



The St. John's Messenger

Celebrate Christ, Proclaim His Gospel, Live His Love

July 9th, 2025

56 Victoria St. E., Alliston L9R 1L5

Church Office: 705 435 6732

Office Hours: Mon. - Thurs.

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Closed 12:30-1:30 p.m.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that we meet on Indigenous land, covered by Treaty 18. We thank the Petun, Anishinabek, and the Wendat, the most recent stewards of this place.

Thursday July 10th, 2025.

2:00 pm Cribbage Group

Shilton Hall

7:30 pm A. A.

Faith Hall

Sunday July 13th, 2025.

10:00 am Joint Worship Service

Sanctuary

Monday July 14th, 2025

6:30 am Private Use

Shilton H./ Dermott Rm/

Library

Tuesday July 15th, 2025

6:30 am Private Use

Shilton H./ Dermott Rm/

Library

6:30 pm A. A. Business Meeting

Faith Hall

7:00 pm N. A.

Nursery & Small Office

7:30 pm A. A.

Faith Hall

Congratulations and Best Wishes

to

Glenna McC

as she celebrates her

90th birthday,

Wednesday July 9th



<https://clipart-library.com/clipart/pc78ypEzi.htm#1216380>

The Joint Summer Services 2025 * July 6

Prelude

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

Response: **And also with you.**

Acknowledging the Territory

Lighting the Christ Candle and Peace Candle

Welcome/Announcements & Introit MV # 18 Lord, Prepare Me to be a Sanctuary (twice)

Call to Worship

Welcome to this summertime place of gathering and of witness.

We come to worship God as revealed in the risen Christ.

Open your hearts to the movement of the Spirit within.

We come to live our faith in a world of need and of opportunity.

Widen your understanding of the movement of God within and without.

We come to pray in mind, in body, in spirit, and in action.

- Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C., Kincardine, Ont.

Gathering Hymn: VU 374 "Come and Find the Quiet Center"

Prayer of the Day (all)

God who seeks justice and abundance for all, we yearn for but have not lived up to your vision of the world. Some live in abundance, while many remain in poverty. Some are treated with dignity and respect, while others are rejected. God of passion and compassion, do not let us be comfortable with the way things are.

(a time of quiet reflection)

Help us be part of your work of feeding, empowering, and transforming our communities and our world. Amen.

- Beth W Johnston, Bridging Waters P.C., Nipawin, Sask.

Singing VU 400 Lord, Listen to your children Praying (B.C.D.& E)

Prayer of Illumination: (all) inspired by Psalm 14

We come seeking, O God. We seek wisdom. We seek knowledge. We seek what will restore our spirits and provide refuge from the chaos of the world. Bless to us your word, this day, and guide us to the wisdom we need. Amen.

Scripture: [Genesis 27:1-15]

When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called his elder son Esau and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." 2 He said, "See, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. 3 Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt game for me. 4 Then prepare for me savory food, such as I like, and bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I die." 5 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father say to your brother Esau, 7 'Bring me game, and prepare for me savory food to eat, that I may bless you before the LORD before I die. 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my word as I command you. 9 Go to the flock, and get me two choice kids, so that I may prepare from them savory food for your father, such as he likes; 10 and you shall take it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.'" 11 But Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, "Look, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a man of smooth skin. 12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him, and bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." 13 His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my word, and go, get them for me." 14 So he went and got them and brought them to his mother; and his mother prepared savory food, such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the best garments of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob.

Herein is Wisdom.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon Jacob's Spiritual Transformation

The Bible is a spiritual book for our spiritual journey on earth. It, therefore, should be read with spiritual eyes and mind. The story of Jacob shows us a three-stage process of spiritual transformation. In the first stage, which is usual for everyone, Jacob was under the care of his parents, Rebecca and Isaac. But when he took the blessing assigned to his elder brother Esau, all things changed. He could not stay at his earthly parents' house anymore. The same story is in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. As the second son, he asked his father for his share and left his father's house to start a new life. It still happens today in many households. For example, when a child grows up and earns a degree, diploma, or graduation, they no longer stay in their parents' house but leave to start a new, independent life.

Let us see the process. With the help of his mother, Rebekah, Jacob disguised himself as Esau by taking his brother's garments and then putting on animal skins. But he could not mimic his brother's deepening voice. Let me read the story a little more:

and she put the skins of the kids on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 Then she handed the savory food, and the bread that she had prepared, to her son Jacob. 18 So he went into his father, and said, "My father"; and he said, "Here I am; who are you, my son?" 19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, so that you may bless me." 20 But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success." 21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob went up to his father Isaac, who felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. [Genesis 27:16-23]

In order to get a blessing from God through his earthly father, Isaac, he needed to be a firstborn. However, Jacob was the second born, even though Esau and Jacob were twin brothers. Jacob, with the help of his mother, Rebekah, deceived his father, Isaac. Is deceit acceptable in any human relationship? Absolutely not! What about in a relationship with God? No way! Just read the story once more. Is it possible to deceive Isaac by putting animal skins on Jacob's hands and neck, though his father's eyes are dim? Is Isaac, who now acts as God's agent, so gullible? What kinds of people are so gullible today? Are those who read and believe the Bible literally not gullible?

