

**Welcome to
The Port Dover – Woodhouse Pastoral Charge
Woodhouse United Church and
Grace United Church
Worship From Home Service
Sunday, July 4, 2021**



**Port Dover – Woodhouse Pastoral Charge
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Woodhouse Organist: Pat Tiller

Grace Pianist: Cheryl Copeman

Office Administrator: Jackie Misner-Hilton

Minister Emeritus: The Rev. Frank Walker, OM

Licensed Lay Worship Leader: Heather King

Volunteer Associate Minister: Rev. Sheena Riley-Marini

Pastoral Charge Minister: Rev. Kathryn Vance, DM

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Office Hours 9:00 am – 11:30 am (Mon. – Thurs)

July 4 2021

6th Sunday after Pentecost

We Gather to Worship

Land Acknowledgement

Welcome and Announcements

Christ Candle

Call to Worship

On this glorious summer's day, we worship the One who created all that is. Some here have joy in their hearts, others hearts of sadness; yet there is room for all in the shelter of God's healing wing. As we worship, may each of us be healed and blessed as needed. May each of us experience the wonder of the risen Christ.

Come, let us worship.

Ryan McNally, St. Mark's U.C., Cannifton, Ont.

Hymn – VU #218 We Praise You, O God SH Disc 5 #10

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.

We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

We worship you, God of our mothers and fathers,
through trial and tempest, companion and guide.
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
but faithful to your promise, you walk by our side.

With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

Opening Prayer

O Gentle Saviour,
we pray today to embrace the gift of God's grace.
For we know in our hearts that
God's grace is our life force.
God's grace has many qualities,
and one of those qualities is humility.
Jesus, stand among us in our hometown.
Do not pass through our midst and go on your way.
Let your truth and grace
dissolve our need for entitlement,
and let humility catch its breath among us. Amen.

Norah Lavery, St. Andrew's U.C., Sioux Lookout, Ont.

We Listen for God's Word

Time for the Young at Heart – How does a pair of eyeglasses remind you of God?

Hymn - VU #266 Amazing Grace SH Disc 1 #4

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved and strengthened me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
this word my hope secures;
God will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.

Prayer for Illumination

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.

Roxanne Williams, Gaetz Memorial U.C., Red Deer, Alta.

Scripture Psalm 48 Above all other gods

When things go right, give God the praise;
give God the glory.

Raise your eyes and see;
the shadow of the Lord looms over us like a thundercloud.
Before that awesome might, no one risks defiance,

not even the principalities and powers that rule this world.

They gather in force, confident of their powers;

they disintegrate in chaos, aware of their weakness.

The rain slices them into fragments.

The hail drives them into the ground. They cry out in agony.

Like leaves before an autumn wind, they scatter.

We do not lie;

we witness in truth to what we have seen and heard.

The authority of God is above challenge;

it surpasses all other gods that humans worship.

The reality of God is more than human minds can grasp;

we can only struggle to understand.

The truth of God overwhelms our imaginations,

despite our attempts to confine it to our comprehension.

We know no more than to worship the Lord of creation,

the one who created us, and all creatures,

and all communities of creatures.

Let them all praise God.

Spend your life learning about this Lord,

so that you may pass on to your successors the truth –

that this is God.

There is but one God, now and forever.

This God will lead us forward into the future.

2 Corinthians 12:2-10 New International Version

² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. ³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— ⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. ⁵ I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ⁶ Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or

say, ⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. ¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6:1-13 New International Version

A Prophet Without Honor

6 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ² When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³ Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴ Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵ He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶ He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village. ⁷ Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them

authority over impure spirits.

⁸ These were his instructions: “Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. ⁹ Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. ¹⁰ Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. ¹¹ And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

¹² They went out and preached that people should repent. ¹³ They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Anthem Just a Closer Walk With Thee SH Disc 3 #8

Message

Of all the places in the world to live, the best is to live in God’s grace. It doesn’t matter if a person is homeless, owns a mansion, or is living in an institution. If they feel God’s grace, they can experience joy.

There are lots of people in our world who live in luxurious surroundings but do not have that deep down joy that only the certainty of God’s grace can provide. Conversely, there are many who live in conditions that are unimaginably horrible and yet their spirits remain unbroken, despite the daily challenges, because they know the unmerited love and favour of God.

That’s not to say they are happy 24/7. That would be unrealistic. We live in a world where there is an abundance of tragedy, injustice, sickness, deceit, cruelty, and misfortune. It is when we feel God’s love despite all these things that they become manageable. I think that even more amazing is when we feel God’s love even though we have somehow messed up. When we admit that our thoughts, words, or actions have been contrary to God’s will and we approach God with a contrite heart, we can once again experience God’s grace.

