

Sunday, September 14, 2025 - Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Welcome & Announcements

Creation Connection Have we really lost our way, in our role as caretakers of God's Good Creation? Have we allowed numerous species of plants and animals become extinct, or pushed them to the very edge of being obliterated from this planet? Sadly, we have. But as Jesus, our Good Shepherd, loves and searches constantly for us, rescuing us from the edge of every precipice, so too He now stands ready and willing to assist and enable us in a rescue mission of unparalleled scope and importance, calling us daily into significant action, forgiving and inspiring simultaneously.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

L: As we light this Christ candle, we remember that Jesus is the light of the world, and we are called to let our light shine before others, bringing hope and love into the darkness."

All: We will let Christ's light shine through us in all that we say and all that we do. Amen

Gathering Hymn Amazing Grace, VU # 266

Amazing grace!	'Twas grace that	Through many	The Lord has	When we've been
How sweet the	taught my heart to	dangers, toils and	promised good to	there
sound	fear,	snares,	me,	ten thousand years,
That saved a wretch	And grace my fears	I have already	His Word my hope	Bright shining as the
like me!	relieved;	come;	secures;	sun,
I once was lost, but	How precious did	'Tis grace that	God will my Shield	We've no less days
now am found;	that grace appear	brought me safe	and Portion be,	to sing God's praise,
Was blind, but now I	The hour I first	thus far,	As long as life	than when we'd first
see.	believed.	And grace will lead	endures.	begun.
		me home.		

Call to Worship & Opening Prayer

L: Here we are again, dear Lord, gathered in Your name, in Your church, at what we think of as either the very end of a long week, and a short weekend,

P: Or at the very beginning, the very birth of a brand new week, fresh with possibilities and hope.

L: We come to set aside and to process the matters and concerns which have occupied our thoughts, day and night, and to ask for You to ease and release them, as we bow our heads in prayer to you.

P: We come with open, contrite hearts, and yearning, questing minds, seeking answers to question that only you fully understand,

L: And to discover the yearnings, hopes, and concerns buried deep within our minds and hearts, of which we are not fully aware,

P: But You, Oh Lord, see and know all, being fully aware of each of us from the time when we were knitted in our mother's wombs, through all of our days and nights, up until now.

L: You understand our fears, our self-imposed limitations, and our regrets, and offer through Your Grace to lift them and all burdens up from our shoulders and our hearts.

All: Inspire and strengthen us so that we honestly and earnestly open our authentic selves to you, now and always, receive our repentance, and heal our wounds, filling us with a sense of being secure in Your loving arms, with hope for all of the days to come. Let us worship our God with eager hearts, minds, and voices! Hallelujah!!! Praise God. Amen.

Ministry of Music I Believe

Children's Ministry Lost

The Lord's Prayer spoken.

Hymn The King of Love, VU # 273

The King of love my shepherd is, Whose goodness faileth never, I nothing lack if I am his And he is mine forever.	Where streams of living water flow My ransomed soul he leadeth, And where the verdant pastures grow With food celestial feedeth.	Perverse and foolish oft I strayed, But yet in love he sought me, And on his shoulder gently laid, And home rejoicing brought me.	In death's dark vale I fear no ill With thee, dear Lord, beside me Thy rod and staff my comfort still Thy cross before to guide me.	Thou spread'st a table in my sight, Thy unction grace bestoweth, And O what transport of delight From thy pure chalice floweth!	And so, through all the length of days Thy goodness faileth neve Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise Within thy house forever!
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Offering Invitation & Prayer God's love is everywhere - let us reflect it to others. However we offer our gifts, in person or through PAR, we do so to share God's world-changing love with those here in our community, across Canada, and around the world.

All-embracing God, we praise you for the blessings of love and care that we have received. You do a new thing in each of us. Your Spirit enables us to do more than we can possibly imagine. So, as we offer our gifts, we ask that you bless them in Jesus' name, that others may understand and believe. Amen.