Followers of Harold Camping who predicted Judgment Day on May 21, 2011, donated all their belongings, including their houses and automobiles, and waited for the Rapture at 6 o'clock in the evening. Unfortunately for them, nothing happened. The day passed quietly. There was no refund from the organization because Harold had postponed the day for five months. Was this not a religious deception? I would say that anyone who reads and believes the Bible literally is potential prey for such a religious organization and prediction. Jacob, disguising himself with animal skins on his neck and hands, symbolizes our divine soul imprisoned in the animal body before being sent to the earth. For example, just before Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden of Eden, God killed an animal and put the animal skin on them for their garments (Gen. 3:21). If you see Jacob's disguising himself

with animal skins as a divine soul incarnated in an animal body, the story of old is now yours. Here, the blessing of God/ the right of the firstborn through his father Isaac to Jacob symbolizes the divine spirit and fire, or the business of the Heavenly Father, which Jesus, Son of God, begins to focus on at the age of twelve. All mothers, however, want their children to receive such a blessing from God, the symbol of eternal life. With it, they have more opportunities not only to do their own business but also God's business. Jacob is not fully mature yet to do God's business, although he obtained it in a mean way. He is not yet ready to deal with the blessing of eternal life or business.

How do we know? "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." His voice has not been changed to deepening. Physically, he seems to be an adult with lots of hair, like his elder brother Esau. But spiritually, he is still a child whose voice is not deep yet. (If we use our degrees, diplomas, gifts, talents, and blessings only for our own sake, we are not yet mature.)

I think Rebekah was a revolutionary mother who resisted the social norm that the divine blessing should be inherited only by the firstborn. That is how I can justify her action in helping her second son. Yes, indeed, the second son should also inherit God's blessing. If such a notion is acceptable or authorized by the Word of God, it tells us that everyone born in this world is qualified to do God's business here on earth and to have eternal life. Jesus Mary's son, from the worldly point of view, was an illegitimate son, fatherless/second-class, but from God's viewpoint, the firstborn Son of God. What a Christmas Story we have as the Good News!

In order to do God's business, Jacob needed more time for training and maturity. So, God kicked him out. He left his father's house and arrived at his uncle's house, where Jacob's second stage began.

Here, the uncle's house represents the world we live in. As you know, the uncle's house/the world is not a perfect and permanent place for all souls to live in forever. Born in South Korea and now living in Canada, I feel Canada is my uncle's house. I had the opportunity to return to Korea. I feel that Korea, too, is my uncle's house. That is why all souls are yearning to go back home. "In my Father's house there are many mansions," says Jesus (John 14:2). Like the people of Israel wandering in the wilderness for forty years and like Jacob staying in his uncle's house for fourteen years, we, too, are wandering/wondering here in the uncle's house of the world for a certain time.

In his uncle's house, Jacob created his own family and developed his own business by taking care of sheep and goats that belonged to his uncle. So do we. What did Moses do in the wilderness for forty years before seeing God in the flame? It is exactly what Jacob did –taking care of animals. What did Jesus do in the wilderness for forty days? He struggled with the temptations of animal natures in and surrounding him. In order to do God's business here on earth, first of all, we must tame animal natures and desires in and around us.

After a long agony with the blessings of God in the wilderness of the house of Uncle Laban, Jacob heard the voice of God bidding him to return to his father's house. Read Genesis 31:3 - Then the LORD said to Jacob, **"Return to the land of your ancestors and to your kindred, and I will be with you."** (Read more Genesis 31:17-18) On his way home, just before crossing the river of Yapok, he wrestled with the angel of God and

received the final blessing from God directly, and his name Jacob – to follow, to be behind, to cheat, was changed to Israel (the child of God) to begin a new life in his eternal home. Crossing the river is another important symbolic action in the spiritual world. It signifies the soul's final entry to God's land. After forty years of wandering in the wilderness, the people of Israel entered the Promised Land by crossing another river, the Jordan. We, the souls of God, will cross another river at the end of our wandering life here on earth. There we shall sing together, "Shall We Gather at the River."

Offering Invitation

Offering Hymn MV 191 What can I do?

Offering Prayer (all)

Loving God, we offer these gifts with open hands and open hearts, trusting that your love will transform them into acts of compassion, justice, and mercy, through the power of the Holy Spirit. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

- Sandra Jenkinson, Sundridge P.C. and Trout Creek P.C., Sundridge, Ont.

Hymn: VU 710 Shall We Gather at the River?

Commissioning & Benediction

Let us go out in love and service.

Let us go out ready to give all that we are and have as disciples of Jesus.

Let us go, committed to persistent love and service.

Let us go, knowing that God is with us. Amen.

- Beth W Johnston, Bridging Waters P.C., Nipawin, Sask

Postlude

*The service is adopted from Gathering and GatheringWorship.ca, The United Church of Canada

LOOKING AHEAD: Potato Pancake Breakfast Mix Day – Tuesday, July 22nd

First Shift: 9:00 a.m. Preparing the large bags of mix for August 9th breakfast

Second Shift: 10:00 a.m. Preparing small bags for sale

For more information, check out the sign-up sheets outside Shilton Hall!

Pancake Breakfast T-shirts will be available for pick-up and payment on Sunday July 27 during Fellowship at St. John's. Cash would be appreciated for payment. Contact Sharron S after July 18 if you have any questions.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE ANNUAL PORK B-B-Q

Trinity Centennial U.C., Rosemont

Saturday July 19th 4:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

Adults: \$25.00 Children 6 – 12 years: \$15.00 Under 6 years: Free

Take-out available

Bring your own container or \$1.00 for a take out container