

The Glebe-St. James United Church

Thirteenth after Pentecost

September 7, 2025

Gathered by God

PREPARING OUR HEARTS FOR WORSHIP

Praeludium et Fuga in A, BWV 536

J. S. Bach

WELCOME

Elizabeth Elton

In the name of the Holy Mystery,
who is Wholly Love we welcome one and all who gather here, and online with us this morning.
May our hearts, mind and souls be filled and shared, according to the Will of the Holy Spirit
and may we gratefully receive and share this blessing. Amen

My name is Liz Elton and I am

Today we welcome Maureen Stark to the pulpit. Maureen is a returning member of the
Licensed Lay Worship team.

Whether you are a regular or a newcomer, a visitor or worshipping from home, we welcome
you. Friends, note who is seated near you and extend our hospitality. Green cards are
available near the entrances and during coffee hour. If you want more information about
Glebe-St. James, fill one out and pass it into the office.

Glebe-St. James is an Affirming Community of Faith in the United Church of Canada.
Everyone and their gender, race, ethnicity, abilities, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation,
or story is welcome and celebrated in our worship. If you don't experience being welcome,
please let us know, and we'll do better!

Today's worship service bulletin can be found on the GSJ website, along with a link to this
week's announcements and a "donate" button to make your offering. If you are here in person,
you can share your offering in the service, either in the collection plate or via a QR code which
is located on the backs of the pews.

And now, let us remember the holy land upon which this Sanctuary stands.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is with deep respect and gratitude that we acknowledge that we are located on un
surrendered, unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory. May our gathering bring us all into
more loving, more harmonious relations, and may we all take another step in understanding
and accomplishing true reconciliation and peace true building.

**I am sending you light to heal you, to hold you.
I am sending you light to hold you in love.
I am sending you light to heal you to hold you.
I am sending you light to hold you in love.**

CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome in the name of the One who calls us to gather. Welcome as a member of this community on this day. May the One who calls us be praised and may our community be strengthened in the words, prayers, and songs we sing and share and pray today.

HYMN Come In, Come In and Sit Down

VU 395

Refrain:

**Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family:
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.**

**You know the reason why you came,
yet no reason can explain;
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,
for we are a part of the family. R**

**God is with us in this place,
like a mother's warm embrace.
We're all forgiven by God's grace,
for we are a part of the family. R**

**There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine;
we are the branches, Christ is the vine.
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine,
but we are a part of the family. R**

**There's rest for the weary and health for us all;
there's a yoke that is easy, and a burden that's small.
So come in and worship and answer the call,
for we are a part of the family. R**

OPENING PRAYER

From deep within us we know of a loving presence.
All around us we see glory, beauty, life and light.
We have no words for what we experience so we cry out, "God!".
In this moment of worship may that loving presence grow deeper,
may our awareness of the divine presence around us grow more intense.
May we, gathered in this place, learn to pay more attention to God,
who loves us at all times and in all places.

**God, of love and life, in this moment of prayer
be more and more in us
that we might live more and more in you. Amen.**

INVITATION TO HEALING

...

PRAYER FOR HEALING

Holy God,
we acknowledge that we do not always love our neighbour.
We confess that we have despised others,
even to the point of hatred.
We recognize that we have been hurt by others.
We confess that forgiveness and reconciliation at times
are just impossible for us.
We know that nothing is impossible in You.
We come to You, seeking healing and wholeness for us.
Help us, whenever possible, to live in peace with others,
to seek reconciliation and healing and forgiveness.
For Your Son came and lived among us,
was betrayed and denied,
abused and put to death.
He rose again,
and came with the message of peace to those
who had denied him and abandoned him.
May we walk in his ways. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

For nothing is impossible with God.
There is no place you can go,
no end of the earth you can run,
where God cannot find you.
There is nothing on earth or beyond death
that can separate you from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
You are forgiven.
You are loved.
You are reconciled to God.
Go and live with the love of God. Amen.

SIGN OF PEACE

One of the hallmarks of faithful living is concern for others –
we pray for better conditions for people here and in war zones.
We seek to build peace in our homes and workplaces,
and on the national and international stages.

