Living Table United Church of Christ

June 30, 2024, Pride Sunday

Singing: “All Are Welcome”

1. 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.

Greeting and Grounding

Singing: “All Are Welcome”

2. Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat; A banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet. Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space. As we share in Christ the feast that frees us; All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Invoking Spirit Responsively

One: All you who delight in the Sacred, come and worship the Creator. All: Thanks be to God who blesses the particular and rejoices in the uniqueness of every bodymind and being. One: The Holy takes on flesh in every gender identity and expression and sexual orientation, every race and ability, every bodymind size and type. All: Each embodied difference is a unique glimpse of Holy Wonder. One: Blessed are those who search for God among the lives of the oppressed, the betrayed, the turned-away, and the condemned. All: Blessed are those who receive with joy the gifts of God enfleshed among us. One: The Sacred is with us. All: Let us worship and be transformed.

Singing: “All Are Welcome”

3. 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 bears 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.

4. 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.

Acknowledging our Need for God (Responsive)

One: God, who made us in your image,
All: teach us to love ourselves as you love us.
One: God, who made us in your image,
All: allow us to show that image to the world.
One: God, who made us in your image,
All: help us to recognize your image in all those we meet.
One: God, who made us in your image,
All: teach us to conserve and protect all your creation.
One: God, who made us in your image,
All: bless, protect, and keep us and all your children safe.

Silent Reflection

One: God, who has made us reflective of Their own image, has forgiven us
and made us new – today and all days.
All: In gratitude we seek to live in love and peace, honoring and
upholding the dignity of all we meet, knowing all are created in the
image of God. Amen.

Sharing Love’s Peace

Singing: “Weave”

Refrain: Weave, weave, weave us together,
Weave us together in unity and love.
Weave, weave, weave us together,
weave us together, together in love.
1. We are many textures, we are many colors,
Each one different from the other.
But we are entwined with one another
in one great tapestry.
Learning with Younger (and Older!) Disciples

Considering the Word and the Sacred Texts

Sacred Reading: Genesis 2, A Retelling by Rachael Keefe

In the days before time began to flow, there existed the One-Who-is-Many. The One-Who-is-Many was surrounded by sacred silence and was content for it to be so. Until one day when the One-Who-is-Many imagined a world filled with life and breath and hope.

Days were not yet days, but a span of time stretched and shaped in many ways and directions, when out of sacred silence the One-Who-is-Many pulled a solid sphere of matter. This matter came together because the imagination of the One-Who-is-Many willed it to be. There were periods of light and dark at the end of this first eternal day. The One-Who-is-Many was pleased with creation for it was good. Yet, there was more to be done.

So on the second eternal day, the One-Who-is-Many, separated the sphere with all its gases and waters from the sky around it. On this sphere there was now above and below as well as light and dark. The One-Who-is-Many was pleased with creation for it was good. Yet, there was more to be done.

On the third eternal day, which may have been longer than other eternal days, the One-Who-is-Many separated land from seas. Seeing the barren places, the One-Who-is-Many, touched them with sacred silence and brought forth plants and vegetation of all kinds. All kinds of growing things that would change and lead to other kinds of green and growing things as the eternal days went on and on. Now the sphere had plants, land, and seas as well as ground below and sky above and light and dark. The One-Who-is-Many was pleased with creation for it was good. Yet, there was more to be done.

On the fourth eternal day, which also stretched on and on, the One-Who-is-Many set great lights in the sky. The sun would rule the day and the moon and stars would rule the night. The One-Who-is-Many enjoyed shining lights into the nights and bringing warmth to the days. The sphere turned slowly and seasons came into being. Now there were sun, moon, and stars, growing things, land and seas, ground and sky, and light and dark. The One-Who-is-Many was pleased with creation for it was good. Yet, there was more to be done.
On the fifth eternal day, the One-Who-is-Many rejoiced to set living beings free in the water and in the air. Some were placed so deep in the waters that they have yet to be seen and some have long been forgotten. But on the fifth eternal day, bird song filled the air and whale song filled the seas. These creatures brought forth others and others as the sphere turned slowly day after day. Creatures of the air and creatures of the sea filled the sphere and enjoyed the sun, moon, and stars, plants of all kinds, land and seas, ground and sky, and light and dark. The One-Who-is-Many was pleased with creation for it was good. Yet, there was more to be done.

On the sixth, and maybe the longest, eternal day, the One-Who-is-Many set about making all the creatures of the earth. Things with fur and things with scales. Large things and small things and all kinds of hidden things. Some have come to be named and known while others remain hidden and still others have been forgotten. The One-Who-is-Many took great delight in fashioning all the creatures of the earth, for they were all good.

Late in the day, the One-Who-is-Many realized a loneliness. All the wonders and beauty of creation, yet nothing was like the One-Who-is-Many. So the One-Who-is-Many mixed sacred silence with the mud and matter of creation to fashion a human one. And it was very good. The human one went about naming all that the One-Who-is-Many had made. It was a good day.

As evening came, the One-Who-is-Many saw that the human one was alone. Neither the One-Who-is-Many nor any of the animals were much like it. Realizing that none should be alone, the One-Who-is-Many imagined a companion for the human one. Soon the human one was wrapped in sacred silence so that the One-Who-is-Many could shape another from flesh and bone. This human one was meant to keep the other human one company. Together they were more like the One-Who-is-Many than they were apart. They came to be known as male and female, man and woman.

