

# Home Worship Service September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020



by [Aleta Karstad](#)

## Opening Words

"There is no nothingness - with these little atoms that run around too little for us to see. But, put together, they make something, "And that to me is a miracle. Where it came from, I don't know. But it's a miracle, and I think it's enough to keep a person afloat"

[Mary Oliver]

## Opening Music

"We Are A Part of The Family"

As sung by Jim and Jean Strathdee with some new words added by the Strathdees

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZISiuyRLS0AYyZWAEscgJ\\_h-32OxuM\\_n/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZISiuyRLS0AYyZWAEscgJ_h-32OxuM_n/view?usp=sharing)

## Opening Prayer

**We gather, six months into our pandemic season. Such a long journey, and no end in sight- as we learn new ways to connect, new ways to live, and new ways to worship. We are not the same as we were 6 months ago. Life is not the same. Changes are afoot, once again, in the shape of our common life. Such changes may evoke fear, anxiety, confusion. May this time of worship calm our spirits, as we ground ourselves in deep love. May we trust - we are still part of the family, however the family gathers, and however we choose to take part in this gathering. May we trust that however and wherever we gather, the Holy One is in our midst, guiding our wild and precious lives, and the wild and precious life we share together. Amen.**

## Readings

by Janice Fairney

### Matthew 18:20

For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

### Philippians 1:3-7, 27; 2: 1-4

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the good news from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart,\* for all of you share in God's gr ace - with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel.

Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves, each of you thinking of the interests of others before your own.

## **Contemporary Reading: A Summer Day by Mary Oliver**

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean -  
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down-  
who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?

## **Special Music**

### Laudate Dominum

Mozartsung The Janáček Chamber Orchestra Patricia Janečková - Sopran.

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

**Words in Translation are:** Praise the Lord, all nations, praise Him all peoples. For his mercy is assured over us, and the truth, the truth of God abides, abides into eternity. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning and is now and ever shall be, world without end, amen.

## **Reflection by Jane:**

### Looking Back and Forward

#### Wasn't that a time?

That's a title of a song sung by the Weavers, Pete Seeger and Ronnie Gilbert among them- they were talking about a more fun time than a pandemic.

But this past six months,  
Whatever else you want to say about it,  
It's been a time- like none other.

You know what kind of time it's been.  
Full of adjustments, anxieties, stresses and griefs,  
Plus, thanksgiving for what we still have,  
what we can still do,  
those who are still with us.

#### What kind of time has it been for our church, our "beloved community"?

Well, about 6 months ago, we knew we were having our last gathering in church until, well, who knows..

We made that decision just before the government made it for us.

This we knew- we were closing down the building,  
But we were not closing down the church.

And so, you've had a way to worship every Sunday- be it by email, or a printed copy delivered by a neighbour - Or by Zoom.

And meetings, and study groups, and midweek services on Zoom as well.

It's been a blessing, in many ways.

Those on Zoom have enjoyed seeing each other's faces, each other's homes, each other's pets. We have welcomed friends who live out of province - 4 of whom have become weekly attenders. We have welcomed family members from far away, for Easter communion, for the blessing of pets. We've kept going with readers, with Minutes for Mission, we've learned how to use a variety of musical selections, from near and far.

Those of you not Zooming have had almost the same worship service, not quite the same because my Sunday reflection works better spoken than read, And you don't hear what comes up in joys and concerns or see everyone's friendly face.

With zoom and home worship, we've reached more people than we ever saw in church on a Sunday- over 100 households week by week, as many as receive the Cooperator. And others we have reached by Facebook Live- a series of talks I gave through the spring and summer - And anyone who wants can find our website, our church Facebook- the latter has 241 likes now!

All this, plus I am sure many an email, a phone call, a careful visit, The church never closed,

Our scriptures remind us - beloved community happens in many forms. God is wherever two or three are gathered- And today the gathering might be by phone or Internet, whatever makes gathering possible.

And our scriptures remind us that Paul often could not see his church friends- No doubt he would have sent a weekly email or had a Zoom call if possible- Failing that, he got someone to carry a letter for him- it might have taken several someone's, passing the letter from one hand to another- because, remember, there was no postal service- And found someone who could read them aloud - and others who copied them and recopied them, by hand, for all the centuries before printing was invented, So, you and I can read them today.

And he reminds us, even now- if you want to communicate you can find a way, And it's not about who is physically there, or where there is, or whether circumstances are ideal, often they are not- It's about who you choose to be as community, How you live for the good of all, Keeping the faith whatever happens.