Scripture Readings

1 Timothy 1:12-17

I thank Christ Jesus, our Saviour, who has strengthened me, given me this work, and judged me faithful. "I used to be a blasphemer, a persecutor, a violent man; but because in my unbelief I didn't know what I was doing, I have been treated mercifully, and the grace of our God has been granted to me in overflowing measure, as was the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

Luke 15: 1-10

Meanwhile, the tax collectors and 'the sinners' were all gathering around Jesus to listen to his teaching, at which the Pharisees and the religious scholars murmured, 'This person welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

Jesus then addressed this parable to the: 'Who among you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and search for the lost one until it is found? And finding it, you put the sheep on your shoulders in jubilation Once home, you invite your friends and neighbours in and say to them, 'Rejoice with me!' I have found my lost sheep!' I tell you, in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.

What householder, who has ten silver pieces and loses one, does not light a lamp and sweep the house in a diligent search until she finds what she has lost? And when it is found, the householder calls in her friends and neighbours and says, 'Rejoice with me! I have found the silver piece I lost!' I tell you, there will be the same kind of joy before the angels of God over one repentant sinner.'

Hymn Your Hand, O God, Has Guided, VU 274

Your hand, O God, has guided your flock from age to age, the wondrous tale is written, full clear, on every page. Our forebears owned your goodness,	and we their deeds record, and both to this bear witness, one church, one faith, one Lord.	Your heralds brought glad tidings to greatest as to least, they bade them rise, and hasten to share the heavenly feast. And this was all their teaching, in every deed and word,	to all alike proclaiming one church, one faith, one Lord.	Through many days of darkness, through many scenes of strife, the faithful few fought bravely to guard your people's life. Their gospel of redemption, sin pardoned, earth restored,
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was all in this
enfolded,
one church, one
faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be
faithless?

Shall hearts fail,
hands hang down?
Shall we evade the
conflict
and cast away our
crown?

Not so: in God's
deep counsels
some better thing is
stored,
we will maintain,
unflinching,
one church, one
faith, one Lord.

Your mercy will not
fail us,

nor leave your work
undone,
with your right hand
to help us,
the victory shall be
won,

and then, by earth
and heaven,
your name shall be
adored,
and this shall be our
anthem:
one church, one
faith, one Lord.

Message More Joy in Heaven

More Joy in Heaven is a novel written by Canadian author Morley Callaghan and published in 1937. The central figure, Kip Caley, was inspired by Norman Ryan (1895-1936), a criminal who had committed a number of robberies in Quebec, Ontario and the United States. The title derives from the biblical quote "*I say to you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repents, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*" Luke 15:7.

Callaghan's friend Ernest Hemingway had also considered writing a novel based on Ryan's life. As a reporter for *The Toronto Daily Star*, Hemingway had covered the criminal in 1925. Ryan story was dramatized as a radio play by Donald Jack for CBC.

The novel and play provide a powerful and moving story of an ex-criminal's struggle for rehabilitation. The story of Kip Caley, an ex-criminal, intent on becoming a useful and honourable human being. His struggle with himself and with a society which will not let him regain his human dignity. Kip Caley is protagonist, who was in jail for 10 years for robbing banks. Kip was let out around Christmas (a time for new beginnings). He tries to have a normal and simple life after he is out, but is glamorized by local reporters and journalists, and his plans to rebuild his character, reputation, and his life all come to naught.

He was cast in the role of criminal character, and was trapped still behind iron bars, not real this time, but the solid cage of others' judgements and unforgiving natures. He was labelled as a scoundrel and a miscreant, considered to be a reprobate or degenerate, judged by humans as a sinner. Humans decided a terrible, lonely fate for him, whereas our scriptures tell us that there was much Joy in Heaven for his attempts to revitalize and reinvent himself.

I chose to teach this classic Canadian novel to my students for many good reasons: to show how powerful and educational Canadian Literature (not taught much in our schools before the 1980's,) to provide an experience to work through their own feelings towards people who have become misguided and taken the wrong of societally unacceptable path, and to show how other's words, beliefs and actions can unduly limit, harm, and depress others. They were challenged, as I hope that you all are today, to hold up their own developing ethical and moral sensibilities and to learn what it is like to literally live in another's skin, as we are frequently advised to do in order to develop a sense of empathy, of fellow-feeling, for others. While I was not preaching to my students from a Christian stance, all moral codes in the world teach this kindness and supportive stance toward others as being the ideal of the good.

