

Trinity-Grace United Church

September 8th, 2024

SEASON OF CREATION - WEEK 1

*To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.
- William Blake*

ORDER OF SERVICE

PRELUDE

Naoki Natsume

WELCOME

OPENING RESPONSES

One: We have awoken to a new day,

***All:* surrounded by God's beauty and abundance;**

One: A new week, a new season,

***All:* holding endless, unfolding possibilities.**

One: You are invited to embrace those possibilities;

***All:* In them, we encounter the Spirit of Life.**

One: May the divine presence and energy
which infuses and connects all creation
resonate within you...

VIDEO REFLECTION

CANDLE LIGHTING

One: Today as always, we gather in the light of Christ:
the light of love,
the light of the sun and stars,
the light within us and all creation.

The Christ candle is lit

GATHERING PRAYER

Leader:

God of grace and glory,
Your creative power is beyond imagining.
Your love encompasses the whole universe;
your grace extends beyond the highest heavens;
your wisdom lies deeper than the fathoms of the sea.

Maker of all things,
In Christ you show us the truest image and possibility
of divine/human connection.
Through your Spirit,
Your creative impulse is present with us in every time and place.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit,
be with us now.

All: Amen.

HYMN: "God. Who Gives To Life Its Goodness"

(VU 260)

God who gives to life its goodness,
God creator of all joy,
God who gives to us our freedom,

God who blesses tool and toy:
teach us now to laugh and praise you,
deep within your praises sing,
till the whole creation dances
for the goodness your love brings.

God who fills the earth with beauty,
God who binds each friend to friend,
God who names us co-creators
God who wills that chaos end:
grant us now creative spirits,
minds responsive to your mind,
hearts and wills your kin-dom growing,
all our acts by Love refined.

PRAYER FOR RELEASE AND RENEWAL

One: God of the hopeful sunrise and early morning birdsong,
of the mysterious deep oceans and vast life beyond the waves,
Your vast Creation inspires awe in us.
And in the breakthroughs and new discoveries
in our understanding of the working of the world,

***All:* We see your fingerprints and feel your presence.**

One: Yet we sometimes polarize science and faith,
setting them at odds with each other.
Forgive us for not seeing the potential blessings
that, together, they offer us,
and for limiting our understanding of both - and of you - in the process.

***All:* May we open ourselves to your great mystery once more.**

- Time for silent prayer -

Response: (singing)

VU 267 (v.1 & 2)

Like a mighty river flowing,
like a flower in beauty growing,
far beyond all human knowing
is the perfect peace of God.

Like the hills serene and even,
like the coursing clouds of heaven,
like the heart that's been forgiven,
is the perfect peace of God.

SHARING PEACE

One: May the peace of Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you!

We take a moment to greet each other in the peace of Christ.

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

One: Creator God, as we read and meditate on the Scriptures,
speak a creative word into our hearts and minds.
And may the Life and Wisdom that fills the Cosmos
fill us anew today.

All: Amen.

READING: Acts 2: 14-21

14 Then Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:
“Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to

what I say. **15** Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. **16** No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17

'In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

18

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit,
and they shall prophesy.

19

And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20

The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

21

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

One: Hear what the Sacred Spirit is saying to the church.

All: **Open our hearts, Spirit of Life.**

EXPLORING THE WORD

- Message by Rev. Sandra Nixon

RESPONDING

HYMN: "Each Blade of Grass" (Circle of God)

(MV 37)

During the hymn, the offering box is brought forward

Each blade of grass, ev'ry wing that soars,

the waves that sweep across a distant shore,
make full the circle of God.

Each laughing child, ev'ry gentle eye,
a forest lit beneath a moon-bright sky,
make full the circle of God.

Each silent paw, ev'ry rounded stone,
the buzz that echoes from a honey'd comb,
make full the circle of God.

Each fire-brimmed star, ev'ry out-stretched hand,
the wind that leaps and sails across the land,
make full the circle of God.

Each icy peak, ev'ry patterned shell,
the joyous chorus that the dawn foretells,
make full the circle of God.

Each cosmic hue, ev'ry creature's way,
all form the beauty of this vast array,
making full the circle of God.

OFFERING OUR GIFTS

Trinity-Grace is grateful for the many ways we are gifted and called to contribute to God's mission through this faith community.

Prayer of Dedication

One: In gratitude O God,
we ask your spirit to bless all we offer this day.
May your spirit may move in this community
and transform all our gifts into faithful ministry,
in Christ's name.

All: Amen.

CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY

We share announcements, celebrations & prayer requests.

PRAYERS OF GRATITUDE AND CONCERN (The Prayers of the People)

Periods of silence will be left for you to offer your own prayers

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES (Lord's Prayer, adapted)

One/All:

Creator of all, who is in the heavens...
and in the air, soil, forests, and oceans.

hallowed be your name...
by the care we take of your creation.

Your kin-dom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven...
your will to till and tend.

Give us today our daily bread...
that all may have enough to live life in fullness.

Forgive us our sins...
our greed and lack of concern
for the welfare of creation
and future generations,

as we forgive those who sin against us...
through reconciliation with justice and peace.

