

Applewood United Church
An Affirming Community
Joint Hybrid Worship for August 6, 2023
Sacrament of Baptism

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibway and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Centering Music: "Gather Us In" MV 7

Gather us in, ground us in you.

Gather us in, ground us in you.

Gather us in, gather us in, ground us, ground us in you.

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

One: God calls us to gather as one great family rooted in love.

All: We come as siblings in Christ, ready to share our hopes and dreams,

One: our worries and troubles,

All: our gifts and skills and resources,

One: our loaves and our fishes.

All: Most importantly, we share our love.

One: As we expand our family through the Sacrament of Baptism today,
may our love be shown in our open welcome.

**All: As we worship God in word, music and sacrament,
may God's love inspire and enrich us all.**

One: Let's pray together:

**All: Open our spirits, God,
and move us into new ways of living.
Open our minds, God,
and move us into deeper ways of thinking.
Open our hearts, God,
and move us into fuller ways of loving.
Open us thoroughly and completely, God,
as we worship you with love and in the company
of our family of faith. Amen.**

Opening Hymn: "Let Us Build a House" MV 1 verses 1 and 2, 4 and 5

Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak
and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek
to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness
and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Sacrament of Baptism:

Statement of Purpose

One: The sacrament of baptism
proclaims and celebrates the grace of God.

**All: By water and the Spirit,
we are called, claimed, and commissioned:
we are called God's own,
welcomed as children of God;**

One: we are claimed by Jesus,
united with him in love,
united with one another and the Christian community
of every time and place;

**All: we are commissioned to Jesus' ministry
of love, peace, and justice,
and strengthened by the Holy Spirit
for the work of the church in the world.**

Presentation of Baptismal Candidate

One: On behalf of the congregation of Applewood United Church, I present the following children for
baptism:

Declan Walker Finn Williams

Godparents Patricia Medieros and Jay Gaanderse

Harlow Innis Anne Gaanderse

Godparent Kristen Gaanderse

Children of Allison and Jay Gaanderse

Family Introductions

Profession of Faith and Promises

*Do you believe in God, who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
and who works in us and others by the Spirit?*

I do, by the grace of God.

*Desiring the freedom of new life in Christ,
do you seek to resist evil, and to live in love and justice?*

I will, God being my helper.

Will you follow the way of Jesus Christ?

I will, God being my helper.

Will you join with your siblings in this community of faith to celebrate God's presence, live with respect in creation, and love and serve others?

I will, God being my helper.

Will you share your faith with Declan and Harlow, growing with them in faith, hope, and love?

I will, God being my helper.

To the Godparents:

Will you grow in faith with these children, trusting that, "you are not alone, you live in God's world"?

I will, God being my helper.

*Congregational Commitment

One: As a baptizing and welcoming church, will you, the Applewood United Church family, work to include, support and nurture these children within a community which worships God, resists evil, and seeks justice?

All: We will, God being our helper.

*Affirmation of Faith "A New Creed" VU 918

**All: 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 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 with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.
In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.
We are not alone.**

Thanks be to God.

The Pouring of Water and Prayer of Thanksgiving
Baptism in the Name of the Triune God

Marking with the Sign of the Cross

Laying On of Hands/Seal of the Spirit

One: Declan Walker Finn/ Harlow Innis Anne, child of God

**All: the power of the Holy Spirit work within you,
that being born of water and the Spirit,
you may be a faithful companion of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Declaration and Congregational Welcome

One: Do you, the congregation of Applewood United Church,
welcome Declan and Harlow into this community of faith?

All: We welcome them!

Sharing the Light of Christ

Presentation of Baptismal Certificates

Presentation of Prayer Blanket and Bible

Sung Response: "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise" VU 444

Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.

Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.

Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.

Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow to laugh and sing and worship,
trusting in God's love and care.

Scripture Reading:

Matthew 14:13–21 *NRSVUE*

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Choir: "In The Hands Of The Lord" by Pepper Choplin

Reflection: All in the Family

Hymn: "Creator God You Gave Us life" MV 27

Creator God you gave us life,
your image formed within our souls,
yet through the mist of time and space,
we search for that which makes us whole.

Through hands that paint majestic skies,
and voices chanting melody,
with words that reach beyond the page,
we comprehend your mystery.

In ev'ry flow'r and ev'ry tree,
we see your great diversity,
yet greater still we see your love,
expressed in our humanity.

Through hands that paint majestic skies,
and voices chanting melody,
with words that reach beyond the page,
we comprehend your mystery.

When with our hearts, our hands our minds,

we share our gifts with all the world,
our spirits soar beyond the veil,
to touch the very face of God.

Through hands that paint majestic skies,
and voices chanting melody,
with words that reach beyond the page,
we comprehend your mystery.

Introduction to the Offering

Gift of Music: "I Will Magnify Thee"

Hymn of Dedication: "Know that God is Good" MV 104
Know that God is good,
know that God is good,
know that God is good,
God is good, God is good.

Offering Prayer:

**All: Loving God, we ask you to bless our gifts
and with the addition of your blessing,
just as it was with the loaves and fishes,
there is enough for all. Enough justice, enough hope,
enough food for bodies, minds, and spirits.
Amen**

Prayers of the People

Loving Parent God, today we bring our gratitude and our thanks
to you in prayer, as your diverse family of faith.
We thank you for our siblings in the Christian faith,
those who teach us and those who inspire us,
those who share their lives and experiences with us,
those who walk with us as we journey together.