It is in remembering this sacred duty that I say to you:

Friends, the peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you.

HYMN I Am Walking A Path of Peace

MV 221

**I am walking a path of peace.
I am walking a path of peace.
I am walking a path of peace,
Lead me home. Lead me home.**

Listening for Wisdom

THEME CONVERSATION FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

Standing Bear Network's post

Ekسا nitisanak – come close, sit near, for this story is not about far-off places, but about the heart of every child.

There was once a little one, we will call her Mikwan, which means Feather. She was light in spirit, gentle in her ways, like the feather that drifts upon the breath of the wind.

One day, another child, carrying storms inside, struck Mikwan without reason. Like a branch snapping in the wind, she fell, her knees kissed by the stones, her eyes wet with sorrow. She did not understand. Why should my soft feather be torn by another's storm?

Mikwan walked to the forest, where the birch trees whispered and the river stones glistened. She sat beside a great stone, one that had sat since the beginning of the world. The old ones said such stones know how to listen.

She laid her hand upon it and spoke softly:

"My heart has been hurt. My body is scraped, but it is my spirit that is bleeding. Tell me, Grandfather Stone, how do I carry this pain?"

The stone answered not with words, but with stillness. Its silence was deep as the sky at night. And in that silence, Mikwan remembered the teachings:

- The Bear who roots himself in the earth teaches us strength.
- The Wolf, who walks with his pack yet stands brave alone, teaches us courage.
- The Eagle, who rides the high winds, teaches us to lift our prayers above the weight of this world.

Mikwan breathed with the stone. She felt her tears soak into the earth, and the earth received them without judgment. Slowly, her spirit grew steady again. She saw the truth: the one who had struck her carried a heavy stone of their own – sharp, jagged, hurting them from the inside. That was not her stone to carry.

The next day, Mikwan rose like dawn and returned to her people. She saw the child who had hurt her. She did not lift her hand in anger, nor did she bow her head in shame. She stood like the pine, rooted and tall, and said:

"You tried to place your heavy stone in my bundle. But I will not carry it. I choose to carry only my own spirit, light as a feather."

The other child had no answer. Their eyes lowered, for they felt the weight of their own stone more clearly.

And so, my grandchildren, Mikwan learned what our old ones always knew: when others act with harm, we need not take their darkness into our lodge. We breathe, we call upon the Bear, the Wolf, and the Eagle, and we walk in kindness, carrying only what is truly ours.

-- Kanipawit Maskwa

PRAYER FOR INSIGHT

Wise and Knowing God, Through you, all things are known:
from the mysteries of the world
to the stories we share with each other,
your wisdom illuminates our world.

**Through you, we learn more and more:
we study and we teach each other
so that we can all grow together
to better understand your Creation.**

Through you, we find wisdom:
hidden in parable and fable,
in the experiences of our elders
and in the innocence of our children.

**Wise and knowing God,
fill us with your knowledge and love
so that we may cross the earth
sharing it with each other. Amen.**

GIFT OF MUSIC Change my heart, O God

Eddie Espinosa

Change my heart, O God,
Make it ever true;
Change my heart, O God,
May I be like you.

You are the Potter,
I am the clay;
Mold me and make me,
This is what I pray.

You are the Potter,
I am the clay;
Mold me and make me,
This is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God,
Make it ever true;
Change my heart O God,
May I be like you.

Matthew 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.' But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 6:14-15

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Luke 6:37

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven;

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

REFLECTION

Forgiving the crucifixion

Maureen Stark

Father forgive them for they know not what they do."

These words, as you all likely know, are the last reported words of Jesus as he was dying on the cross. They are important words. What do you think of these words?

If these words are accurate as reported, why do you think he said them?

Given everything he said, taught and did up to this point, do you think he actually had any doubt about his Father's forgiveness?

"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

Jesus voice was likely very faint and very frail at that point. He was on his last breath. What if he said a word that wasn't expected? What if there was a one letter word that was missed by the jeering crowd? What if he said: "Father, I forgive them for they know not what they do?

Jesus followers would not have expected to be witness to his torturous death .

