

SA, SL, TS & DSM United Churches
100th Anniversary of the United Church – June 8th, 2025
with Communion

Prelude: - by Christie Coatsworth

Welcome & Announcements:

Thank you for your support of all our past services, which are posted on our websites - Talbotstreet.ca and Southbuxton.ca

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Call to Worship:

Eric: We sing of a church seeking to continue the story of Jesus by embodying Christ's presence in the world.

People: **We are called together by Christ as a community of broken but hopeful believers, loving what he loved, living what he taught, striving to be faithful servants of God in our time and place.**

Eric: Our ancestors in faith bequeath to us experiences of their faithful living;

People: **Upon their lives our lives are built.**

Eric: Our living of the gospel makes us part of the communion of saints,

People: **Experiencing fulfillment in God's reign, actively anticipating a new heaven and a new earth.**

Eric: Let us come together, as God's Church, to celebrate God's Spirit, alive in the United Church of Canada for well over 100 years. Come let us worship and celebrate! **

Opening Hymn: VU 326 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

(Methodist hymn sang in the 1925 "church union" service)

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of God's grace.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace.

He speaks, and listening to his voice,
new life the dead receive,
the mournful broken-hearts rejoice,
the humble poor believe.

Hear him, you deaf; you voiceless ones,
your tongues again employ;
you blind, behold your Saviour comes,
and leap, you lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of your name. **

Opening Prayer:

People: The church has not always lived up to its vision. We require the Spirit to reorient it, helping it to live an emerging faith while honouring tradition, challenging it to live by grace rather than entitlement, for we are called to be a blessing to the earth.

We are each given particular gifts of the Spirit. For the sake of the world, God calls all followers of Jesus to Christian ministry. In the church, some are called to specific ministries of leadership, both lay and ordered; some witness to the good news; some uphold the art of worship; some comfort the grieving and guide the wandering; some build up the community of wisdom; some stand with the oppressed and work for justice.

To embody God's love in the world, the work of the Church requires the ministry and discipleship of all believers. In grateful response to God's abundant love, we bear in mind our integral connection to the earth and to each other. We participate in God's work of healing and mending creation, as we pray and act in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen. **

Responsive Psalm: Isaiah 40: 1 - 8

Encourage God's People

Our God has said: "Encourage my people! Give them comfort.

Speak kindly to Jerusalem and announce: Your slavery is past; your punishment is over.

I, the Lord, made you pay double for your sins."

Someone is shouting: "Clear a path in the desert! Make a straight road for the Lord our God.

Fill in the valleys; flatten every hill and mountain.

Level the rough and rugged ground.

Then the glory of the Lord will appear for all to see.

The Lord has promised this!"

Someone told me to shout, and I asked, "What should I shout?"

We humans are merely grass, and we last no longer than wild flowers.

At the Lord's command, flowers and grass disappear, and so do we.

Flowers and grass fade away, but what our God has said will never change.

Children's Story:

Children's Prayer & Lord's Prayer:

Children's Song: VU 43 "Go, Tell It On the Mountain"

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.*

*Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.*

While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.*

*Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.*

The shepherds feared and trembled
when lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Saviour's birth!

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.*

*Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born.*

Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born,
and God sent our salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.

*Go, tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and everywhere.*

*Go, tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born. ***

Gospel Reading: John 1: 1 - 14

The Word of Life

In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. And with this Word, God created all things. Nothing was made without the Word. Everything that was created received its life from him, and his life gave light to everyone. The light keeps shining in the dark, and darkness has never put it out. God sent a man named John, who came to tell about the light and to lead all people to have faith. John wasn't this light. He came only to tell about the light. The true light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. The Word was in the world, but no one knew him, though God had made the world with his Word. He came into his own world, but his own nation did not welcome him. Yet some people accepted him and put their faith in him. So he gave them the right to be the children of God. They were not God's children by nature or because of any human desires. God himself was the one who made them his children. The Word became a human being and lived here with us. We saw his true glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. From him the complete gifts of undeserved grace and truth have come down to us. **

History of DSM United Church:

Message: “100 Years and Counting”

From the beginning, God called us into covenant, bound with God, with one another, and with God’s wonderfully diverse Creation. God called us, further, to live lovingly in those relationships...According to Jesus’ commandment, we are to love one another: ‘Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other’

In our time, 2025, we can continue believing into Christ and the expansiveness of divine love by inviting congregations to reflect on recent decisions of our General Conference—removing the exclusive language of the Discipline regarding ordination and LGBTQ people, as well as affirming the words of the revised Social Principles that marriage is “a sacred, lifelong covenant that brings two people of faith...into union with one another.”

The lectionary texts invite us to discern “what the Spirit is saying to the churches” as we love one another into beloved community within God’s whole Creation.

But then, how strange that in the prophet’s vision, “the sea was no more”? The signifier of chaos and fearsome storms, the sea transported Roman military and policing power throughout the empire. No wonder then, John’s vision of New Creation included an absent sea. In our time, we can ask ourselves what dangerous entities we hope become “no more” in our own futuring of New Creation—drone warfare, drought and floods, school shootings, toxic waste incinerators, gender- and sexuality-based violence? As an imaginative exercise, consider Doug Gay’s liturgical poem based on Revelation 21, but written through prophetic eyes for his city, “The New Glasgow”:

We are not alone. God is always with us. Thanks be to God!

