

**Welcome to  
The Port Dover – Woodhouse Pastoral Charge  
Woodhouse United Church and  
Grace United Church  
Worship From Home Service  
Sunday, September 5, 2021**



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**Ministers: All People of the Community of Faith**

**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**

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

September 5 2021

## 15th Sunday after Pentecost

### We Gather to Worship

#### Land Acknowledgement

#### Welcome and Announcements

**Joke** – An atheist was spending a quiet day fishing when he was attacked by the Loch Ness monster. It tossed him and his boat into the air, and opened its mouth to swallow both. The atheist cried out, “Oh, my God! Help me!” At once the attack scene froze in place. A booming voice came down from the clouds. “I thought you didn’t believe in Me.” “Come on God, give me a break!” the man pleaded. “Two minutes ago I didn’t believe in the Loch Ness monster either.”

#### Christ Candle

#### Call to Worship

All people on earth share a common bond;

**God is the Creator of us all.**

Those who trust in God

**are strong and full of courage.**

Have no doubt: the reign of terror will self-destruct.

**God has given this world to all of us, for all of us to use  
our hands for good.**

Those who bless others with their generosity are blessed in return.

**The psalmist prays for those whose intentions are good:**

“Do good, O Lord, to the good.”

In this time of worship, may we seek the good we may do in God’s name.

*Suzanne Edgar, Dexter-Port Stanley P.C., Port Stanley, Ont.*

**Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!**

Raising our hands as a sign of rejoicing,  
and with our lips our togetherness voicing,  
giving ourselves to a life of creativeness,  
worship and work must be one!

**Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!**

Praying and training that we be a blessing,  
and by our handiwork daily confessing:  
we are committed to serving humanity,  
worship and work must be one!

**Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!**

Called to be partners with God in creation,  
honouring Christ as the Lord of the nation,  
we must be ready for risk and for sacrifice,  
worship and work must be one!

**Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!**

Bringing the bread and the wine to the table,  
asking that we may be led and enabled,  
truly united to build new communities,  
worship and work must be one!

**Worship the Lord (worship the Lord)  
worship the Father, the Spirit, the Son,  
raising our hands (raising our hands)  
in devotion to God who is one!**

### **Opening Prayer**

Holy One,  
all our days  
you invite us to offer gratitude  
for the gift of our living,  
even when our living is challenged,  
and grief and loss threaten to overwhelm.  
You invite us to walk the path of kindness,  
forgiveness, and love.  
We bless you that we can gather this morning  
to share our living  
and be strengthened for the journey.  
In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Bob Root & Co., Peterborough, Ont.*

### **We Listen for God's Word**

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

### **Hymn - VU #357 Tell Me the Stories of Jesus SH Disc 4 #17**

Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear,  
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:  
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,  
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,  
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;  
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,  
all in the lovelight of Jesus' face.

Tell me, in accents of wonder, how rolled the sea  
tossing the boat in a tempest on Galilee!  
And how the Master, ready and kind,  
chided the billows and hushed the wind.

Into the city I'd follow the children's band,  
waving a branch of the palm tree high in my hand;  
one of his heralds, yes, I would sing  
loudest hosannas! Jesus is king!

Show me that scene in the garden of bitter pain;  
and of the cross where my Saviour for me was slain.  
Sad ones or bright ones, so that they be  
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

### **Prayer for Illumination**

Covenant-Keeper,  
as we prepare for the sharing of scripture,  
we celebrate your promise of continuing renewal.  
Through Jesus,  
you showed us the way past temptation  
and drew us into life-giving community.  
He is the living bread that builds us up  
and helps us when needed  
to endure and overcome.  
We gather and share his word that,  
through his teachings,  
our hearts may continue to be formed  
in the image of your love. Amen.

*Karen Boivin, City View U.C., Nepean, Ont.*

## Scripture

**Psalm 125 Let there be fairness (James Taylor, Everyday Psalms)**

Mountains are not easily moved.

**God's people have faith like that.**

As mountains gather around a little town,

Cradling it in the hollow of their valleys.

**So God wraps loving arms around her children,**

**To protect them from the abuse and exploitation.**

Hands of hate shall not touch them;

**no guns or war toys will fall into their cribs.**

They will not be tempted by violence later in life;

**They will have no desire to make victims of others.**

Let it be so, Lord.

Let it be so.

**Let a good start lead to goodness as an adult.**

Show us that there is an innate fairness in the universe.