How could it be possible that their messiah was dying on a cross? They had seen the miracles, they had been with him for years. They had been loved and taught by him, heard his parables, felt his compassion. Can you imagine the paralysis of fear they must have felt, the terror, the shock?

Have you ever been in shock? I have. I was in shock when I heard of the death of my mom. Everything stops when we are in shock. Annihilation sets in sometimes, as a motionless numbness. Its like your heart just stops beating.

There are just no words to describe those feelings.

I remember that I found myself not in the world I had been in only moments before. Thinking was impossible.

So I can only imagine, in the presence of Jesus imminent death, the unspeakable torture of a crucifixion, I am quite certain that the disciples were in absolute shock.

Today, we find ourselves 2 thousand plus years later. My question today is what if Jesus was still loving, still demonstrating love, even more than we thought, right up to his last breath. What if he said, Father, I forgive them for they know not what they do?

For some people, that one word would change everything. Father, I forgive them for they know not what they do.”? For some people, that one word would not change a thing. For me, finding out how to come to peace with forgiveness, learning what forgiveness means and how and when to apply it is the biggest lesson of my life. And, I know that I have not yet mastered it. I am not always at peace with forgiveness.

Why do we need to ask for forgiveness?

Why do we need to offer forgiveness?

What changes when we ask for forgiveness?

What changes when we offer forgiveness?

I do fully admit the world we are in today , seems to have left the power of forgiveness entirely forgotten, abandoned and left by the wayside.

The entire world seems to be coping with a mass insanity of hatred, fear, greed and violence. We really need to know forgiveness? Why does it matter?

I believe forgiveness is a master key.

It's a divine, universal key. The willingness to forgive is the very key that opens a door in each of us that without forgiveness, is locked.

That locked door, deep in the deepest interior of our being is our ultimate safety door.

That door opens us to our soul. It's where we come to our knees and meet with the power of the divine. Forgiveness heals us. Together, with our Creator, we are given the wisdom and the courage to let the work of peace building be done in us. Opening that inner door of forgiveness, completely transforms us, changes our perceptions and redefines all of our relationships.

Risking opening that forgiveness door makes peace possible. It empowers a change of our own most strongly held perspectives, thoughts, beliefs and habits. It defies, transforms and surpasses our intellectual logic.

Being willing to forgive opens our own mind so we can more closely receive, accept, attend to, and learn from grace. It demands every ounce of courage that we have.

But please, do not misunderstand me, I am not saying that there is no place for our earthly justice system. Forgiveness does not mean to me, abandoning necessary earthly consequences of the earthly abuse of power and authority. There are people who intend to create danger to others. People who see themselves of higher value, higher worthiness, special status or believe that they can with impunity, abuse others. Those thoughts and actions pose a danger to us all.

Social justice systems that create and maintain poverty, and create and maintain obscene wealth are indefensible, and must change.

Forgiveness in our earthly justice system must mean acceptance of the power and responsibility to prevent oppression of others.

Jesus never abused power. He stood up to and called out the false use of power.

He understood it.

He had become the human embodiment of the powerful endlessness, of unconditional love. The Holy Spirit, itself. Through forgiveness, he offered it to what we all can only call his enemies.

Forgiveness was not only his final act, while still humanly embodied it was and is his continuous teaching. Jesus was not willing to give up his oneness with God in order to judge his attackers.

Jesus had gone beyond the idea that there was any power greater than the Glory of God.

That is what threatened and enraged his attackers.

We on the other hand are still working on being all in with accepting and trusting that Glory.

He gave his life for us to learn to forgive.

Why does forgiveness seem so hard?

In my experience, feeling or being right is the biggest stumbling block to forgiveness. Feeling or being right is something we take very seriously. Too often we use the idea of being right as an excuse for attacking others. Too often we think in fact that being right is what gives us value and makes us safe.

Too often we forget that our value and our safety come from the very beingness given to us by God: the very mystery of life given to us by God.

We forget that God made us, and made us in Gods image.

We forget that we are Gods mystery here on earth.

We forget that God is in us, in every breath, in every heart beat.

Because we forget this so often, much of the time we don't really know what we are and therefore don't really know what we are doing.

