

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
Sunday, February 12, 2023 – Have a Heart Day

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m. Sunday

Email smiletoday9@proton.me to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Opening Hymn: MV 1 *Let Us Build a House, vv. 1, 4, 5*

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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to everyone. Today is Have a Heart Day. We celebrate God's Kin-dom vision of equity for all, including children. Have a Heart Day. There will be a Special Dialogue in worship about the First Nations Child & Family Caring Society; delicious Have a Heart Day cookies; and, after worship, please sign and send a Valentine Card to the Prime Minister and your local MP.

For next week, we're inviting people to send in pictures to Suzanne (crazycat@cyberbeach.net) that speaks to God's wonder for you.

Those at home, if you are new here, note that our contact information is at the end of the video, and you might want to visit our Facebook page, YouTube channel, or website, or email our office manager so you can receive our weekly e-newsletter. We also have a Social Hour on Zoom, every Sunday night at 7. As always, you can get your Zoom link to join that time of connecting by sending an email to Diane. That email address is also at the end of the video and is on our main YouTube page.

Inviting Holy Light

We light this candle. May its light guide us to truth talking and to travelling good paths. May we in turn share the light with those we meet until it spreads to all peoples worldwide. *[lights candle]*

Sung Response: VU 402 *We Are One, vs. 1*

1. We are one as we come,
as we come, joyful to be here,
in the praise on our lips
there's a sense that God is near.
We are one as we sing,
as we seek, we are found;
and we come needful of God's grace
as we meet together in this place.

Nurturing Safe Space

We are all children of God, loved in our uniqueness, regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In this space, all are welcome. May we as a community of Faith work towards making our spaces truly safe and welcoming, as our Creator pours love extravagantly upon each of us.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We begin this time of worship by acknowledging that we are meeting on the land of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek people. This land has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning. We thank all the generations of Indigenous people who have taken care of this land and been its stewards for thousands of years. We give thanks for the countless ways they have assisted the settler peoples who came to inhabit the land. We also recognize the contributions Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made in shaping and strengthening this region, the provinces, and Canada as a whole. May the Creator hold us gently in this time as all mourn the loss of innocent Indigenous children's lives. Meegwetch. All my relations.

Call to Worship

In the presence of Creator, we gather:

People carrying burdens we may not know about looking for comfort; folks needing their spirits refreshed.

We draw together hoping for that touch that will enliven us, longing to be embraced in arms of love and understanding.

Help us to put aside our differences and see the earth as you see it, boundary-free.

You call us all: babies, toddlers on unsteady feet, school-age children with curious minds, teens with questing spirits, full of youthful confidence one moment and like frightened children the next.

We are called, as adults trying to take good paths watching out for the next generations, and those easing into their winter years passing on our teachings.

We are all kin in this meeting place whether we gather in person or through technology, our spirits joining to say meegwetch for all that we have been blessed with.

Thanks be to God for the goodness in our lives. Amen.

Opening Prayer

All-encompassing God, you who called creation out of chaos. You breathed the sacred, and life came into being. Your magnificence is a Holy Mystery that we are too human to be able to comprehend. We give thanks for that which is beyond our comprehension. It allows us to dream and imagine. We give all praise and glory to you, Most Holy, for holding us in all the seasons of

our days, to love, and to cherish, in this life, and in everlasting life. We are in awe of our covenant love and journey with you. We pray together this modern version of the Prayer that Jesus Taught:

The Prayer that Jesus Taught

Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother, Holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come, We pray that your good will be done, Let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, Give it to those who have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us From each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence Beyond the evil of our days — Come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: Forever your name is All in One. Amen.

Hymn: VU 229 *God of the Sparrow, vs. 1*

1. God of the sparrow, God of the whale, God of the swirling stars.
How does the creature say Awe?
How does the creature say Praise?

Adult Time up Front – Have A Heart Day Dialogue/Reflection/Video (Suzanne & Rhodine)

Setting: Rhodine is sitting on a chair on the dais with a plate of heart shaped cookies. Suzanne approaches and sits in the other chair.