As Paul told the Corinthians, God's grace doesn't protect you from challenges but it's all you need to live with them. In fact, Paul welcomes difficulties because they serve to demonstrate just how powerful God's grace is. Scholars have not been able to come to any conclusion as to what the thorn in Paul's flesh was, but I think most of us can identify with him anyway. Each of us probably has something that they wish God would fix and yet we are left to accommodate it ourselves. I know that there have been some things my whole adult life that I wish were different. And add to that the last few years the tremors in my hands and my memory not being what it once was, and I sometimes get a little discouraged. But my discouragement doesn't last long. Why? Because I feel God's love through you. Nobody has criticized my shaky handwriting or lapses in memory. I feel loved and accepted just as I am. To me, that is God's grace. And, just like Paul said, it keeps me from being conceited.

As I was writing this, I was thinking about all of the unmarked graves of Indigenous children that died at residential schools and I ask, "Where was God in all those schools and in all of the harm done to children?" The only answer I can come up with is that God was with the children, those who died and those who survived. I thank God that in the 1970's the Federal government could no longer afford, financially, to operate those schools. I thank God for the 2008 establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I thank God that our generation is committed to helping our Indigenous individuals and communities heal. And I pray that the work toward healing will continue as long as necessary.

I usually try not to judge but I'm finding it difficult in this situation. How could anyone who claims to be a follower and teacher of Jesus' life do the evil things that we are hearing about? To kidnap, yes, kidnap, children from their parents, take them hundreds of miles away, disallow any contact with their home communities during the school year, strictly limit contact with their siblings who are in the same school, punish them for speaking their own language, abuse them physically, emotionally,

and sexually, allow them to die and then bury them in unmarked graves. I heard one account that talked about the oatmeal being buggy. Add to this that the children were not being educated in a way that would prepare them for post-secondary education and careers. Their classes were ½ days and the other half was spent learning domestic or farming skills. Sounds much like child slavery to me. Where was the justice that Jesus taught of? Where was compassion? Where was love of neighbour? These administrators did not model Christian values.

I wrote this before Canada Day. There are many communities planning to forego the traditional July 1st celebrations. I am a member of the Lions Club and I know that we have purchased fireworks and have other limited plans. Will we proceed?

I am proud to be a Canadian. I am not proud of our history with Indigenous peoples. But I am proud that the government of Canada is now both apologizing and committing resources in efforts to provide healing for the people and their communities. I am proud to be a member of the United Church of Canada. In 1986 our General Council offered an apology for its role in colonization practices and committed to walk together toward healing. Ours was the first to do this. In 1998 we offered another apology, specifically for our role in residential schools. Then, in 2020, another apology. This for our role in pressuring indigenous unwed mothers to give up their babies for adoption. Yes, we were partners in a sinful system. There is no excuse. But we are taking action to repent and walk in a new direction. It is this repentance that will enable us to feel God's grace as we journey into the future.

I've heard some persons express that they are weary of the subject. They believe that almost 50 years of discussion is enough. But it is my opinion that the first 40 years were heard by only a few. It has been only since the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in December 2015 that there has been a concerted effort to draw the attention of all peoples to these crimes. Five years is not long in history. There is a teaching which states that it takes 7 generations for change to be complete. When I was in Sandy Lake there were still residential

school survivors living there. This is really current history. These are people my age and younger. In fact, on one of my trips home, a man asked me where my home was. When I told him "Brantford", he said, "There is a mean principal there." He had attended Mohawk Institute. I urge you to do whatever you can to learn the history of our Indigenous brothers and sisters and participate in the repentance which is indicated. You may say, "I was not part of that, so why should I repent?" We have all benefitted from the unjust practices of our ancestors. As the First Nations communities continue to pay the price of colonization, residential schools, coerced adoptions, and broken treaties, we continue to benefit. And our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren benefit. We must strive for equity. Our thoughts, words, and actions toward our Indigenous neighbours, our brothers and sisters, are either for Christ or against Christ. I believe that it is as simple as that. And if the conversation stops, so will the action. I risk the fact that what I have said may not be welcome or popular. I may be subject to criticism because of it. I am sorry if I have in any way offended you. However, I do not apologize for saying it. I have spoken out for justice. I have spoken out for the kingdom of God. I have tried to see through Christ's eyes and feel through Christ's heart. I feel God's grace as I sit here. Amen.