Lead us not into temptation...
to put ourselves at the centre

and deliver us from evil...

that dwells within our systems & structures

For yours is the kin-dom...

yours, not ours,

the power, and the glory...

in the cross and resurrection,

now and forever...

alpha and omega

Amen.

HYMN: All Who Hunger"

(VU 460)

- 1 All who hunger, gather gladly;
 holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wandering.
 Here, in truth, we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness,
 all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
 Taste and see that God is good.

- 2 All who hunger, never strangers;
 seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming.
 Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered
 in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
 Taste and see that God is good.

- 3 All who hunger, sing together;
 Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.

Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.

WE SHARE THE FEAST OF LIFE *in The Sacrament of Communion*

Invitation to the Table

We gather now at the table of life - God's table, to be nurtured in the life and love of Jesus Christ. The United Church of Canada practices an "open table" which means that everyone is welcome to participate. At this table, we are welcomed as seekers and insured to receive the grace that empowers us to live lives of loving connectedness, in Christ's name.

The Great Thanksgiving

One: The Creator be with you and all creation.

***All:* And also with you.**

One: Open your hearts.

***All:* We open them to our Creator.**

One: Let us give thanks to Creator God.

***All:* It is right to join creation in praising the holy one.**

Leader:

It is right that we give you thanks, Holy God.
Your Word is the impulse for all things to be, for space,
stars and stardust to appear, for Earth to emerge from the deep;
for life to be born of Earth and for humans to be born
of Earth and the Spirit.

You chose to enter into human life, to become a part of Earth,
to suffer, die and rise from death, showing us the redemption

we have in You, renewing creation,
and affirming all born of Earth and the Spirit.

Your presence is the living impulse in all things,
the Christ presence deep among us,
filling Earth—land, sea and air;
filling every element and place;
filling the grain and the grape we share this day.

Therefore with the ancient voices in the forest,
high voices from the sky, deep voices from the sea;
with all of creation and and the whole company of heaven,
we proclaim your presence among us, singing:

(MV 203)

**All: O holy, holy, holy God,
O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n,
Creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
And bears your name always!**

Leader:

As we lift our prayers and praise to you, O God,
we again re-live that special moment in the upper room
when Jesus broke the bread, passed it around the table
and said to his friends,
“This is my body given for you;
each time you do this, remember me.”

And then taking the cup of wine, after supper, saying:
“Drink this, all of you. This is my life poured out for you,
a new covenant through my self-giving;
each time you do this, remember me.”

Therefore upon these common elements of the earth,
we seek the blessing and life-giving presence of Christ's Spirit.

**All: Holy One, may your spirit rest upon these gifts,
that in our sharing together,
the strength and compassion of Jesus
will continue to stir our hearts,
so we may we become more fully one with Christ and each other,
Christ's living body in service to God's beloved world.
Amen.**

Sentences

One: Jesus, Christ, our alpha and omega,
eternal word and love incarnate,
is present to us in this bread.

Jesus, Christ, the one who redeems us
and calls us by name,
now meets us in this cup.

These are the gifts of God for the family of God.

COMMUNION

Communion is distributed - all are welcome to participate.

In person:

**Please come forward for communion. You will be given a piece of bread (gluten free) by the first server. Please consume the bread and then move to the second server where you can take and drink a glass of grape juice.*

**If you are unable to come to the front, please remain seated and the servers will come to you once they are finished the distribution at the front.*

Online:

Please have a piece of bread and a cup of grape juice (or your preferred substitutes) ready. If you are with others, offer them to each other. Or you can consume them on your own while communion is happening on screen.

Communion Hymn: "As We Gather At Your Table"

(VU 457)

As we gather at your table,
as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence;
let our hearts and minds be stirred.

Nourish us with sacred story
till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet
how to make Love's victory known.

Turn our worship into witness
in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you,
bringing peace where there is strife.

Give us, Christ, your great compassion
to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image
in the world you died to save.

Gracious Spirit, help us summon
other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome
those who had been last and least.

There no more will envy blind us
nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels
to repeat the sounding joy.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

One: Creating God, source of all life and love,
we thank you for nourishing us in Christ's life and love.

All: May we who have received these gifts,
live in Christ's hope and share his love,
so that we and all your Creation may be set free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name.
Amen.

HYMN: "Let All Things Now Living"

(VU 242)

Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God our Creator triumphantly raise;
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
by guiding us on to the end of our days.

God's banners are o'er us, pure light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night;
till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into Light.

By law God enforces, the stars in their courses
and sun in its orbit obediently shine;
the hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.

We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise:
till all things now living unite in thanksgiving,
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise

The Christ candle is extinguished.

Our prayers rise and are received into God's heart.

SENDING & BLESSING

Leader:

Go into God's wondrous world,
open to the infinite possibilities for love and justice
and wonder that abound.

And may the God's divine grace,
Christ's loving presence
and the re-creative energy of the Spirit
continue to resonate within you
and bless you this day and always.

Sung Response: "Ameni" (MV 219) **(3x)**

Ameni, ameni,
amen, amen, amen,
ameni!

POSTLUDE