Suzanne: Hi Rhodine, those look like pretty good cookies. Are you giving them away?

Rhodine: Yes, I made them for Have a Heart Day.

Suzanne: Oh, are they valentine cookies – you know HEART? VALENTINE?

Rhodine: Well sort of. Mars and I made valentine cookies for Have a Heart Day.

Suzanne: I think you did that last year!

Rhodine: Yes, the valentine cookies are to remind us that Have a Heart Day is a reconciliation event that brings together caring Canadians to help ensure First Nations children have the opportunity to grow up safely at home, get a good education, be healthy, and be proud of who they are.

Suzanne: I thought that was something new, but then I saw that Have a Heart Day has been going on since 2011 when the first event was held. It is an event for children especially, and they are encouraged to do certain activities like making cookies and sending cards to the Prime minister. Have a Heart Day is an initiative of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society.

Rhodine: Yes, that's right. Have you heard about the Spirit Bear?

Suzanne: I don't think so?

Rhodine: There is a really great story about the Spirit Bear. Here is the picture and the story of Cindy Blackstock who started the Spirit Bear story.

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LchiS8eQ7UM>

Rhodine: The Caring Society of Canada stands with First Nations children and families for equal opportunities to succeed. Children on reserves do not receive the same level funding for education and social services that children off reserves receive.

Suzanne: Cindy Blackstock is someone who has spoken out loudly to have this funding changed. She is a very big voice. The Spirit Bear is one of her voices. So here is the Spirit Bear Plan: The Spirit Bear Plan calls on government, parliament, government departments and agencies to end the inequalities in Public Services for First Nations Children, Youth and Families.

Rhodine: Today we are going to give everyone a chance to participate in our Have a Heart Day event. When you leave church this morning you can pick up some cookies on your way to coffee.

Suzanne: Also, you can pick a card that you can sign to send to the Prime Minister and other leaders, reminding them to end the unfair practices and comply with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal rulings. And there is a prayer for you to take that has been prepared by our National Church for this day.

Rhodine: The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society is a very important link and helps us work for reconciliation.

Hymn: VU 229 *God of the Sparrow*, vv. 5, 6

5. God of the neighbour, God of the foe, God of the pruning hook.
How does the creature say Love?
How does the creature say Peace?

6. God of the ages, God near at hand, God of the loving heart.
How do your children say Joy?
How do your children say Home?

Scripture Readings (Anne Pile)

Psalm 106:1-5 – a paraphrase from NRSV

Praise our Creator! O Meegwetch give thanks to the Maker, for Turtle Island nurtures us; love lives forever in ancestors dancing in the aurora borealis. Who can truth talk the mighty doings of the Creator or drum all their praises? Joyful are those who observe justice, who work for right relations at all times. Remember me, O Great Spirit, when you show honour to your people. Help us when you lead us into places of protection. We see the grateful hunting of creatures, generous gathering, and abundant harvest and prosperity of our kin, that we may dance in the ceremonies of our nation's people, that we may glory in your ancestry.
All my relations.

Galatians 3:28 – New Revised Standard Version

Paul's statement rings true for us here, today. In these times of racial awareness and acknowledgement of discrimination, it is time for us to focus on our common humanity and look for ways we can love our neighbours.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Prayer After Scripture

May we strive to live together in harmony, Indigenous and settler people, listening to the Great Spirit, walking in peace on the path of acceptance and healing. Amen.

Message: "God Loves ALL Creation"

Paul, in his letter to churches in southern Galatia, states in Galatians 3:28: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." This wonderful proclamation of inclusivity needs to be heard. This statement rings true for us here, today.

In these times of racial awareness and acknowledgement of discrimination, it is time for us to focus on our common humanity and look for ways we can love our neighbours instead of fearing them, or talking about us and Indigenous peoples have a saying,

All My Relations. The Indigenous contribution to the church is honoured by the Mohawk phrase "Akwe Nia'Tetewá:neren" (aw gway-- nyah day day waw-- nay renh) —all my relations—on the crest. The four colours of the Medicine Wheel, yellow, red, black, and white, and the Mohawk words have been incorporated in the United Church crest since 2012. Indigenous spirituality, leadership, and participation are vital to the church's life.

