

# Glebe-St. James United Church

*Reaching – Into Faith, Out to Others*

15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

September 5, 2021

## Gathered by God

### PREPARING OUR HEARTS

Meditation on Hyfrydol

(Margaretha Christina de Jong)

### WELCOME

### LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE

Open your hearts to the light of God's presence.

**We will walk in the light.**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

**Thanks be to God.**

### CALL TO WORSHIP

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

May grace wash over you as you worship.

**May peace be experienced in all we sing, pray, and reflect on.**

May joy fill you so that you are enlightened by God's delight.

**May love radiate from every cell,**

**Conveying the amazing truth of God's goodness.**

In hope and gratitude, let us worship.

### HYMN MV 3 River

*Words and Music: Julian Pattison*

*© 2003 Julian Pattison.*

*Used with permission. All rights reserved.*

*Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-722049*

**River, rush-a-down to the ocean blue,**

**River from a mountain high.**

**River, as you do what rivers do.**

**River, draw the Spirit nigh.**

Spirit, come-a-down to the riverside,  
Spirit, spark of wondrous thought.  
Spirit, I am free for you to guide,  
Spirit, pray that I be taught!

Water, let me drink of your healing pow'r,  
Water, strength and life you give.  
Water, as I travel with each hour,  
Water, help my body live.

River, flow-a-down where you ran before,  
River, source of clearer view,  
River, as I walk your rocky shore,  
River, see my journey through.

#### **OPENING PRAYER**

Loving God,  
You live in us through the Spirit.  
We feel the holy breeze on our hearts,  
As surely as the trees feel the gentle wind  
On their leaves.  
Thank you for always being with us,  
For giving us the courage and strength  
To let the Spirit into our lives,  
To let it fill our spiritual sails and carry us forward  
So that we may be winds of change  
In a becalmed world.  
Through your love, O God,  
This is possible. Amen.

## **Listening for the Word**

#### **CHILDREN'S TIME**

#### **GIFT OF MUSIC**

All things bright and beautiful

(Martin Shaw)

#### **READING**      Mark 7:24-37

From there Jesus set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came

and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” But she answered him, “Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” Then he said to her, “For saying that, you may go — the demon has left your daughter.” So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, “He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.”

This is wisdom from our ancestors in faith.

## REFLECTION

God of fresh starts and new beginnings,  
God of hope and promise,  
flesh and spirit entwined to become one  
with you through Jesus Christ:  
as heaven and earth connect, so, too, may we,  
through responding to your word.  
Increase our depth of understanding  
as we receive the words of scripture this day.  
God of eternal life,  
teach us to keep on the path of righteous living,  
which so many have travelled before. Amen.

As we read and ponder Mark’s gospel reading for today, one cannot help but picture Jesus seeking a little time to get away from the crowds and the constant testing of the Pharisees that followed him everywhere he went. Here, Jesus takes his disciples and heads out of town – even out of the region and into the land of Gentiles. He is to spend a considerable time alone with this group of men, one of my professors refers to it as a walking seminar.

Verse 24 tells us that he went to Tyre and Sidon, the first time in his public ministry that he stepped foot outside the actual borders of Palestine. Though this area was populated by many Jews, historically it had been bitterly antagonistic to Israel, and was noted for its paganism in violent opposition to the one true God of Israel. Tyre had been the home of Jezebel, who in Elijah's day almost overthrew the Northern Kingdom with her pagan prophets and practices.

They no sooner arrive in the region of Tyre and Sidon than he is approached by a Greek woman who in desperation gets right to the point with Jesus, asking him to cast an evil spirit out of her daughter.

"For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter." (Verses 7:25-26)

Even in a foreign land, Jesus cannot escape his ministry calling. Mark tells us that Jesus did not want anyone to know where he and his disciples were. He had apparently arranged to stay in a house where he and the disciples could get a brief rest from the constant needs of the crowds and from the opposition they were facing from the religious leaders and to have some time to teach his disciples in private. But Mark tells us that their time of rest and recuperation was short-lived because Jesus could not be hidden.

In Matthew's account, Jesus simply ignored the Greek woman, and his disciples encouraged him to send her away. After all, she is a Gentile not a Jew. Also, they are in the midst of taking a sabbatical, away from public ministry.

Mark says, "But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." Matthew 15:23

We don't know anything more about this woman, but we soon find out that she has faith and she has determination. She persists in humility and faithful worship. The mother didn't care how her daughter had become possessed...she was just frantically desperate that her daughter be released from this awful oppression. So she kneels before Jesus as a sign of respect and humility.