Hymn - MV #157 I Am a Child of God SH Disc 2 #13

I am a child of God, I am a glimpse of God's new creation.
I am a child of God, I am a child of God.
I am an endless prayer, I am a yearning for contemplation,
I am an endless prayer, I am an endless prayer.
I am an angry voice, I am compassion and consternation,
I am an angry voice, I am an angry voice.
I am a cry for peace, I am commitment and dedication,
I am a cry for peace, I am a cry for peace.
I am a song of joy, I am the moment of jubilation,
I am a song of joy, I am a song of joy.

We Respond to God's Word

Offering & Prayer of Dedication

God our Creator, giver of all good and perfect gifts, we bring our praise for who you are, the one who is and was and is to come. You continue the work of creating, of giving and forgiving, and we worship you for it all, embracing your grace and love. Help us in our journey to live the mystery of being born of water and spirit. Be patient with us as we learn to embrace your grace and extend it to others. We offer up to you all we are, all we have, and all we are becoming, in the name of Christ, who gave it all for us. Amen.

Glad Faith Klassen, Stamford Lane U.C., Niagara Falls, Ont.

Minute for Mission

Grandmothers Help Change Attitudes



In Kenya, 1.5 million people live with HIV. In the Rift Valley of Kenya, 7 percent of the people who live there are HIV positive. That's roughly 892,707 people. Sadly, the grandmothers whose children have died of AIDS are often left alone to care for their grandchildren. To add insult to injury, their church community condemns them.

Why? Because some pastors who don't know the facts about HIV believe and teach that faithful Christians cannot contract the disease. They think HIV is a result of sexual sin and that it's a judgment from God for sexual immorality—a disease for sinners.

"The pastors had little information about HIV and AIDS; to them, and others in the community, it was a strange disease. Their theological interpretation of the disease was based on the way they read about the incurable diseases mentioned in the Old Testament. The pastors said that they had believed and taught that a believer in Christ cannot contract HIV—that HIV is a disease for sinners. HIV was a result of sexual sin and was a judgement from God for the sexually immoral," write Esther Mombo, regional coordinator of the World Council of

Churches Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiatives and Advocacy, and Pauline Wanjuru, lecturer in the faculty of theology and director of partnerships and alumni relations at St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya.

With support from your Mission & Service gifts, Mombo and Wanjuru led a series of workshops in one Rift Valley community that has been hit especially hard by HIV/AIDS. The workshops invited grandmothers and pastors to meet and discuss the nature of the disease and the stigma around it.

One grandmother who attended the workshops was 70 years old. She had lost both her daughter and her son and was left to raise three grandchildren on her own. Instead of stepping up to help, her neighbours refused to visit her because they said her daughter and son had been sexually immoral. Her pastor wouldn't even attend her children's funerals because he didn't want to be seen associating with her family. When she went to church, the pastor preached about the punishment for sexual immorality.

At the workshops, this woman bravely told her story to the pastors who attended. She also shared with them how it felt to be shamed for loving her children and grandchildren. Another grandmother explained that her grandchildren were born with the virus and thus couldn't have been involved in any sexual immorality. Yet another spoke of God's love for everyone.

As the grandmothers told their stories, they felt more and more confident in their knowledge and experience. The pastors learned more about the disease and made a commitment to extend compassion and offer pastoral care to the grandmothers. For these pastors, the experience was a true epiphany.

Beliefs inform actions. How we think affects what we do. All of us know from our own life experience that when we know better, we do better.

Your Mission & Service gifts support people around the world in speaking their truth so Christ's light of love can shine in all we think, say, and do. Thank you for your faithful support.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Concern

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, 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.

We Take Christ's Message Into the World

**Hymn - VU #586 We Shall Go Out With Hope of Resurrection SH Disc
5 #11**

We shall go out with hope of resurrection;
we shall go out, from strength to strength go on;
we shall go out and tell our stories boldly;
tales of a love that will not let us go.
We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted;
we'll dream our dreams of hurts that can be healed;
we'll weave a cloth of all the world united
within the vision of new life in Christ.

We'll give a voice to those who have not spoken;
we'll find the words for those whose lips are sealed;
we'll make the tunes for those who sing no longer,
expressive love alive in every heart.
We'll share our joy with those who still are weeping,
raise hymns of strength for hearts that break in grief,
we'll leap and dance the resurrection story,
including all in circles of our love.

Benediction and Commissioning

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
kingdom to all we meet.

Fern Gibbard, for Okanagan Falls U.C., Okanagan Falls, B.C.