What this says to me is that we are all united. It goes further than Paul's teaching and evangelism. Paul was speaking about people. All my relations include all living things: people, creatures in the

water, those that fly in the air, everything that creeps and crawls and slithers on the ground. We all have a place in God's great creation. I was taught it is like creation is a giant spider's web. If you pluck at one thread, the vibrations are felt throughout the whole web. It's like the ripples that spread out when a pebble is thrown into or skipped in water.

So how we work toward justice and reconciliation? Like the paraphrase of Psalm 106 says, "Joyful are those who observe justice, who work for right relations at all times." We are educating ourselves about culture, racism, and reconciliation. Some of us might bristle at what feels at times like awkward terminology – reconciliation, right relations – are these just trendy words or do we really mean it?

I was moved by a book entitled "Seven Fallen Feathers" by Tanya TALEGA about how cases of 7 indigenous high school students who went missing, and the system abandoned them including policing.

I know that some of you, like me, are fans of Richard Wagamese – I really enjoyed his book, "Medicine Walk" about a journey of forgiveness and healing. Indigenous art, books, attending events like pow wows, we already engage, we need to continue this work of listening to those voices that call us to see All My Relations.

Donate to local Indigenous organizations such as healing and friendship centres. We can also support urban Indigenous people through Indigenous community centres and programs. We can contribute individually or collectively to the United Church of Canada's Healing Fund, which directly supports projects led by Indigenous church members and others in their communities. The Healing Fund promotes healing initiatives for survivors of the residential school system and initiatives that address ongoing intergenerational impacts. Indigenous communities can apply for a grant of up to \$15,000 toward programs centred on cultural, healing, and language projects. The Healing Programs Working Group, made up of representatives from diverse Indigenous communities across the country, determines the fund's criteria and evaluates applications.

Have a Heart Day is on Tuesday, Valentine's Day. I invite you to sign a card, one to the Prime Minister and one to your local MP after worship while you enjoy some treats and conversation. We need to pay attention, and hold prayerfully the victims and families when we hear on the news about more unmarked graves of indigenous children who died in Residential Schools. We are not doing nothing, we are paying attention, and we are praying, and perhaps we will find ways to offer our support.

We say thank you, or Meegwetch (the Ojibwe term for "thank you") for the Indigenous people of our community and their profound contributions to our common life together. We are on a journey, probably only the beginning of that journey, towards mending the broken relationships. May we hear Paul's call to see all as one, not meaning that we are all the same – we are very diverse. But we are ALL God's beloved children. We are all part of Creation that the Creator loves so much. Thanks be to God.

Choir Anthem: MV 138 *My Love Colours Outside the Lines*

1. My love colours outside the lines,
exploring paths that few could ever find;
and takes me into places where I've never been before,
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

2. My Lord colours outside the lines,
turns to wounds to blessings, water into wine;
and takes me into places where I've never been before,
and opens doors to worlds outside the lines.

We'll never walk on water if we're not prepared to drown,
body and soul need a soaking from time to time.
And we'll never move the gravestones if we're not prepared to die,
and realize there are worlds outside the lines.

3. My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine;
I want to walk beyond the boundaries where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines.

We'll never walk on water if we're not prepared to drown,
body and soul need a soaking from time to time.
And we'll never move the gravestones if we're not prepared to die,
and realize there are worlds outside the lines.

4. My soul longs to colour outside the lines,
tear back the curtains, sun, come in and shine;
I want to walk beyond the boundaries where I've never been before,
throw open doors to worlds outside the lines.

Minute for Right Relations

Have a Heart Day – February 14, 2023

Did you know that the Government of Canada gives less funding for important services like child welfare, education, and healthcare to First Nations children than other kids in Canada? That is why the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations filed a human rights complaint against the Government of Canada in 2007. In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) tribunal found that Canada's funding practices discriminate against First Nations kids and constituted systemic human rights violations.