We also need to admit that being your mystery dear God, here on earth often scares us and feels like a responsibility way too big to handle.

Please, help us to remember that you never leave us, you never leave us alone.

Help us to remember that if we ask for Jesus help, he always gives it to us.

Help us to remember your omnipotence.

Help us to remember our humanity.

Help us to choose to let you lead our thoughts feelings and actions.

Help us to remember You are our only constant loving witness.

Help us to see and understand ourselves, others and the entire world as you would have us see and understand it.

Help us to see your divinity active in us, active and healing us and the entire world.

Show us how to be your light, your mystery, your forgiveness.

May your inspiration lead each thought we make, and each step we take.

May your wisdom cause us to laugh at any thought that limits you or the power of your healing gifts to us.

May we each love as you, each other and ourselves as you would have us love,

And may we awaken in each moment by willingly inviting you to be the very life we live, that we may truly be who and what you would have us be. Through Christs power of forgiveness and in his name we pray.

Amen.

Responding at Table

HYMN **Forgive Our Sins As We Forgive**

VU 364

**“Forgive our sins as we forgive,”
you taught us, Christ, to pray;
but you alone can grant us grace
to live the words we say.**

**How can your pardon reach and bless
the unforgiving heart
that broods on wrongs, and will not let
old bitterness depart?**

**In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew:
what trivial debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!**

**O cleanse the depths within our souls
and bid resentment cease;
then, bound to all in bonds of love,
our lives will spread your peace.**

INVITATION TO GIVE

We are thankful for all we have in our lives.
Let us be a blessing for others, as you have been for us.
Our offering will now be received.

OFFERING HYMN Grant, O God, The Grace

VU 540

**Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
With a spirit large and free.
That ourselves and all our living
We may offer faithfully.**

OFFERING PRAYER

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Creator God:

The vastness of life sometimes leaves us speechless. Its challenges seem unsurmountable, and our abilities insufficient. Help us to see this world and our place in it through your eyes. May we look to you, knowing that you are always in us and with us. May all wars cease. May fresh winds of change inspire loving solutions in Gaza and in Ukraine, and in all countries involved in coping with or perpetrating violence and poverty. May we have the courage to be with you and the hearts to share your loving kindness. May each wound regardless of origin or shape be healed. May balms of comfort be our chosen gift to one another. May each land, each body of water and all of life flow according to your design. May we know and be your healing loving peace. May inspiration reign. And may we now together pray the words taught to us through Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OF JESUS

**Our Creator, who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses**

As we forgive those who trespass against us
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
Forever and ever, Amen.

Sent by the Spirit

HYMN Deep In Our Hearts

MV 154

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
Telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
Deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
Deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
Justice and Peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
Deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
Deep in our hearts there is a common current,
Flowing to freedom like a stream.

Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts there is a common story,
Telling Creation that we are one.

SENDING FORTH

Go now with each breath, sharing the unending love of your Creator. Know that the very mystery of the universe holds you and molds you now and always. Rely on that love to reveal itself in you, in your hopes and dreams, thoughts feelings and actions.
May we know that we are One with all of Creation, tend to it and be tended to by it as we see that we are one, through the forgiveness of Christs perfect love,
Amen

AMEN

Merritt in G

End of Worship - Beginning of Service

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you to Maureen Stark for joining us today. Welcome back to James, the choir and all of those that have been enjoying the summer. Please join us in Fraser Hall following the service for coffee and fellowship.

A reminder, volunteers are needed for the welcome, land acknowledgement, scripture reading, coffee time, and Audio Visual.

If you are interested in the AV aspects of Sunday service Sound, video, livestreaming. There will be a free workshop with Ottawa sound technician Tony Mungham, for those interested in supporting our AV Team. The session will be held here at Glebe-St. James on Wednesday, September 10th at 6:30 pm. No experience required. Training and support will be provided. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Liz Elton (worship.gsj@gmail.com)

Photo Directory

For those that are interested, Universal Portraits will be here at Glebe-St. James on October 7, 8, and 9th to photo for inclusion in our new Photo Directory.

Next Sunday

We welcome back Rev. Teresa and introduce you to our new Children's Church Leader.

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