**Let those who turn away from you,**

**Who prefer their own ways to yours,**

**Fade out of the limelight.**

Those who follow your way do not expect fame or fortune;

**But let there be fairness.**

## **James 2:1-17 New International Version**

### **Favoritism Forbidden**

**2** My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. <sup>2</sup> Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. <sup>3</sup> If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," <sup>4</sup> have you not

discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

<sup>5</sup> Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? <sup>6</sup> But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? <sup>7</sup> Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

<sup>8</sup> If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. <sup>9</sup> But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. <sup>10</sup> For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. <sup>11</sup> For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery," also said, "You shall not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

<sup>12</sup> Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and Deeds

<sup>14</sup> What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? <sup>15</sup> Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

## **Mark 7:24-37 New International Version**

### **Jesus Honors a Syrophenician Woman's Faith**

<sup>24</sup> Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. <sup>25</sup> In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. <sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

<sup>27</sup> "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

<sup>28</sup> "Lord," she replied, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

<sup>29</sup> Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

<sup>30</sup> She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

### Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup> There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

<sup>33</sup> After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. <sup>34</sup> He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "*Ephphatha!*" (which means "Be opened!"). <sup>35</sup> At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

<sup>36</sup> Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. <sup>37</sup> People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

## **Anthem Let the Children Come to Me SH Disc 3 #10**

### **Message**

The James reading that we heard today is one of my favorites in the whole Bible. In my opinion the author, whose identity is disputed, has truly captured Jesus' message. Don't show favoritism; faith demands action.

I like the way James writes. The language is clear and to the point. Jesus initially showed what could be regarded as favoritism in that he was only ministering to the people of Israel. When he realized that this was unfair, he changed. This happened in the account of the Syrophenician woman. Let's look at how that transpired.

The story begins with the mysterious statement that Jesus went to the vicinity of Tyre and did not want anyone to know it. What was going on? Well, Jesus had been spending all of his time ministering in Jewish provinces, and that ministry was drawing overwhelming crowds, and he was exhausted. So Jesus left the Jewish provinces and went into a Gentile territory, Tyre, in order to get some rest.

But it doesn't work. A woman hears of his arrival and makes her way to



Jesus. Though she's a Syrophoenician, because of Tyre's proximity to Judea she would have known the Jewish customs. She knows that she has none of the religious, moral, and cultural credentials necessary to approach a Jewish rabbi—she is a Phoenician, a Gentile, a pagan, a woman, and her daughter has an unclean spirit. She knows that in every way, according to the standards of the day, she is unclean and therefore disqualified to approach any devout Jew, let alone a rabbi. But she doesn't care. She enters the house without an invitation, falls down and begins begging Jesus to exorcise a demon from her daughter. Nothing and no one can stop her. She's pleading with Jesus—she won't take no for an answer.

As a parent, if your child is in jeopardy, you simply do what it takes to save her. It doesn't matter whether you're normally timid or brazen—your personality is irrelevant. You don't think twice; you do what it takes. So it's not all that surprising that this desperate mother is willing to push past all the barriers.

So, what is Jesus' response to this woman as she is down on the floor begging?

"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

On the surface, this appears to be an insult. We are a dog-loving society, but in New Testament times most dogs were scavengers—wild, dirty, uncouth in every way. Their society was not dog-loving, and to call someone a dog was a terrible insult. In Jesus' day the Jews often called the Gentiles dogs because they were "unclean." Is what Jesus says to her just an insult, then? No, it's a metaphor. And actually the word Jesus uses for "dogs" here really means "puppies." Remember, the woman is a mother. Jesus is saying to her, "You know how families eat: First the children eat at the table, and afterward their pets eat too. It is not right to change that order. The puppies must not eat food from the table before the children do." What he's saying to the Syrophoenician woman is, "There's an order here. I'm going to Israel first, then the other nations later."

However, this mother comes back with "Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the

demon gone.

In other words, she says, “Yes, Lord, but the puppies eat from that table too, and I’m here for mine. I understand. I am not from Israel, I do not worship the God that the Israelites worship. Therefore, I don’t have a place at the table. I accept that - but there’s more than enough on that table for everyone in the world, and I need mine now.” She is arguing with Jesus in a respectful way and she will not take no for an answer.

She’s not saying, “Lord, give me what I deserve on the basis of my goodness.” She’s saying, “Give me what I don’t deserve on the basis of your goodness—and I need it now.”

As with much of Jesus ministry there were some justice implications in this story.

In Jewish religious culture, it was understood that one’s standing with God depended first upon their Jewish ethnicity and, secondly, upon their degree of religious practice. Therefore, to be ethnically Gentile (not Jewish) was to be inherently outside of right standing with God. Ethnicity, then, was an important factor for your status before God. Jesus, however, told the apostles to make disciples of ALL nations. In addition, in Jesus’ day, women were also regarded as social outsiders—in society and also in the religious spheres. To be a woman meant social inferiority, religious marginality, and political inequality. Indeed, this woman had two strikes against her—being a Gentile and a woman. Yet, Jesus’ treated women with the same respect as he treated men. So, as I said, Jesus stopped ministering solely to the people of Israel and treated Gentiles with the same love, care, and status. Even though James only mentions favoring rich over poor, it should be extended to race, gender, and religion as well.

