Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same?	and never be the same?	and never be the same?	and never be the same?	and never be the same.
Will you let my love be shown,	Will you risk the hostile stare	Will you kiss the leper clean,	Will you use the faith you've found	In your company I'll go
will you let my name be known,	should your life attract or scare?	and do such as this unseen,	to reshape the world around,	where your love and footsteps show.
will you let my life be grown	Will you let me answer prayer	and admit to what I mean	through my sight and touch and sound	Thus, I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me?	in you and you in me?	in you and you in me?	in you and you in me?	in you and you in me.

Commissioning & Benediction Go now out into the world with the grace of God, the love of Jesus the Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Choral Amen