

Trinity-Grace United Church
November 19th, 2023
25th Sunday after Pentecost
Transgender Awareness Week
Fourth Anniversary of Becoming an Affirming Community

GATHERING

PRELUDE

WELCOME

INTROIT: "Dance with the Spirit" (MV 156)

1st time - soloist, 2nd time - All

Dance with the Spirit early in the morning,
Play with the Spirit throughout the long day;
Work and hope for a new life a bornin',
Listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

CANDLE LIGHTING & INVITATION TO WORSHIP (One/**All**)

The rainbow is a sign of diversity and hope,
a reminder of the covenant made between God and humanity;
**a proclamation that diversity is at the heart
of God's good creation.**

We give thanks to God our Creator, for within our God-given diversity,
We are one in Christ.

**We are one in Christ, whose love embraces all
in the eternal realm of belovedness and belonging.**

(Christ candle is lit)

In gratitude and praise, let us worship.

GATHERING PRAYER

(Leader)

God of all life and each life,
We thank you that you are with us every day,
in each challenge and opportunity.
In our weakness, you are strength.
In our confusion, you light the path ahead.
In our questions, you offer wisdom for our choices.
Stay with us in these days when so much seems uncertain;
Help us to stay playful, and joyful
in our living and loving and serving,
as we seek to follow the way of Christ
through the inspiration of your Spirit of Life.

Amen.

HYMN: “Praise God For This Holy Ground”

1. Praise God for this holy ground,
place and people, sight and sound.

Refrain:

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
God’s goodness is eternal.

2. Praise God in whose word we find
food for body, soul and mind. *Refrain*
3. Praise God who through Christ makes known
all are loved and called God’s own. *Refrain*

4. Praise God's Spirit who befriends,
raises, humbles, breaks and mends. *Refrain*

5. Though praise ends, praise is begun
where God's will is gladly done. *Refrain*

PRAYER FOR WHOLENESS

(One/All)

Faithful God, this morning, as every morning,
We wake to a world of beauty and catastrophe,

**A world of visions and of violence,
of compassion and cowardice.**

Eternal One, we confess that sometimes
the problems feel too big,
the challenges too pervasive, the issues too systemic.
Sometimes we forget that you are present in it all,
lamenting and suffering and questioning with us,
just as you are with us in our moments of joy and inspiration and celebration.
And we can shrink from our faith and from the expansiveness and power
of your love and spirit at work in the world.

**O God, whom no image can encompass,
no definition encircle,
and yet who meets us in the gentle touch of love,
the beauty of a butterfly's wing,
and the laughter of children,
help us to move beyond our attempts to limit You, intellectualize You,
or to eliminate You from all that is earthy, sensuous, or vibrant.**

Calm our fears and open us again with grace,

so that we may greet You in every particle of this spectacular universe which You are creating.

In Christ's name,

Amen.

(Silence is held)

A SONG OF GRACE: "There is Room for All" (MV 62)

1st time - soloist, 2nd time - ALL

There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing;
there is room for all, sheltered in God's love.

And I rejoice and sing,

"My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."

There is room for all, there is room for all!

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 and share a sign of peace

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD

PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING

(One)

O God, Open our hearts and minds today

to listen for your wisdom spoken

as your spirit has moved through your people.

Move in us and among us by your Spirit so that in their words,

we may meet your Living Word, Jesus Christ and your Good News.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 2: 4b-9, 15-23

In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, **5** when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; **6** but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground— **7** then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. **8** And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. **9** Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’

18 Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.’ **19** So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. **20** The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. **21** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. **22** And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** Then the man said,

‘This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was taken.’

Proverbs 8: 1-3, 22-31

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

2

On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

3

beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

The Holy One created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.

23

Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

24

When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.

25

Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—

26

when God had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.

27

When the heavens were established I was there,
as the Lord drew a circle on the face of the deep,

28

Making firm the skies above,
and establishing the fountains of the deep,

29

assigning to the sea its limits,
so that the waters might not transgress the holy command,
and marking out the foundations of the earth,

30

then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily God's delight,
rejoicing before God always,

31

rejoicing in the inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Luke 18: 15-27

15 People were bringing even infants to Jesus that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they sternly ordered them not to do it. **16** But Jesus called for them and said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. **17** Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.'