"Then she came and worshiped him, saying, "Lord, help me!" Matthew 15:25

Jesus continues to rebuff her saying: "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

Now this seems like a shocking and quite rude thing for Jesus to say at first glance. But that is not the case at all. It's true that the Jews referred to Gentiles as dogs, a term that meant they were unclean, since dogs will eat almost anything. The Greek word they used was *kyon*, the term for the pesky, unkempt, sometimes dangerous mongrel dogs that roamed the streets of cities. So the term they used was meant as a term of derision.

But a different word, *kynáron*, was used for a pet dog. – It was this term that Jesus used for this woman in this exchange. Understanding this distinction helps us understand what Jesus was saying and why she took no offense. This was a parable for this woman. The “children” Jesus refers to is Israel, and she is the little pet doggy. Jesus was reinforcing the fact that the first focus of His ministry was to Israel. But Jesus wasn't saying she could never eat the crumbs because she was not a Jew; that she was somehow unclean. Rather, he was saying, “First the kids eat, then the pet doggy; or “I have come first to Israel, and THEN the Gospel will go to the Gentiles.”

Jesus was simply using a metaphor to make a point. And what was that point? His ministry was to the Jews but not necessarily to the exclusion of non-Jews. Rather, Jesus was saying that he will minister to the Jews and then to the others.

Did this reply deter the poor woman at all? Not at all! She came right back at Him: “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.” (Verse 27)

Her reply implied to Jesus that the pet dogs get some food AT THE SAME TIME as the children and therefore they don't have to wait. She was saying that there need be no interruption in His instruction to the disciples, or in carrying out His role to go first to Israel with His message. She wasn't asking for much from such a great and merciful Lord; all she wanted were some crumbs, some small benefit for her desperate need. She knew in her heart that there was grace enough for both Israel and a Gentile such as her. Again, we see a humble fortitude and the strength of childlike faith. It must have really touched Jesus, maybe even convicted him, as he responded:

“O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.” (Verse 28)

Jesus said, “For such a reply, go your way. Your daughter has been delivered.” What an irony! Jesus tried repeatedly to teach His chosen disciples, yet they could never understand any of Jesus' parables. They were always so dense and dull in understanding of spiritual truth. This woman, on the other hand, hears one simple sentence from Jesus and immediately understands His mission. And because of it, she received Christ's wholehearted commendation and the answer to her request. I cannot help but believe that Jesus was very pleased and encouraged by this Gentile woman's persistent faith and humble worship. I also believe that Jesus is just as pleased today to experience that same humble persistence and faith.

We are called to recognize Christ's divinity and compassion. It's often difficult to hang on to that kind of faith when we don't realize immediate results. Here we are supposedly mature Christians learning a lesson from a foreign, non-discipled person, heretofore a non-believer. The Greek mother understood what even the disciples had not understood and took Jesus at His Word, and her reward was that her earnest desire for her child was granted. Martin Luther says, "She took Christ at his own words. He then treated her not as a dog but as a child of God."

Now as we move on with Jesus and his journey, still seeking a little time away from throngs and public ministry demands, we find them at the eastern shores of the Sea of Galilee near Decapolis. Can't you just imagine the scenario? They arrive tired, dusty, hungry and in need of rest? From my maps, I see the distance from Sidon and Tyre to Decapolis (or that region) to be quite a hike, at least fifty miles. They most likely trudged it on foot as there were, like here, no Greyhound buses available.

Before they had a chance to get any rest, they were approached by a group of people with a man who was both deaf and mute, begging Jesus to restore his speech and hearing. Who are all these people? My bible doesn't say but it doesn't appear to be family but rather neighbors and people of compassion. They believed that the poor fellow was in need of having his speech and hearing restored. The loss was most likely the result of some physical accident or serious illness. Why do I think so? Well, nothing is impossible for Jesus but we read in verse 35:

"Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly."

His ears were opened, meaning that he could hear. If he had never been able to hear, he would have no idea at all what any of the noises were that now came flooding in. Likewise, we read that he spoke plainly. If he was deaf and mute for all his life, he certainly would not have the ability to speak plainly in an instant from Jesus touching him.

In verse 33, we read that Jesus took this poor fellow away from the multitude in order to minister to him. We realize that all of this transpires in time just prior to the Feeding of the Five Thousand. As this healing takes place, I am touched again by the compassion of Christ in immediately administering his touch of healing. I am equally touched by the compassion and concern for this man by friends and neighbors. We don't read where any requested anything from Jesus beyond restoring the speech and hearing of this man. Jesus loves this kind of unselfish compassion.