How often do we pre-judge, or permanently judge others, and ourselves, falsely believing that there is no hope or chance for improvement or renewal?

But remember, our scripture begins with the Pharisees and religious scholars judging and criticizing Jesus for spending time with these rascals and ne'er-do-wells, in the very narrow and misguided belief that once one has become depraved or a wrongdoer, that it is our duty to condemn and decry them, a practice far too common in our world, and in the country to our south, but also here in Canada.

The urge to punish far too often overwhelms any impulse to forgive and to love, and thus goes one-hundred percent contrary to what our Lord and Saviour teaches and commands us. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you!

And so, my friends, I am continuing to teach Jesus' theme of universal, unconditional love, in a world where thousands of conditions are being enforced in dehumanizing and degrading ways, which frankly make me and all civilized people and thinkers, sick to our stomachs. We worry and stand by in disbelief as long-held beliefs and practices to support and protect others are cast aside, in the name of power, greed, and hate.

Enable and motivate us do the extremely hard work of holding up to the light of your love our own prejudices and mindsets, and to modify and transform them into newly formed ways of living out our Christian identities.

In the midst of such madness and judgement, it is as important more than ever before that we stand up and speak for what we believe, and to practice such each and every day. Let there be more joy in heaven that we are the good shepherds, the careful purse-keepers who direct our spending in healthful, moral ways, and we live out God's unconditional love in all that we say and think and do. Amen

Pastoral Prayer -by Elizabeth Turnage

Holy Lord, help us to correctly understand your prohibition against judging. On the one hand, you "prohibit a critical spirit." On the other, you do "not forbid the use of all critical faculty." We are not to judge for a number of reasons: First, God is the only one worthy to judge us. Second, we've got a blind spot as big as Northern Ontario, blocking our view of our own hearts. Third, we've been forgiven our sins so fully by you, why would we judge someone else's sins? On the other hand, you have provided us with wisdom and "righteous judgment." You have given us the Holy Spirit to show us what is true and what is false. And you instructed your disciples about an honorable way to approach a brother or sister when they have sinned against us. Lord, only by your Spirit and by your guidance can we properly judge anyone or anything. May we enlighten our minds and hearts with your Word that we might live out your love in this world. In your advocating name. Amen.

(prayer credit to Elizabeth Turnage)

Parting Hymn *This is the Day*, VU # 412

This is the day, this is the day that our God has made, that our God has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it and be glad in it. This is the day that our God has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day that our God has made.	Open to us, open to us your gates, O God, your gates O God; we will go in, we will go in to your holy place, to your holy place. Open to us your gates, O God, We will go into your holy place. Open to us, open to us your gates, O God.	You are our God, you are our God, we will praise your name, we will praise your name; we will give thanks, we will give thanks for your faithfulness, for your faithfulness. You are our God, we will praise your name, we will give thanks for your faithfulness. You are our God, you are our God, we will praise your name.	This is the day, this is the day that our God has made, that our God has made; we will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it and be glad in it. This is the day that our God has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day that our God has made.
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Commissioning & Benediction Designer and author of the universe, and of all living things, remind us this day of the great sorrow in Your heart, and for us all, when one of us strays and becomes lost from your great design for our lives, and our mission to reach out to and assist all such souls. Allow us a portion of the joy which arises in Heaven when a lost soul has been found, a strayed sheep is returned to the fold, and the human coins of inestimable value have been safely returned to the sheltering purse of your goodness. Bless us all in our hope for redemption, salvation, and eternal love, held closely in your bosom, O Lord. Let us go forth this day and all days with a hopeful song, and songs of praise for You, in our hearts, and on our tongues.

Sung Benediction God Says, MVU # 172

God says, "Be still so you may hear
the words I whisper in your ear."

If you will listen, you will know
I'm with you always where you go."

Choral Amen