

Applewood United Church
An Affirming Community
Hybrid Worship for October 1, 2023
World Wide Communion
(*please stand body or spirit
bold print is for all)

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: "Come All You People" MV 2

Come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come all you people, come and praise your Maker,
come all you people, come and praise your Maker.
Come now and worship your God.

* Call to Worship: *(responsive)*

One: All creatures are one vast family,

All: this world, our home.

One: We sleep beneath one roof, the starry sky.

All: We warm ourselves before one hearth,
the blazing sun.

One: Upon one soil we stand,

All: and breathe one air,
and drink one water,
and walk the night
beneath one luminescent moon.

One: The children of one God are we,

All: related by one blood,
members in one worldwide family of God.

One: Come, let us worship God.

from 'Celebrate God's Presence,' United Church of Canada

Opening Prayer: *(together)*

All: God of rainbows and blue rivers,
God of red autumn leaves and golden sand,

**God of brown and tan and pink and ebony people,
artistic and athletic and calm and frenzied people,
gay and straight and queer and trans people,
searching and finding and wondering people,
your love colours the world with variety.
We thank you for the gift of diversity,
we praise you for gift of community
where all are welcome to experience
your love for us in Jesus Christ.
Amen**

* Hymn: "Come In, Come in and Sit Down" VU 395

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

You know the reason why you came,
yet no reason can explain;
so share in the laughter and cry in the pain,
for we are a part of the family.

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

God is with us in this place,
like a mother's warm embrace.
We're all forgiven by God's grace,
for we are a part of the family.

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

There's life to be shared in the bread and the wine;
we are the branches, Christ is the vine.
This is God's temple, it's not yours or mine,
but we are a part of the family.

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

There's rest for the weary and health for us all;
there's a yoke that is easy, and a burden that's small.
So come in and worship and answer the call,
for we are a part of the family.

Come in, come in and sit down,
you are a part of the family.
We are lost and we are found,
and we are a part of the family.

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation: *“A prayer for diverse creation” James Hart Brumm
in the collection “Autumn” – adapted and used with permission*

Glorious God, you made us part of a wonderfully varied creation,
and so we join with all creation in praising you.

Generous God, who made humanity in amazing diversity
so that we might, together,
comprehend your boundless marvels,
we join with all creation in praising you.

Gracious God, who entrusts the care of all creation to us,
and has given us the gift of creativity,
help us to use that gift to heal, to include, to cherish and celebrate
your creation with which we praise you.

For all the times we are, in our impatience and greed,
destructive rather than creative;

for all the ways we look upon difference as something to destroy
rather than as a miracle to appreciate, protect and preserve;

for all our choices that reflect fear of people who are unlike us,
objectifying them as somehow less than we are, missing their gifts;

have mercy on us.

You, God, have created us, each unique, each varied,
yet each in your own image and likeness.
Help us to see past our own limited viewpoints,
to learn from our past shortcomings
and to learn from and delight in our distinctions,
that we might, in all our colours, genders and languages,
be one in praising you, be one in following Jesus.

Sung Response: "Jesus Came Bringing Us Hope" MV 33

**Jesus came bringing us hope,
Jesus came bringing us hope,
Jesus came bringing us hope, hallelujah forever more!**

Scripture Readings:

Philippians 2:1-5, 12-16a *The Inclusive Bible*

If our life in Christ means anything to you -- if love, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness or sympathy can persuade you at all -- then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing that would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit, but everybody is to be humble: value others over yourselves, each of you thinking of the interests of others before your own. Your attitude must be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

Therefore, my dear friends, you who are always obedient to my urging, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, not only when I happen to be with you, but all the more now that I'm absent. It is God at work in you that creates the desire to do God's will.

In everything you do, act without grumbling or arguing; prove yourselves innocent and straightforward, children of God beyond reproach, in the midst of a twisted and depraved generation -- among which you shine like stars in the sky, while holding fast to the word of life.

Mark 10:42-45 *The Inclusive Bible*

Jesus called them together and said, "You know how among the Gentiles those who exercise authority are domineering and arrogant; those 'great ones' know how to make their own importance felt. But it can't be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. The Promised One has come not to be served, but to serve- to give one life in ransom for the many."

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

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Choir: "Circle The Table"

Reflection: The Humanity Family

*** Hymn:** "Bread of Life, Feed My Soul" MV 194

Bread of life, feed my soul,
as the presence of the Spirit make me whole.
Bread of life, fill my heart
with the grace and mercy you impart.

I have heard your voice calling,
"Come, my friend, and share
in the feast that is laid out for you
to show how much I care.

Bread of life, help me live
a life as pure and true as Jesus did.
Bread of life, help me see
the boundless love of Christ for you and me.

I have heard your voice calling,
"Come, my friend, and share
in the feast that is laid out for you
to show how much I care.

Bread of life, feed my soul,
as the presence of the Spirit makes me whole.
Bread of life, fill my heart
with the grace and mercy you impart.

