

**Applewood United Church**  
**An Affirming Community**  
**Hybrid Worship for September 10, 2023**

**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:** “My Soul is Thirsting For You” MV 109 Chorus

My soul is thirsting for you, O God, thirsting for you, my God.

My soul is thirsting for you, O God, thirsting for you, my God,  
thirsting for you, my God.

**Call to Worship and Opening Prayer**

One: We gather as God’s people, with thanks for God’s creation.

**All: We gather with gratitude for the beauty of fall flowers,  
for the ripening of fruits and vegetables,  
for the late summer warmth.**

One: We gather as God’s people, with thanks for all that connects us.

**All: We gather with gratitude for our families –  
faith families, found families, chosen families,  
and the web of life that ties all living creatures together.**

One: We gather as God’s people, with thanks for water that sustains us:

**All: living waters of faith, the waters of baptism and of new life,  
flowing streams and rivers, puddles and oceans.**

One: We gather as God’s people, ready to worship.

**All: We lift our hearts, our voices, our hopes and our prayers to God.**

One: Let’s pray together.

**All: Creator God, be with us as we worship  
and offer welcome in our time together today.  
Open us to a deeper reverence for the life that  
surrounds us in plant or creature,  
and for your Spirit present in water, earth, and sky.  
Give us the wisdom and the courage to act in ways  
that support a healthy planet and future  
for all your children, everywhere.  
We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen**

**Opening Hymn: “God of the Bible” MV 28 verses 1, 2 and 4**

God of the Bible, God in the Gospel,  
hope seen in Jesus, hope yet to come,  
you are our centre, daylight or darkness,  
freedom or prison, you are our home.

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful you do not change.  
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful, you do not change.

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful you do not change.  
Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful, you do not change.

**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 child for  
baptism:

Austin Alexander Latocha

*Son of Pooja and David Latocha*

*Godparents Michael Williams and Shirley Tyagi*

Family Introductions

Profession of Faith and Promises

*Do you believe in God, Source of love; in Jesus Christ, love incarnate; and in the Holy Spirit, love's power?*

**I do, by the grace of God.**

*Desiring to walk in God's way,  
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 Austin, growing with him in faith, hope, and love?*

**I will, God being my helper.**

To the Godparents:

*Recognizing that many persons nurture and influence the life of a child, will you support Austin and his parents as they grow in faith?*

**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 this child 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: Austin, 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 Austin into this community of faith?

**All: We welcome him!**

Sharing the Light of Christ

Presentation of Baptismal Certificate

Presentation of Prayer Blanket

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 Readings:**

Genesis 1:1-2, 9-10     *The Inclusive Bible*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.  
But the earth became chaos and emptiness, and darkness came over the face of the Deep – yet the Spirit of God was brooding over the surface of the waters.  
Then God said, “Waters under the sky, be gathered into one place! Dry ground: appear!” So it was. God called the dry ground “Earth” and the gathering of the waters “Sea.”  
And God saw that it was good.

Exodus 17:1-6     *The Inclusive Bible*

The Israelites left the desert of Syn to travel by stages, as YHWH had directed them. They camped at Rephidim, but found no drinking water.  
Again, they turned on Moses, “Give us drinking water.”  
Moses replied, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test YHWH?”  
But the people were thirsty, and complained even more to Moses. “Why did you bring us out of Egypt only to make us and our children and our livestock die of thirst?  
Moses appealed to YHWH, “What am I to do with these people? They are ready to stone me.”  
YHWH answered Moses, “Take some of the elders and move to the front of the people. Take with you the staff with which you struck the Nile. Go! I will wait for you there by the rock of Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink.”  
Moses did so, in the sight of the elders.

Revelation 7:17 *The Inclusive Bible*

For the Lamb, who is at the center of the throne, will be their shepherd and will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Matthew 3 selected verses      *The Inclusive Bible*

At that time Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to John the Baptizer. He baptized them in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

Immediately after Jesus had been baptized and was coming up out of the water, the sky suddenly opened up and Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and hovering over him.

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

**All:** **Thanks be to God.**

**Choir:** "A Chant for the Water"

**Reflection:** A Watery Life

**Hymn:** "Touch the Earth Lightly" VU 307

Touch the earth lightly, use the earth gently,  
nourish the life of the world in our care:  
gift of great wonder, ours to surrender,  
trust for the children tomorrow will bear.

We who endanger, who create hunger,  
agents of death for all creatures that live,  
we who would foster clouds of disaster,  
God of our planet, forestall and forgive!

Let there be greening, birth from the burning,  
water that blesses and air that is sweet,  
health in God's garden, hope in God's children,  
regeneration that peace will complete.

God of all living, God of all loving,  
God of the seedling, the snow and the sun,  
teach us, deflect us, Christ reconnect us,  
using us gently and making us one.

**Introduction to the Offering**

**Gift of Music:** "Somebody Bigger Than You and I"

**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: Living and Loving God,  
may what we give be like your gift of water –  
trickling into spaces where it can help to bring joy,  
gushing into places that need a soaking of justice,  
pouring into hearts and lives that need refreshment.  
Amen**

**Prayers of the People** *Based on Season of Creation Prayer for 2023, Let Peace and Justice Flow*  
*[worshipwords.co.uk/season-of-creation-ecumenical-resources/](http://worshipwords.co.uk/season-of-creation-ecumenical-resources/)*

Creator of All,

From your communion of love life sprung forth like a mighty river  
and the whole cosmos came into being.