Christ next instructs the multitude NOT to tell anyone about this healing that just transpired. The only reason that I can think of for this word of instruction is that Jesus

was on his way back to Galilee and was wanting that re-entry to be rather inconspicuous. Of course, these people just could not keep that secret. Their excitement and exuberance overwhelmed them.

“Then he commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more he commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed. And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.” (Verses 36-37)

Can you identify with the compassion and concern exemplified by the Syro-Phoenician woman, the group presenting the deaf mute to Jesus, and the compassion of Jesus? This, my friends, is what we are called to – lives filled with compassion and concern for the others around us, lives anchored in faith and humility. May it ever be thus. Amen.

## **Responding to God’s Word**

**HYMN**                      MV 62    There Is Room for All

*Words and Music: Bruce Harding*

*© 2004 Bruce Harding.*

*Used with permission. All rights reserved.*

*Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-722049*

**There is room for all in the shadow of God’s wing;  
there is room for all, sheltered in God’s love.  
And I rejoice and sing, “My refuge and my rock in whom I trust.”  
There is room for all, there is room for all.**

### **TIME OF OFFERING**

God, the Source of Life, has given us so much –  
creation, community, all that we need to thrive.  
How do we respond? How do we express our gratitude?  
By the way we help each other,  
By the way we reach out to the community around us.  
Let us take a moment in gratitude.

### **PASTORAL PRAYER**

Let us offer prayers to the Holy One,  
knowing that we are held with compassion.

*(silence for reflection)*

Through the ebb and flow of life's events,  
may we trust in your grace.

When our dreams seem far off,  
may we believe in the transformative power of hope.

In those moments when joy fills us and  
there is cause for celebration,  
may we remember to give you thanks;  
may gratitude come to us with ease.

As we recognize that all of creation is our kin,  
may we seek new ways of daily living;  
may our love for creation transform our actions.

On those days when we recognize  
that we have caused the tears of another,  
may we ask for forgiveness;  
may we practice reconciliation.

In times of sickness or sorrow,  
we pray for healing and wholeness...  
In particular, we pray for refugees from  
and displaced people in Afghanistan,  
who seek safety after the Taliban  
seized back control of the country.  
We pray too for those who lost their lives  
to the suicide bombers during the rescue efforts.  
We pray for the people of Madagascar  
who are suffering famine-like conditions  
driven by four years without rain.  
We pray for all around the world  
who are affected by another wave of COVID-19,  
that all might work together for the common good.  
We pray for our country as we face  
the electioneering of politicians in the coming weeks.  
May all who struggle feel  
strengthened by your presence.  
Holy One, creator of all,  
You reveal your love to us  
in all times and places.  
May we hear your call to live our lives  
with courage and imagination. Amen.



## PRAYER OF JESUS

Our Mother and Father who art in Heaven,  
hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power and the glory  
forever and ever. Amen.

## Sent by the Spirit

**HYMN**    MV 30    It's a Song of Praise to the Maker

*Words: Ruth Duck, © 1992 GIA Publications, Inc.*  
*Music: Ron Klusmeier, © 1992 Ron Klusmeier*  
*Used by permission. All rights reserved*  
*Reprinted under ONE LICENSE A-722049*

**It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
the thrush sings high in the tree.  
It's a song of praise to the Maker,  
the gray whale sings in the sea,**

**And by the Spirit you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.**

**It's a call of life to the Giver  
when waves and waterfalls roar.  
It's a call of life to the Giver  
when high tides break on the shore,**

**It's a hymn of love to the Lover;  
the bumblebees hum along.  
It's a hymn of love to the Lover;  
the summer breeze joins the song,**

It's the chorus of all creation;  
it's sung by all living things.  
It's the chorus of all creation;  
a song the universe sings,

And by the Spirit you and I  
can join our voice to the holy cry  
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

#### COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

Let us go from here, strengthened in our inner being  
By the Spirit of our living God; through this power,  
may we bring the message of God's kin-dom to all we meet.  
Know you are never alone, for you go with  
God, the Source of Love,  
Jesus, the Love Incarnate,  
And the Holy Spirit, Love's power and promise. Amen!