Some think the sixth eternal day ended here. But others have come to know the story differently. These know that many more human ones were made in the image of the One-Who-is-Many. There is beauty and diversity, even more so as the day stretched on. These others would come to be known as queer people – gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, asexual, and many more. Together with male and female they were more like the One-Who-is-Many than they were apart. All made of flesh and bone and sacred silence, given breath and life and bearing the image of the One-Who-is-Many.

At the end of the sixth eternal day, the One-Who-is-Many looked over all of creation and saw that it was good. The human ones were given the honor of
watching over the whole of creation. They were to be caretakers for the earth creatures, creatures of the air and creatures of the sea, everything that grew under the sun, moon, and stars, plants of all kinds, land and seas, ground and sky, and light and dark. The human ones delighted the One-Who-is-Many who was pleased with the whole of creation for it was very, very good.

Finally, the seventh eternal day came. It was the shortest of all eternal days. On this day the One-Who-is-Many rested and rejoiced over the works of Creation. It was good to rest on this seventh eternal day. Soon, time would begin to flow as it does now and the human ones would keep the One-Who-is-Many very, very busy because they often forget that though they are many, not one of them is the One-Who-is-Many. But these are stories for another day.

**Message: “In the Image of Love” Rev. Dr. Rachael Keefe**

**Singing: “In the Midst of New Dimensions”**

Verse 1: In the midst of new dimensions, in the face of changing ways. Who will lead the pilgrim peoples wandering in their separate ways?

*Refrain:* God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagles soar, We your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and ever, now and ever more.

Verse 2: Through the flood of starving people, warring factions and despair, Who will lift the olive branches? Who will light the flame of care?

*Refrain:*

Verse 3: As we stand a world divided by our own self seeking schemes, Grant that we, your global village might envision wider dreams

*Refrain:*

Verse 4: We are man and we are woman, all persuasions, old and young, Each a gift in your creation, each a love song to be sung.

*Refrain:*

Verse 5: Should the threats of dire predictions cause us to withdraw in pain, May your blazing phoenix spirit, resurrect the church again.

*Refrain:*
Praying Together

Prayers of Concerns and Joys

After each spoken prayer, please respond by saying and gesturing:
We release this prayer to You, Holy One(s).

Prayer of Jesus (Rev. Kim Sorrells, adapted)

All: Our mother and father, our beloved parent, in whom we move and breathe and have our being,
The hallowing of your name shines forth in the diversity of your children.
May your peace and love, justice and equality, inclusion and belonging reign here on earth as in heaven.
Grant that all your queer and transgender children might have their daily needs met—that they might find gainful employment without discrimination; that they might have access to medical care without fear; that they might have their rights and lives protected, and that they might find a loving community to belong to and call their own.
Forgive us for the ways that we have fallen short and failed your queer and transgender children. Forgive us of the times we turned away, or did not care; for the times we laughed or judged their unique expression of your image; for the times we have misspoken, asked too much, or failed to listen
As we forgive those who might have failed us.
Lead us away from the temptation to be complacent in the face of injustice. Instead give us courage advocate for and include all your beloved children. For your love and justice is to be made manifest now and forever.
Amen.

Invitation to Offering

Gathering At Love’s Table

Invitation

One: This is Christ’s table.
All: All are welcome here.
One: This is Christ’s table, set in love.
All: All are welcome here in love and grace.
One: This is Christ’s table where all are invited as equal guests.
All: All are welcome here, side by side with all God’s children.

**Singing:** “Breathe”

This is the air I breathe.
This is the air I breathe.
Your holy presence living in me.
This is my daily bread.
This is my daily bread.
Your very word spoken to me.

Refrain: And I, I’m desperate for you.
And I, I’m lost without you.

**The Great Thanksgiving**

One: Called in grace and gifted in love…
empowered to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world.

**Blessing and Sharing the Feast**

All: Come, Holy Spirit, come! Bless these gifts of grace—bread and cup.
Take and transform them that we may know both their comfort and their challenge. Nourish us as we gather at your table that we might bring life and liberation into the world. Amen.

**Singing:** “Bread for the Journey”

1. Give us bread for the journey, give us bread. Give us bread for the journey, give us bread.
When our legs are getting heavy and we’re hanging down our heads, give us bread for the journey, give us bread.

**Communing Together**

**Singing:** “Bread for the Journey”

3. Make us one with each other, make us one. Make us one with each other, make us one.
All the walls we’ve built around us, may we learn to tear them down.
Make us one with each other, make us one.
Prayer of Thanksgiving

All: Nourishing One,  
your gifts renew us in bodymind and spirit.  
Receive our gratitude as we ask that  
through this taste of love,  
may the Spirit send us with a faith that is brave.  
Let no institution or narrow thinking hold us back;  
make us people who boldly pursue collective justice  
and tend gently to the world’s pain. Amen.

Announcements

Singing: “Bring Forth the Reign of God”

1. You are salt for the earth, O People: salt for the reign of God!  
Share the flavor of life, O people: Life in the City of God!  
Refrain: Bring forth the reign of mercy, bring forth the reign of peace;  
Bring forth the reign of justice, bring forth the City of God!

2. You are a light on the hill, O people: light for the City of God!  
Shine so holy and bright, O people: shine for the City of God!  
Refrain

3. You are a seed of the Word, O people: bring forth the reign of God!  
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice, grow in the City of God!  
Refrain

4. You are a blessed and a pilgrim people: bound for the reign of God!  
Love our journey and love our homeland: love is the City of God  
Refrain

Benediction

Resources Used –

Invoking Spirit – United Church of Canada, Adapted

Acknowledging Our Need:  
https://episcopalpartnership.org/, adapted