On January 4th, 2022 the Government of Canada and the parties to the complaint came to a \$40 billion agreement-in-principal regarding the First Nations Child and Family Services program and Jordan's Principle. The final settlement agreement on compensation would provide \$20 billion to compensate children, youth and some families who were removed from their homes and an additional \$20 billion to address long-term reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services program.

In October 2022, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decided against approving this settlement agreement citing concerns around the distribution of compensation and timeline. Meanwhile, children, youth and families are still waiting to be compensated.

The case is ongoing with some parties supporting the original compensation agreement and others opposing it, stating it does not do enough. The Assembly of First Nations and other Indigenous organizations (including the First Nations Caring Society) are calling on the Government to pay those who are eligible to receive funding immediately while the details get worked out. People have waited too long for this compensation.

This year is as important as any other to celebrate Have a Heart Day! What can you do?

Stay after worship and join us in the Lounge across the hall to add your comments to our pre-made Valentine's cards to the Prime Minister and to your local MP. Most is already done for you, just customize it.

Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle to ensure First Nations children get the services they need when they need them. Visit fncaringsociety.com for more information. Learn more about Jordan's Principle and the First Nations Child and Family Services case. www.fncaringsociety.com and www.fnchildcompensation.ca are great places to start.

Offering Moment

Thank you for sharing both your talents and treasures. Your donations will help St. Andrew's to partner with people who help the most vulnerable downtown. Giving to the United Church of Canada's Mission and Service allows us collectively to reach out to Ukraine and other places needing love and community. Thank you for all you do!!

Dedication Hymn: VU 538 *For the Gift of Creation*

For the gift of creation, the gift of your love,
and the gift of the Spirit by which we live,
we thank you and give you the fruit of our hands.
May your grace be proclaimed by the gifts that we give.

Dedication Prayer

We return some of the abundance of our lives to share with others who need a caring touch. Here is the work of our hands, and here is the love of our hearts. Accept them and use them, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of Community

Tender and loving Creator, we are all part of the delicate web of life. When one thread is plucked, the ripples are widely felt, stronger closer to the epicentre, still felt toward the outer reaches. May the uncertainties and concerns we hold close to our hearts be gentled by the love we have of you, and the support of each other. You know the longing of our hearts for a just society for all of your beloved children. We pray for people living in troubled places, for refugees needing homes and relocation, for people without safe drinking water.

Rabboni Jesus, may your teachings lead us all to speak the same language of loving you, ourselves, and our neighbours. Restore our gratitude and refresh our faith. Grant us dreams of unity and harmony. May your light and love encircle and envelope us all as we rest in the promise of your goodness. Living Spirit, we are all relations in your family. We give thanks for our blessings. Amen.

Closing Hymn: MV 30 *It's a Song of Praise to the Maker, vv. 1, 2, 4*

1. It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the thrush sings high in the tree.
It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the gray whale sings in the sea,
and by the Spirit, you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

2. It's a call of life to the Giver
when waves and waterfalls roar.
It's a call of life to the Giver
when high tides break on the shore,
and by the Spirit, you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

4. It's the chorus of all creation;
it's sung by all living things.
It's the chorus of all creation,
a song the universe sings,
and by the Spirit, you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

Blessing

May we travel our lands in gentle ways,
caring for creation as in turn she cares for us.

May your light and love encircle and envelop us all, as we rest in the promise of your abundance.
Go in peace, with wisdom and gratitude. All my relations. Meegwetch. Amen.

Blessing Hymn: MV 221 *I Am Walking a Path of Peace/Joy/Love*

1. I am walking a path of peace,
I am walking a path of peace,
I am walking a path of peace,
lead me home, lead me home.

2. I am walking a path of joy,
I am walking a path of joy,
I am walking a path of joy,
lead me home, lead me home.

3. I am walking a path of love,
I am walking a path of love,
I am walking a path of love,
lead me home, lead me home.

Postlude

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Prayer after scriptures written by Jen Bruneau.

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