History of The United Church Of Canada:

History of St. Andrew’s United Church:

Reflection Hymn: VU 332 “The Church’s One Foundation”

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation by water and the word;
from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride;

with his own blood he bought her, and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses, with every grace endued.

'Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,
she waits the consummation of peace for evermore,
till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the three in one,
and mystic sweet communion with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we,
like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee. **

Prayer of Dedication:

Gracious God, we believe that you are calling us forward into a new day. We believe that you have a future for The United Church of Canada, that is rooted in your abundant life, and we trust you with this future, even though it's beyond the horizon of our dreams. So, we offer you the blessings you have already given us— our time, our talents, our finances, and our hopes— so that you might use them and transform them for the good of your whole world. May these gifts be a blessing to the people of The United Church of Canada and beyond! All this we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen!

Affirmation of Faith:

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

Who has created and is creating

Who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,

To reconcile and make us new,

Who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church,

To celebrate God's presence,

To live in respect in creation,

To love and serve others,

To seek justice and resist evil,

To proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

Invitation to Share Our Gifts:

Eric: We strive to offer fullness of life; which includes moments of unexpected inspiration and courage lived out, experiences of beauty, truth, and goodness, blessings of seeds and harvest, friendship and family, intellect and sexuality. We offer our gifts today so all can live the fullness of life.

Music while collecting Offering:

Offertory: VU 541 “Praise God From Whom...”

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Offertory Prayer:

People: The Spirit challenges us to celebrate the holy, not only in what is familiar, but also in that which seems foreign. Today as we offer these gifts, we sing of the Spirit, who speaks our prayers of deepest longing, and enfolds our concerns and confessions, transforming us and the world. Thanks be to God, in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Hymn: VU 400 “Listen To Your Children Praying”

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!

Pastoral Prayer and Lord’s Prayer:

Sacrament of Communion:

Eric: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you!

Eric: Present your heart forth to God.

People: We open our hearts to God’s presence!

Eric: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Eric: Creator God, we praise you for all the goodness you have sown in this world.

People: From the beginning of time, you have planted love in your Creation in all of our relations: the rocks and trees, the skies and seas, the birds, the fish, the plants and the animals, and the people.

Eric: We are in awe and wonder of all that you have done.

People: But you didn’t stop there! Not only did you sow the seeds of love, you also tended the ground in which they grew. Among the people, you raised up leaders who nurtured people through your dream.

Eric: You anointed prophets and judges to hold out your dream and sought to pull the invasive weeds from our hearts.

People: Yet we often left our gardens untended, forgetting your original call and hope. All that was created you intended and called to bear the fruit of life.

Eric: Despite your tender care, we still didn't get your dream, so in the fullness of time, you revealed yourself in the person of Jesus, who came into the garden of your world to grow among us.

People: Jesus showed us what truly good fruit looked like, and he did something that no other had done before.

Eric: He loved so widely and fully that his life force spread out like the sun's rays, nourishing life in all he touched.

People: Even though a bountiful harvest was freely given to all, the parasites of fear and power rose in us, impeding our flourishing in your love.

Eric: On the night in which he was betrayed, Jesus sat at the table with his followers and friends.

People: Celebrating the gifts of God's love and freedom, they shared a meal together.

Eric: As they ate, he took the bread of freedom and life, gave thanks to God, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take this bread and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Whenever you eat, remember me."

People: And after supper, he took the cup of blessing, gave thanks to God, and gave it to each of his disciples in turn, saying to them: "Take this and drink. This is my life which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of all. Whenever you drink, remember me."

Eric: In this simple meal, we witness the full blossom of Jesus' life, lived boldly and given freely.

People: Nothing could stop his sharing of himself. Not even death could prevent love's fruit.

Eric: And so, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Eric: We join our hearts together in a moment of silent prayer as we remember all whom you would have us share this meal with and all that weighs on our hearts: (time of silence)

People: Pour your Spirit upon us and upon these gifts, O God, that we might be transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ. Dying to our old ways, may we rise to life anew. Through your presence, may the garden of your Creation flourish and thrive, and the fruits we bear nourish others.

Sharing of the Bread and Cup:

Eric: When we share the bread together, we remember that Jesus was strongest and most powerful in his weakest and most vulnerable moments. This broken loaf is the bread of life.

(Bread is broken.)

People: When we fill this cup, we remember the common cup and the abundant blessings that have been entrusted to us. This is the cup of blessing.

Eric: The gifts of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

Prayer After Communion:

Gracious God, thank you for all the ways you nourish and replenish our lives! For time spent with others at this table, for the life and teachings of your Son, and for your hope that grows daily in our hearts— thank you! Today and always, may we follow in the Way of Jesus, sowing

seeds of grace in deep, bold, and daring ways so that all Creation might be nourished by your love. All of this we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen!

Closing: VU 626 "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Come unto me and rest;
lay down, O weary one, lay down
 your head upon my breast.'
I came to Jesus as I was,
 weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
 and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
 stoop down, and drink, and live.'
I came to Jesus, and I drank
 of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
 and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, your morn shall rise,
 and all your day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
 in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
 till travelling days are done. **

Blessing:

Eric: May we reaffirm our commitment to deep spirituality, bold discipleship and daring justice. Go with the grace of God, the Father, the compassion of Jesus, the Son, and the wisdom of our sister, the Holy Spirit, now and forever more. **

Go Now In Peace:

Go now in peace, never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.
Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others, so all the world can see.
God will be there, watching from above.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen, Amen, Amen.

Postlude: – Christie Coatsworth