### **For the good of all.**

This is the question?

What is for the good of all our beloved ones?

One drawback with the last 6 months- we can't all see each other on Sunday.

Those Zooming miss those who don't Zoom.

We fear that those not Zooming may be feeling very lonely, Especially if they can't take advantage of anything online.

We continue the quest to be beloved community in whatever way best includes as many of you as possible.

And so we will experiment, next week, with in-person worship,

And see who comes and see what you think of it.

Wesley we'll be in the building at 9:30.

St James is starting outdoors in the Scotch ridge hall parking lot at 11:30- and we will figure out what to do in weeks following.

These physical gatherings won't be what they used to be.

Well, what is, these days?

They will be the best we can come up with, and as safe as possible- as safe as all of us there can make it, by doing what we need to do.

As Paul would advise, we always have the interests of others at heart- and that's why we will sanitize, keep our distance, wear masks , avoid singing, avoid hugs and handshakes- Putting our preferences and habits aside for the good of all.

### **So the times are a'changing.**

But some of you won't be at the in-person gatherings next Sunday.

Some are out of province and can attend only by Zoom.

Some, are physically more comfortable staying at home,

And some are limiting public gatherings, especially indoors.

We do not want to pressurize anyone into going where you don't feel safe or comfortable.

We know we cannot gather everyone, even our local New Brunswick people, until a vaccine is ready and available.

So whatever way we meet, we will be missing some people.

And those who do show up in person are giving something up too.

Some would be more than happy to worship on Zoom indefinitely.

Some have got used to not having to go out on Sunday.

Some have got used to having their cats or dogs on their laps.

And some enjoy singing along to the music, which we cannot do in physical gatherings- though we will have lovely live piano!

If you stay home on Sunday, you will still get a weekly Home Worship, though a more modest one when I'm also doing onsite services.

And for now, we will alternate on-site Wesley services and Zoom - so if you like Zoom we will be back Zooming two weeks from today.

And we will soon know what St James is going to do,

We're stepping into the unknown - yet again-

With mixed feelings, different feelings.

Some would as soon go on as we are now.

Some may be desperate to get into the building.

And those who gather will have some adapting to do-

It won't be the same as what we left 6 months ago.

### **Wisdom for the next steps**

Wherever and however we gather, in person, on-line,

As we used to gather, as we can gather now,

the Holy One is with us.

Wherever and however we gather,

We can stand firm in the Spirit, we can be of one mind and heart,

We can share Spirit, compassion and sympathy,

And - while, contrary to Paul, others are not better than you,

They matter just as much as you,

And always we consult others' well-being, along with our own.

And, finally:

Wherever and however we gather,

We are spiritual beings on an amazing journey through this beloved, beautiful creation,

We are called to listen, pay attention, be "idle and blessed "

And seek divine guidance as we live out, each, our one wild and precious life,

And as we take part in the one wild and precious life of this beloved community,

Wherever Spirit might take us together.

May it be so!

## **Reflection Music:**

“Abide With Me” Carrie Newcomer and Parker Palmer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWxqvY5j0HY>

## **Minute for Mission**

read by Sharon Hannan

National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering 2019

Our gifts for Mission & Service support the important work of reconciliation with Indigenous members of The United Church of Canada. One of the programs Mission & Service supports is the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering. Many Indigenous members met on the territory of the Chippewas of Rama near Orillia, Ontario, in August 2019 to discern and decide on the structure and priorities for the self-determining Indigenous church within the United Church.

This fourth National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering provided opportunities for listening to and discerning the Creator’s plan, visioning, spiritual nurture, mutual accountability, inspiration, education, youth development, and expressing the voice of the Indigenous community on spirituality and ministry.

Using the Biidaabin\* (“first light of a new day”) process of education, reflection and discussion, discernment, and decision-making, participants created and named a new national Indigenous church organization, elected a new National Indigenous Council, appointed a National Elders Council, and set priorities for the next triennium. The National Indigenous Council is an intergenerational group that includes two youth leaders.

As the planning team declared in its vision statement, the gathering would “inform, transform, and manifest healing and vitality. This is our act of decolonizing.” This vision and the decisions made at the gathering will help the Indigenous church to speak with a strong voice as its members continue to live into right relations.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.