And James other point, faith without action is critical to Christianity. Imagine what would have happened, or should I say *wouldn’t* have happened, if Jesus’ followers did nothing after he died. They could have said, “Jesus is our Saviour” until their dying day but faith in our Lord would have died with them. Jesus was not all talk, he was action. That must be true of us, too. Everybody can do something – a gesture of kindness, of love, of care, of justice. I think action is the best form of evangelism. Talk is cheap. Action is priceless.

Amen.

## **Hymn - VU #606 In Christ There Is No East or West SH Disc 2 #16**

In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no south or north,  
but one great family of love  
throughout the whole wide earth.

In him shall true hearts everywhere  
their high communion find;  
his service is the golden cord  
close binding humankind.

Join hands, then, people of the faith,  
whate'er your race may be;  
all children of the living God  
are surely kin to me.

In Christ now meet both east and west,  
in him meet south and north;  
all Christ-like souls are one in him  
throughout the whole wide earth.

### **We Respond to God's Word**

#### **Offering & Prayer of Dedication**

These are our monetary gifts, O God.  
With them come our hours of work,  
our years of service,  
and the love of our hearts.

Bless them in the work of this congregation  
and in the compassion they can offer in the world. Amen.

*Kate Gregory, Belwood-Metz P.C., Belwood, Ont.*

## Minute for Mission

### Hungry and Alone, Generosity Changed Amei's Life

Last year, Amei's family had nothing to eat but wild fruit. On good days, Amei's neighbours gave her their leftovers. But those days were few and far between.

Amei is 61 years old and has lived in Aweil East County of Northern Bahr el Ghazal, South Sudan, for 40 years. Over a decade ago her husband abandoned their family, including their four children. To get by, Amei collected firewood and sold it to feed her family. But now,

her body is too weak.

Chopping and hauling wood is too hard at her age.

Thanks to the support of United Church

partners, Amei's life has changed for the better.

"I was able to receive food

for my family. I received assorted food items such as sorghum, beans, cooking oil, and salt. I am able to cook nice food for my family. We



Amei is participating in the food assistance project implemented by Tearfund Canada and funded by CFGB and The United Church of Canada.

*Credit: John Deng/Tearfund*

also received vegetable seeds and tools to cultivate our own food. I am in a farmer group, and we received seeds of okra, kale, eggplant, onions, cabbage, carrot, and tomatoes, including tools such as watering cans, axes, and hoes for each of us. We have fenced our gardens as a group, and we come here every day to water them. We talk and pray that crops are good and appreciate those who are helping us," says Amei.

The support means hope for Amei and her children.

"I have survived the hardest part of this disaster, where I thought I

would die. I can now eat three meals a day and am optimistic that the harvests from my garden will provide food for my family. I know the future is bright,” she says.

For over three decades, just one of the ways the people of the United Church have worked to end world hunger is by partnering with 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies that together form the **Canadian Foodgrains Bank**. The Christian organization provides food in times of crisis for hungry people in parts of the world where there is high food insecurity, teaches people how to grow their own food, and provides nutritional education.

Last year, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank helped over 800,000 people in 36 countries.

United Church partnerships with organizations like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank that are addressing global hunger are critical. Especially now.

Acute hunger is set to double in the next decade because of COVID-19. The latest figures from the United Nation’s World Food Programme predict that more than 250 million people will suffer acute hunger ([opens in a new tab](#)) by the end of the year.

That’s nearly double the number of people the *2020 Global Report on Food Crises* says were going hungry before the pandemic struck.

“The United Church has been part of initiatives that save lives and support vulnerable people in the world living in the midst of crisis. Working with partners, we can and do make a difference,” says United Church Moderator Richard Bott.

*Make a gift to the United Church’s global COVID-19 appeal and ensure that people like Amei don’t go hungry. Your generosity saves and transforms lives. Thank you!*

## 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 - MV #145 Draw the Circle Wide SH Disc 1 #20

**Draw the circle wide, Draw it wider still. Let this be our song,  
no one stands alone, standing side by side, draw the circle  
wide.**

God the still-point of the circle, 'round whom all creation turns;  
nothing lost, but held forever, in God's gracious arms.

**Draw the circle wide, Draw it wider still. Let this be our song,  
no one stands alone, standing side by side, draw the circle  
wide.**

Let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and  
small;

let our loving know no borders, faithful to God's call.

**Draw the circle wide, Draw it wider still. Let this be our song,  
no one stands alone, standing side by side, draw the circle  
wide.**

Let the dreams we dream be larger, than we've ever dreamed before;

let the dream of Christ be in us, open every door.

**Draw the circle wide, Draw it wider still. Let this be our song,  
no one stands alone, standing side by side, draw the circle  
wide.**

### **Benediction and Commissioning**

God send you from here in the power of love.

God keep you filled with the Holy Spirit.

God build in you the reign of Christ.

***Robin Wardlaw, Toronto, Ont.***