Introduction to the Offering

Gift of Music: "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need"

*** 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.**

*** Prayer of Dedication: (together)**

**All: Loving God, we give as we can
from our resources of time and talent and money.
Our gifts are as unique and diverse as we are.
Bless all that we offer, that it may be transformed
by your love into gifts for all humanity, all creation.
Amen**

Sacrament of Communion

Presentation of the Breads:

One: In a world of difference God reminds us that we are deeply alike,

All: We are all sustained by bread and by love.

Two: These breads we offer are symbols of the many different peoples within the family of God.

All: We give thanks for the bread of life, gift of the earth.

One: We offer flat bread, remembering the people of Africa, South Asia, the Middle East and Mediterranean.

All: We give thanks for the bread of life, gift of the earth.

Two: We offer rice cakes, remembering the people of Asia and all who depend upon rice as a staple.

All: We give thanks for the bread of life, gift of the earth.

Two: We offer tortillas, remembering the people of Mexico and South and Central America.

All: We give thanks for the bread of life, gift of the earth.

One: We offer fry bread, or bannock, remembering the First Nations people in Canada, and indigenous people around the world.

All: We give thanks for the bread of life, gift of the earth.

Two: We offer whole wheat bread, remembering the people of our country and our community, and all those of European heritage.

All: We give thanks for the bread of life, gift of the earth.

One: We gratefully hear God's voice through many people, through many languages, and many hearts.

All: Let us praise God in song, around the table of love.

Hymn: 'We Come Now to Your Table Lord' MV 192

We come now to your table Lord, you are the Living Bread.

We come now to your table, Lord, let ev'ry soul be fed.

You are the Living Bread, let ev'ry soul be fed:

and now may ev'ry soul be fed with Living Bread.

One: God be with you.

All: And also with you.

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to God.

One: Let us give thanks to God!

All: It is right to give God thanks and praise!

One: Gracious and loving God, we praise and thank you,
for you are the creator of all goodness
and the source of abundance.

In the beginning, your Spirit danced on the waters and brought us life,
and in your generosity you created a garden of delights and nourishment:
apples and artichokes;

potatoes and pomegranates;
cabbages and carrots and corn.

Two: You gave us oceans teeming with fish,
and forests where deer and other animals roamed;
and you called us to live with respect in creation and to care for one another
in the places where we live.
You brought your people out of slavery into a land of milk and honey; flowing with streams of
living water and planted with groves of olive trees;
and today, in our country,
fields of wheat stretch under the prairie skies
and blossoms from apple orchards hold promise of succulent goodness, while in cities,
community gardens, farmer's markets, backyard blooms;
vegetables and herbs provide beauty and nourishment.

One: Even when we turn away from you
living in greed and violence,
overfishing the oceans, despoiling the land,
ignoring those who have no food
while our garbage cans are overflowing,
you send us prophets to call us back and remind us to live for a day when no one will go hungry,
and we will live together as gardeners and neighbours
in justice and peace.

Two: And so with people round the world:
farmers and fishers,
winemakers and coffee growers,
butchers and bakers,
those who deliver our daily bread
and those who prepare and serve it
to our dining tables and kitchen tables,
we raise our voice in thanks and praise:

All: (sung) MV 203

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.

One: Generous God, we give you thanks for Jesus who came to live with us.
We remember how he called his disciples to follow him and become fishers of all people.
We thank you that he loved eating and drinking around tables where strangers became friends,
and outcasts – tax collectors, gentiles, women – were included.

**All: He told stories about banquets and barns and vineyards, and taught us to pray for Jubilee, a
time of cosmic liberation when no one will be hungry.
On the hillsides, in the cornfields, on the seashore,
in villages and towns and cities,
he reminded us of the importance of food
for our bodies and for our spirits.**

Two: Jesus was crucified, died and was buried,
but you raised him from the dead;
and like his disciples,
we meet him again in the breaking of bread
as we gather around his table.
We remember that on the night he was betrayed,
Jesus sat at table with his beloved friends
sharing the fruit of the vine
and the harvest of the fields
in the village outside the city.

One: We remember that after he had given thanks
he took the bread, broke it and shared it,
reminding his disciples that he would always be with them.
In the same way, he took the cup and spoke of a new covenant,
a new relationship with them.

**All: O God, giver of all that is good, we thank you for this bread and for this fruit of the vine,
symbols of the harvest of your good earth,
and we look to the day when we will all eat together
as your holy people.
In the meantime, we will live in your promise
as we sing together:**

**All: (sung) MV 204
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!**

One: Ever-present Giver
send your Spirit on us and what we do here
as we gather around Christ's table
to feed on the living Word,
that in our eating and drinking
we may be one with Christ
and one with your vision of peace and plenty.