#### MUSIC TO SEND US FORTH

Partita on "Clap your hands": Maestoso

(John Barr)

**Thank you for joining us at Glebe-St. James United Church.**

**We offer a special thank you to those who have contributed to today's service.**



#### Coffee Hour – Sunday @ 1 pm

Meeting ID: 824 9163 7052 Passcode: 464909

One tap mobile

+16475580588,,82491637052#,,,\*464909# Canada

+17789072071,,82491637052#,,,\*464909# Canada

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82491637052?pwd=dnM1QjNOSnMvY09teXlRZlZlcWQ3UT09>

#### Women's Intergenerational Group

September 19th, 11:30 – 1:30 – zoom link to follow

Pam Fitch will lead the discussion on this month's topic: "How can we contribute to the United Church's commitment to become an anti-racist church?" For reference here is the link to UCC action - <https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism>.

### ***In-person worship returns to Glebe-St. James. Pre-registration is required***

Glebe-St. James welcomes up to 40 people to the sanctuary for Sunday worship

Pre-registration is required. Public Health guidelines will apply.

To register, please send an email to: [registergsj@gmail.com](mailto:registergsj@gmail.com) by 5 pm on the Saturday.

- Maximum 40 people in the pews (in addition to worship leaders, ushers and technical team)
- Masks, or other face covering are mandatory and must cover the nose, mouth and chin.
- Physical distance from others of two metres should be maintained
- Please enter through the First Avenue doors. At the entrance, you will be asked standard COVID screening questions
- Attendees are asked to remain in their assigned seats until directed to leave by the ushers
- There will be no Children's Church; any children who attend should stay with their family
- No congregational singing. Feel free to stand up during the hymns, dance or use other movements to enjoy the music.
- After the service, the ushers ask you to exit via the Narthex beginning with the back rows.
- No coffee hour - socializing may occur outside the building; two-metre distance should be maintained. Our virtual coffee hour will continue (see below)

For more detail, see Glebe-St. James COVID protocol attached. Please note that while Ottawa Public Health recommends vaccination against COVID-19, some people may not be vaccinated for health reasons and no vaccine is yet available for children under 12. Each person should assess their own level of risk before deciding to attend. Those at higher risk may wish to worship via live-stream which will continue to be available. Please send any questions or concerns to [info@glebestjames.ca](mailto:info@glebestjames.ca).

Council will continue to follow public health announcements and adjust our approach as needed.

### **Sandy Hill Senior's Network**

The Network's September Conference-Lunch will take place on Wednesday, September 8th from 1 to 3 pm. Our guest speakers, Margot Montgomery and her 10-year-old Lowchen Marty, volunteers at Ottawa Dog Therapy, will talk about the ins and outs of Pet Therapy and the importance it holds for both volunteers and patients.

The zoom link can be found in the e-update. If you prefer joining by phone, please call 438-809-7799 (Montreal). The Meeting ID is 984 7210 2868 and the passcode is 135345.



## Our Doors Are Open

Welcoming People with Disabilities in Places of Worship

**What:** Please join us for a 75-minute webinar with theologian and accessibility advocate, Mike Walker, who will help our congregation assess our progress towards inclusion and build more welcoming, inclusion and universal access to all who wish to join us at Glebe-St. James. Key topics include examining what it means to be inclusive, welcoming and accessible; creating a congregational access plan, determine how to promote active participation for people of all capacities, figure out how to reach members old and new.  
**When:** September 21st at 7:00 pm on Zoom. **Who's invited:** Everyone welcome, particularly Council members (who will be discussing these topics at upcoming Council meetings)

**Note!** Please confirm your participation by emailing Pam Fitch: [plf350@gmail.com](mailto:plf350@gmail.com) so that you can receive some supportive documentation and the zoom link for the webinar.

<https://opendoors.idrc.ocadu.ca/>

### Our Ministry Team

Coordinating Minister: Rev. Teresa Burnett-Cole, ex 24; [Revtbc.gsj@gmail.com](mailto:Revtbc.gsj@gmail.com)

Minister of Visitation: Rev. George Clifford, 613-825-5997; [georgeclifford@rogers.com](mailto:georgeclifford@rogers.com)

Minister of Music: James Caswell, ex 25; [music.gsj@gmail.com](mailto:music.gsj@gmail.com)

Minister of Music Emeritus: Robert Palmi

Minister of Christian Development: Stephanie Langill, [Stephanie.langill@gmail.com](mailto:Stephanie.langill@gmail.com)

Accounts: Lori Stinson, ex 23; [accts.glebestjames@gmail.com](mailto:accts.glebestjames@gmail.com)

Church Administrator: Jennifer Reid, ex 21; [admin@glebestjames.ca](mailto:admin@glebestjames.ca)

---

Glebe-St. James United Church

650 Lyon Street South, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 3Z7

613-236-0617

[www.glebestjames.ca](http://www.glebestjames.ca)

[admin@glebestjames.ca](mailto:admin@glebestjames.ca)