We thank you for those who take on the challenges of
leading and teaching the youngest in our faith community,
and for those who have offered their time and talents to provide
a welcome and a safer space for those of all ages.

We thank you for the curiosity of young ones, and elder ones,
that help us all to grow in our faith. We thank you for questions asked,
but also for the stories of our faith that nurture us and sustain us
throughout our lives. Help us to share those stories in meaningful ways
within our community, and beyond.

Today, we give thanks that we could welcome Declan and Harlow into our faith family through the Sacrament of Baptism. Remind us of the commitments we have made this day to support them and their parents in their growth and understanding of your love, and their place in our church community.

We thank you, Generous God, for your abundance of care and love – knowing that you provide more than enough for all, more than enough to help us all to flourish as your people and as your faith family.

We offer our prayers, God, for those who feel like they are not part of your loving family today, whether that is through loss and grief, or illness and pain, or despair and hopelessness. Give us the energy, compassion and skills we need to offer radical welcome, acceptance, support and inclusion to those who most need this care, for whatever reason.

And we lift our voices together as we share the words Jesus taught us to pray -

The Lord's Prayer (sung) VU 959

Closing Hymn: "Would You Bless Our Homes and Families" VU 556

Would you bless our homes and families,
Source of life who calls us here;
in our world of stress and tension
teach us love that conquers fear.
Help us learn to love each other
with a love that constant stays;
teach us when we face our troubles,
love's expressed in many ways.

When our way is undemanding,
let us use the time that's ours
to delight in simple pleasures,
sharing joys in gentle hours.
When our way is anxious walking
and a heavy path we plod,
teach us trust in one another
and in you, our gracious God.

From the homes in which we're nurtured,
with the love that shapes us there,
teach us, God, to claim as family
every one whose life we share.

And through all that life may offer,
may we in your love remain;
may the love we share in families
be alive to praise your name.

Let us reach beyond the boundaries
of our daily thought and care
till the family you have chosen
spills its love out everywhere.
Help us learn to love each other
with a love that constant stays;
teach us when we face our troubles
love's expressed in many ways.

Commissioning /Blessing

Sung Amen VU967

Joanne's Reflection:

Some years ago, when I was still living at home with my parents, some unexpected guests arrived. The visitors had travelled some distance, and we were all enjoying our time together, so as dinner time approached, of course they were invited to stay. I wondered how we were going to feed everyone, as dinner had only been planned for three and now there were seven who would gather at the table. Certainly not thousands, as we heard in our scripture story today, but certainly more than expected.

I should not have worried – our family visitors had not arrived empty-handed! Extra vegetables were prepared using some of what was brought and shared; cheese and pickles were added to the table, the roast sliced a bit more thinly, and extra biscuits prepared by the extra cooks! With laughter and good company, with a shared grace and shared time, the meal was expanded and “all ate and were filled.”

This scripture story of the feeding of the thousands may well have contained an element of this abundant sharing between those gathered. I do believe that those folk also shared time together, stories of their lives as they were healed, perhaps laughter and I hope good company. It is a story that reminds us of God’s abundance, of God’s care, and of Jesus’ compassion and love for all. It can also remind us that when we gather in God’s name, we can become like family, sharing what we have, expanding on what God has given us as we pass the loaves and fishes of our lives between us.

Loaves of justice, fish shaped like compassion, the bread of inclusion and right relationship, the meat of caring and teaching and helping each other to be nourished in our faith. These can all be expanded and multiplied when we share them with each other – there may even be enough to go beyond our own faith communities and feed the world. I always note that the first thing that Jesus does when the disciples bring those loaves and fishes is to give thanks – that is what that blessing he offers really is –an acknowledgment that what we have comes from God, and that we are grateful. When we truly offer thanks for what we are able to share, there is enough, there is abundance.

I also think that those who ate, “about five thousand men, besides women and children” became a family of faith that day. They were connected by Jesus, fed together by God’s abundant love, and sat together patiently. They seemed to support each other as those pieces of bread and fish were distributed through the gathered – there is no mention that one person or family took more than they needed, no account of pushing or shoving or grabbing. Everyone ate, everyone was satisfied.

Can our own family of faith gathered here today physically and virtually mirror that crowd? Can we come together to hear and be touched by Jesus? Can we share what we have – and expect that to be multiplied by God’s love and presence? Can we be patient with each other, serve one another, and make sure that each one is receiving what they need to be fed – to be filled?

As we welcomed Declan and Harlow today, as we drew them into our faith family, we made a commitment to feed them, and their parents, abundantly. Feed them with our faith, with our experience of God, with our commitment to follow God’s way of hope and justice, kindness and compassion. When we share in this way, when we are gratefully and humbly dedicated to the task of feeding and sharing, then what we offer can multiply. Our shared faith can help to grow faith in others. Our shared work for justice can lift the hearts and increase the hopes of the vulnerable and help to provide them with what they need. Our shared passion for inclusivity can provide an enlarged welcome and an increased safe and accepting space for those who the church has often rejected.

Like the crowds that gathered to encounter Jesus that day, we have come here for our own reasons. Perhaps we need healing, or seek the answers to our questions, perhaps we are still curious about who Jesus is for us, perhaps we come because this is where we feel called to be today, in this crowd of Jesus followers. What we can become, as we share worship, as we encounter God’s abundance, is a family of faith – one that shares deeply, until all are fed and filled.

May you be filled with God’s abundant love today, may you be moved to give thanks, to share, and to see that love expand and grow into this living family of faith and into the world. Amen