## **Offering Prayer**

***Holy One, we give thanks for all the different ways we can share in worship. We give thanks for the gift of each other, the gift of spiritual community. And we give back, as we can, to support the work of this faith community, to support outreach into the wider community, and to be a caring presence one to another. May our gifts of self and substance spread abundance, compassion and joy around your beloved world. Amen.***

## **Prayers of the People**

God ever wise, your Spirit has guided us through 6 months of pandemic,  
Day by day, as we faced new challenges, as we learned different patterns of going out or staying home,  
as we found different ways to be in touch,  
And we ask for your continued guidance as we take the next steps together,  
Even as our way of being together is not what it was or what it one day might become.

Compassionate One, we seek to live compassionately with one another,  
Caring for the well-being of all,  
And we pray also for our wider community,  
All those living in these difficult pandemic times, throughout our nation and beyond,  
While we also pray for our own province,  
Seeking discernment for any who have not voted,  
That all may choose wisely and well, for the good of the most vulnerable population,  
For the good of community,

For the good of our beautiful land and water-

We give thanks for those who offer themselves for the difficult work of public office,

And we pray that those who are elected devote themselves to serving all residents, those who voted for them and those who did not.

God of peace and healing and hope, this 19th anniversary of 9/11 we pray for those grieving the loss of loved ones and the traumatic events of that day, as well as those lost or traumatized because of choices made in the wake of 9/11, and we pray that we may yet learn the ways of peace with justice for all.

And closer to home, we pray for all those who are grieving, those who are ill, those who are lonely, those who are front-line workers, those who are without work because of COVID, and all who bear heavy burdens.

And in a moment of silence we hold in love and light those who need our prayers...

May that same Love and Light surround each one of us,

That we may know we are never alone.

These and all the prayers of our hearts we gather into the words shared by communities around the world and across the ages: Our Creator [or Father or Mother or..], who art in heaven. etc.

## **Announcements, Joys and Concerns**

### **Correction to COOP Events**

<b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>3:00 – 5:00 pm</b>	<b>St Andrews Open Door</b>
Side Entrance - Wesley United		
<b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September</b>	<b>4:30 – 8:30 pm</b>	<b>Highland Dance</b>

**Dedications are most welcome remembering, honouring, celebrating a special person, event or season! Please email [wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com](mailto:wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com) with your request. Thanks!**

Photos or any other requests to go with dedications – favourite flower or season etc.....

## **We Sing**

VU 657 He Leadeth Me

sung by Billy Pollard and friends [Country Gospel style].

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6kgSSnUgal>

**Start in at about 1:19** Feel free to substitute God or God's for some of the hes and hims, if you so wish.

He leadeth me, O blessed thought O words with heavenly comfort fraught  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be. Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me

### **Chorus:**

He leadeth me, He leadeth me. By His own hand He leadeth me  
His faithful follower I would be For by His hand He leadeth me

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom  
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom  
By waters still, over troubled sea  
Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me. **Chorus..**

Lord, I would clasp thine hand in mine Nor ever murmur nor repine  
Content, whatever lot I see Since 'tis thine hand that leadeth me. **Chorus..**

And when my task on earth is done When by thy grace the victory's won,  
Even death's cold wave I will not flee Since God through Jordan leadeth me. **Chorus..**

## **Blessing**

Go forth in faith, knowing that God lights your way, step by step. Go forth in hope, hope even in these troubled times, hope for the wellbeing of all. Go forth in love, knowing that Love surrounds you in all times and places, whatever any of us may face. You are not alone. God is with you. Thanks be to God.

**We Go Forth Singing** VU 422 God Be With You Till We Meet Again sung by Chorale De Kigali  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7J93UD0x31E>

God be with you till we meet again;  
By His counsels guide, uphold you,  
With His sheep in love enfold you;  
God be with you till we meet again.

Till we meet, till we meet,  
Till we meet at Jesus 'feet;  
Till we meet, till we meet,  
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again!  
'Neath His wings protecting hide you,  
Daily manna still provide you;  
God be with you till we meet again!

God be with you till we meet again!  
When life's perils thick confound you,  
Put His arms unfailing round you;  
God be with you till we meet again!

God be with you till we meet again!  
Keep love's banner floating o'er you,  
Smite death's threatening wave before you;  
God be with you till we meet again

*Prayers by Jane Doull*

*Hymns Part of the family by Jim Manley*

*He Leadeth me - words by Joseph Gilmore music by William Bradbury*

*God be with you - words by Jeremiah Rankin, music by William Tomer*

## **Bulletin dedication:**