Two: At this time, we also remember
all with whom you would have us share your feast.
We pray for all who are in sorrow or in pain . . .
all who are ill or alone . . .
all who live with fear, oppression, or hunger . . .
for all whom the world counts as last and least
We pray for the church and its varied ministries . . .
for nations as they strive for peace and justice . . .
for all our families and friends
And we lift our voices to sing together
with words that Jesus taught us:

The Lord's Prayer (*sung*) VU 960

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive
them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil: for thine is kingdom and the
power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup

If you are worshipping in the sanctuary, you may come forward to receive the elements. If you prefer to stay seated, they will be brought to you— you may wish to respond to the words “Jesus Christ the True Vine” and “Jesus Christ the Bread of Life” with the words “amen” or “thanks be to God” If you are participating on ZOOM, this would be the time to take bread and juice, and if with another you could serve each other with the words “Jesus Christ the bread of life” and “Jesus Christ the true vine.”

Prayer after Communion:

One: We give you thanks, creating God,
that you have blessed us at your table
and nourished us with hope.

**All: Send us out in the Spirit of Christ
to be neighbours and gardeners,
loving, tending, and working for peace and justice
on your sacred streets and your good earth. Amen**

*Today's Communion liturgy was written by Rev. Dr. Nancy E. Hardy and published in her book,
"Worship in the City, Prayers and Songs for Urban Settings"*

* Hymn: "O, For a World" VU 697

O for a world where everyone
respects each other's ways,
where love is lived and all is done
with justice and with praise.

O for a world where goods are shared
and misery relieved,
where truth is spoken, children spared,
equality achieved.

We welcome one world family
and struggle with each choice
that opens us to unity
and gives our vision voice.

The poor are rich, the weak are strong,
the foolish ones are wise.
Tell all who mourn: outcasts belong,
who perishes will rise.

O for a world preparing for
God's glorious reign of peace,
where time and tears will be no more,
and all but love will cease.

* Commissioning/ Benediction

* Sung Amen VU 969

Rev. Joanne's Reflection

Welcome! Willkommen! Bienvenue! ¡Bienvenido! Yōkoso! kakwa o! Namaste!

Welcome – in whatever language it is spoken – is what we pray is being offered to Christians around the world this Sunday, as we celebrate World Communion. We might imagine that at the very same moment, there are worshipers like us gathered around simple tables, or at elaborate altars, in

cathedrals and in small rural churches, all sharing Jesus' meal, all remembering where we have come from and to whom we belong, remembering that we are all part of one faith family around the globe.

So it also seems an appropriate day to lift up humanity in our Season of Creation. As part of the web of all creation, "fearfully and wonderfully made" as the writer of Psalm 139 describes us, we are the ones who have the ability to positively – or negatively – shape our world and affect the lives of creatures, plants, and all other living things. We also have the power to change landscapes, break down mountains, and re-shape waterways. As the human family, we have the ability and the responsibility to respect, accept, include and celebrate all people, especially as people of faith, especially as Christians who know that we have all been made in the image of our Creator who loves us.

As Paul worked to create Christian community around the Mediterranean, he wrote a letter to that community at Philippi, offering guidance on how they could live with one another, but perhaps also how they might live in the world as Christian people. "Be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind," he wrote. As a global community of faith, wouldn't it be wonderful if we could, indeed, be both united and of common purpose. Imagine what we could accomplish if we truly shared a commitment to eradicate poverty, or bring justice to the oppressed, or even if love for each other and creation drove every decision we make. We also know that even as we celebrate the world-wide church at worship today, we do not always have the same values, or the same world view, or the same goals.

In decades past, the ecumenical movement was an important focus for the United Church of Canada, particularly as our very identity as a denomination came from bringing different churches together and creating something new. We were part of the founding of the World Council of Churches, which still exists today "Inspiring the worldwide fellowship of churches to work together for unity, justice and peace." We are still very much involved with this organization as a church, continuing to learn from one another and working together to address important issues such as human rights, climate change, and justice for all.

Despite many efforts to bring the world-wide church together, we have not always been able to follow Paul's advice in keeping ourselves humble, in putting other's needs ahead of our own, nor have we always followed Jesus' way of servanthood. That can be difficult to do even in one community of faith!

Yet the goal is there ahead of us – become not just servants to one another, but to the world, become a servant church that seeks to know the needs of the other, and to respond to those needs even ahead of our own.

Paul offers what I think is a delightful and inspiring description of the church at its best, when as community and individuals we are able to live out Jesus' call to service, and Paul's desire for the church to follow that call. He writes that at our best, we "shine like stars in the sky" – stars that can provide illumination only when there are many together, stars that can point the way in constellations, but only when they are seen together and connected to one another.

We do need one another to live at our best as God's human family. "My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together," wrote the late Archbishop Desmond Tutu. Even when it is challenging, even when our siblings who identify as Christian do not seem to share our concerns or values, we need one another. Perhaps we are needed to stand up and stand out, and be vocal about

what we believe and value, to tell our story of faith and justice and hope and love for all. Perhaps we are needed to show other Christians that there is a path of faith, of servanthood and following Jesus, that respects, includes, honours and protects.

Perhaps we are needed to “shine like stars in the sky” – providing light, inspiration, and a path that can be followed by any that care to look.

May we all shine with and for each other, in God’s name.
Amen.