18 Then a certain ruler asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' **19** Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. **20** You know the commandments: "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honour your father and mother."' **21** He replied, 'I have kept all these since my youth.' **22** When Jesus heard this, he said to him, 'There is still one thing lacking. Sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' **23** But when he heard this, he became sad; for he was very rich. **24** Jesus looked at him and said, 'How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! **25** Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.'

26 Those who heard it said, 'Then who can be saved?' **27** He replied, 'What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.'

One: For the living word of God in scripture,
and among us, and within us:

All: Thanks be to God!

EXPLORING THE WORD: “Creativity, Play, and Building God’s Kingdom”
with Dr. Mary Ann S. Saunders

Mary Ann is a white settler trans woman and nonbinary femme who lives on the stolen territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. She is a life-long Anglican whose faith and spiritual life were immeasurably deepened when she transitioned about 10 years ago. She works at the University of British Columbia where her teaching and research is wide-ranging. These days she’s most proud of research she’s done on the effects of AI gender-recognition technology on trans and gender-diverse people, and a course she developed which focuses on children’s and young adult fiction by trans and nonbinary authors.

RESPONDING

HYMN: “I Am A Child of God” (MV 157)

During the hymn, the offering box is brought forward

1. 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.

2. I am an endless prayer,
I am a yearning for contemplation,
I am an endless prayer,
I am an endless prayer.

3. I am an angry voice,
I am compassion and consternation,
I am an angry voice,
I am an angry voice.

4. I am a cry for peace,
I am commitment and dedication,
I am a cry for peace,
I am a cry for peace.

5. I am a song of joy,
I am the moment of jubilation,
I am a song of joy,
I am a song of joy.

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/All)

Holy one, with these offerings,
we seek to open our hands and hearts.

**May our gifts may be entrusted to Christ's ministry
of hospitality, justice and peace
as we seek to care for your creation and all your people.**

Bless all we offer this day, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

CONNECTING IN COMMUNITY

We share announcements, insights, joys & concerns.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Prayers of gratitude and of concern for our community, world and those we know.

THE PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES (The Lord's Prayer)

(All)

**O Breathing Life,
Your Name shines everywhere!**

**Release a space to plant your Presence here.
Imagine your possibilities now.**

**Embody your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' faults.**

**Help us not forget our Source,
yet free us from not being in the Present.
From you arises every Vision, Power and Song
From gathering to gathering.
Amen.**

- Retranslation from the Aramaic

HYMN: "The Play of the Godhead" (MV 43)

1. The play of the Godhead, the Trinity's dance,
embraces the earth in a sacred romance:
with God the Creator, and Christ the true Son,
entwined with the Spirit, your kin-dom begun,
in spangles of myst'ry, the great Three-in-One.
2. The warm mists of summer, cool waters that flow,
turn crystal as ice when the wintry winds blow.
The tap-root that nurtures, the shoot growing free,
the life-giving fruit, full and ripe on the tree:
more mystic and wondrous, your diversity.
3. In God's gracious image of co-equal parts,
we create in joy, uniting our hearts.
From elders to children, and all living things,
we join in the round of bright nature that rings
with rapture and rhythm: Creation now sings!

The Christ candle is extinguished

SENDING

(Leader)

It is sacred work to open ourselves to God's creative spirit and allow ourselves to be co-imaginers and creators of the divine kindom.

Let us go now to do this work with our whole selves, for the mending and tending of all God's children and God's beloved world.

BLESSING

As our worship concludes, our prayers rise as we sing:

AMEN: "Sing Amen" (VU 431)

Sing 2 times

Amen, we praise your name, O God
Amen, we praise your name, O God
Amen, Amen! Amen, Amen!
Amen, we praise your name, O God!

POSTLUDE

Acknowledgments:

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A portion of the Prayers of the People was written by Rabbi Rueben Zellman.