On this Earth of overflowing love, the Word was made flesh  
and went forth with the life-giving waters proclaiming peace  
and justice for all creation.

And so we give our thanks for the water that surrounds and supports us,  
water for drinking and bathing,  
water for cleansing and creating,  
water for recreation and refreshment.

You called human beings to till and keep your garden.

You placed us into right relationship with each creature,  
but we failed to listen to the cries of the Earth and the cries of the most vulnerable.

We lament the loss of our fellow species and their habitats,  
we grieve the loss of human cultures,  
along with the lives and livelihoods that have been displaced or perished,  
and we ache at the sight of an economy of death, war and violence  
that we have inflicted on ourselves and on the Earth.

We pray for the most vulnerable - creatures losing their habitats,  
and humans striving to find home and shelter,  
plants struggling to grow and thrive on toxic land and climate change,  
humans struggling to grow and thrive in their communities.

Bless us once again with your life-giving waters so that the Creator Spirit  
may let justice and peace flow in our hearts and overflow into all creation.

Open our hearts to receive the living waters of God's justice and peace,  
and to share it with our suffering siblings, all creatures around us, and all creation.

Bless us to walk together with all people of good will so that the many streams of the living waters of  
God's justice and peace may become a mighty river all over the Earth.

Amen

**The Lord's Prayer (sung) VU 959**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil  
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.

**Closing Hymn: "Water Flowing From the Mountains" MV 87**

Water flowing from the mountains.  
Water flowing o'er the earth.  
Water comes to us, so precious.  
Living waters give us birth.

Drink deep this source of life.  
Drink deep and know.  
For living waters sings, and living water brings  
the love that makes our spirits grow.

Water rushing down the rivers.  
Water rushing to the sea.  
Water comes to us, so precious.  
Living water makes us free.

Drink deep this source of life.  
Drink deep and know.  
For living waters sings, and living water brings  
the love that makes our spirits grow.

Water springing from the dry place.  
Water springing in the sun.  
Water comes to us, so precious.  
Living water for each one.

Drink deep this source of life.  
Drink deep and know.  
For living waters sings, and living water brings  
the love that makes our spirits grow.



## Commissioning /Blessing

**Sung Amen** VU 967

### Rev. Joanne's Reflection

Water – too much and there can be destruction and loss of life; too little may cause the same outcome. Its gentle sounds can soothe the soul – waves breaking on a beach, the burbling and tricking sounds of a full spring stream. Conversely when waves crash, when flood waters roar, the sounds can bring fear and anxiety. It is an essential element for everything that lives, and its power can shape rocks and reform mountains.

When the writers of the first creation story in the book of Genesis imagined God creating the world, water was present – as was the Spirit brooding over those waters. When the Israelite people wandered in the wilderness, water was of great concern – as it was for all desert nomadic people. Throughout our scriptures, special names were given to places where water was found, and those locations often became the space where villages and eventually cities could grow.

It is perhaps not surprising that water is a central symbol in our faith tradition, as today we remember that symbolism in Austin's baptism. Water as a sign of the Spirit, water that brings new life, water that renews our spirits as well as our bodies. Simple water transforms to the sacred when we use it in this sacrament, inviting and acknowledging that God's Spirit fills the spaces between the atoms of hydrogen and oxygen.

Jesus saw this in the form of a dove at his own baptism, and knew the power of the living water of God's love to bring change and hope and grace to those who could perceive it. He knew this when he rose from the waters of the Jordan, when he encountered the woman at the well, when he told the man cured of blindness to wash in the pool of Siloam, when he tenderly washed his disciples feet.

Water – sacred, necessary, God's gift. Here in Mississauga, we have an abundance of fresh water close by for drinking, for recreation, and for supporting a variety of wildlife. Lake Ontario, the Credit River, Lake Aquitaine, Crawford Lake, even Mimico Creek. On this first Sunday in the Season of Creation, as we focus on the gift of water, perhaps we can ponder how we treat these waters as sacred in our daily living?

Some years ago, we asked Applewood folk to make a commitment to using refillable water bottles rather than purchasing water. Are you still keeping that promise? Drinking the water from our taps is one way to be reminded daily that water is not a commodity, but an essential need for everyone. Conserving water is another action that can remind us that water is sacred and not to be 'wasted' by leaving taps running unnecessarily, or watering our lawns when other measures can keep grass healthy.

We can learn about our local watershed through organizations like the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, or global water conditions and issues through the work of the United Nations, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Wildlife Fund or [water.org](http://water.org). We can continue to call for safe water to be made available to Indigenous communities in our own country. We All these actions, and our commitment to making good choices for the health of all our waters, can and does make a difference.

Water – crashing at creation, dripping on foreheads at baptism, living, sacred, and a symbol of God’s transforming love. We cannot live without it, our bodies need it, our spirits need it, our planet needs fresh, clean water for us all to thrive. How will you treat this gift today?