

Home Worship Service November 22, 2020

Gathering Music

The Spirit in Me Greet the Spirit In You

<https://vimeo.com/461257140>

[Jim and Jean Strathdee] *with lovely interfaith images*



Opening Words

Something inside me has reached to the place where the world is breathing.

{Kabir, 15th century Indian mystic, raised as a Muslim but a student of Hinduism and much quoted also in Sikhism}

We are caught in an inescapable web of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. *{Martin Luther King Jr}*

To see the world in a grain of sand

And a heaven in a wildflower,

Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,

And eternity in an hour. *{William Blake, 1757-1827 poet, painter, and mystic from Auguries of Innocence}*

We Sing Along

In Loving Partnership

<https://vimeo.com/463703466>

by Jim Strathdee, sung by Jim and Jean Strathdee

Opening Prayer

God, your prophets speak your dreams for our world. We have dreams too. But what chance do dreams have in these days of fear and anxiety, when we have set so much aside, and when hard times are not over? In this season can we hope for a better world? Today we entrust you with our fears and anxieties. We watch for signs of hope, reasons for resilience. We know: we still do walk upon holy ground, even while we seek a new era: where all can dwell in peace and unafraid, where young and old can see visions and dream dreams, where persons and communities can be restored and renewed. We pray, as those who persevere in love for each other and love for your world. Amen.

Readings

all read by Gary Groom

Isaiah 11:6-9 A Jewish Vision of The Peaceable Kindom

The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the baby goat,
the calf and the lion cub will graze together,
and a little child shall lead them.

The cow shall feed with the bear,
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat hay like the ox.

The baby shall play next to the den of the cobra,
And the toddler will dance over the viper's nest.

They will not hurt or destroy
on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Luke 17:20-21 Wisdom from Jesus' Teachings

Once Jesus^{*} **was asked by the Pharisees when the kindom of God was coming, and he answered, 'The kindom of God is not coming with things that can be observed; nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There it is!" For, in fact, the kindom of God is among* you.'**

John 15:4-5 More Wisdom From Jesus' Teachings

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

Special Music

Change the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZPnOe-xrsU>

by Nicki Ford *sung by the Hints of Harmony, a community choir from Wawota and district, Saskatchewan [Jane used to sing with them and the director, Nicola J. Ford is a Wawota United Church musician]- Nicki's daughter Jaime Findlay has been making YouTubes of some of their pieces to lift our spirits.*

Reflection

The Path of Harmony

Introduction

We've been exploring spiritual paths- the path of unity- the big idea, the big visions, the desire to unify, draw together, that all may be one.

The path of devotion - prayer and worship and meditation.

The path of works- all we do in love and in service.

And now, just before the mystical, magical season of Advent,

We pause on the path of harmony.

Singing in Harmony

I introduced this reflection by playing you a piece from the Hints of Harmony-

This group of women has been around over 25 years-some have come and gone but some founding members are still there.

In my time with them, it was indeed a glorious adventure in harmony- Soprano A who could do the really high notes, Soprano B, Second Soprano and Alto-

We were taught to learn our part- by heart - we never performed with music in front of us- and sing it out with confidence and joy-

If we had a good time, we were told, our listeners would too!

At the same time, we learned to listen for each other's voice, those singing our part, and those in other parts-

We weren't there to compete, to see who could sing the loudest, to be soloists-

All voices needed to be heard together-

Diversity beautifully balanced,

And yes, harmonized!

I learned a lot from 5 years in that choir- from other choirs too but especially that one.

Many among you have also sung in choirs- and long for the day when you can do so again-

And likely learned some of what I have learned too

Yes, in choir, we learn lots of wonderful music- which will stay with us forever-

But we also learn a beautiful spiritual path,

Not just for choir singers but for everyone.

Harmony in Beloved Community

A good choir is one that balances and blends its voices- no one voice overpowering the other-

And that's an image for a good community too.

Because it's about putting one's own voice into the mix,

But also listening to the voices of others,

And allowing all to be heard.

That requires respect the same respect one would want for oneself-

And that requires humility- knowing that one doesn't have all the answers oneself,

Knowing each voice is at its best when it works well with other voices-

Not trying to compete or control ,

Not trying to play a win-lose game,

Aiming for win-win.

Surely that's what Jesus wanted for his beloved community-

A ragtag mix of sometimes ill-assorted people,

Some of whom had never even met each other, till they gathered around Jesus.

And yet they could be grafted onto the one vine- each of them a branch,

No two branches alike-

And they could discover- they were better together than they could ever be on their own- they needed each other to be the best they could be.

Just as I couldn't by myself sing all 4 parts of a choir anthem -

And in my singing days I sang even my own part better if I heard others around me singing it too.

Harmony- not easy but a precious thing

Of course, sometimes choir singers all get out of tune together-

We are human, after all.

And sometimes Jesus' community got out of tune too-

The members forgot to be a community -

And got hung up on "Who is the greatest?"

Not surprising - then and now , that question is floating around -

And we have examples in plenty of people fixated on being the Greatest,

Whatever it costs those around them.

Jesus knew all about this -kings who would get rid of rivals even from their own families, and a Roman emperor who liked being worshipped, whose armies and lackeys could easily do away with anyone who wasn't loyal enough.

The beloved community could fall apart- and it could take a lot of care to put it back together again.

But when it worked - at all- it was a precious thing- a pearl of great price.

And a very spiritual thing- the spirit in one greeting the spirit in another, seeing that of God in each other, seeing that God's kingdom, God's realm, dwelt within each-

A loving, safe, compassionate , respectful community ,
Where the spirit in you and the spirit in me met and greeted,
Where we draw out that of God within each other ,
And so God's kindom, God's realm comes to be in our midst-
At least we glimpse it just enough to know it's there!

And so we too treasure harmony in the beloved community

Over my years with Wesley and St James, we have spoken of our vision, our mission, our values-
Who are we?

Why are we here?

And often we find- it's because it's the community that matters.

Yes, you could read the Bible on your own- or find a religious programme on TV- or you could go for a walk and commune with nature-

But it's still worth it to connect with others who are also consciously on a spiritual journey,
Longing for a sense of divine presence, a word of wisdom, a moment of inspiration, something beyond what they can find by themselves,

Longing to experience the spirit in me greeting the spirit in you,

Longing to glimpse that divine kindom between us, among us.

All this while honouring each person's unique spiritual journey and perspective, While all are welcome whoever we are,

And each voice counts whether we've been here for 50 years or just arrived today.

These are challenging times for community- we see much less of each other-- -even in person there are no handshakes, no hugs, no Sunday morning coffee hour, no potlucks, no Christmas sale or Christmas tea- and yes no choir- it's hard to converse through masks or on Zoom!

Still we treasure that beloved community,

In the ways we can still be together, we find the strength and hope to keep on keeping on,

Remembering that we are still loved,

Holding each other in light and love,

Especially any who are ill, or grieving, or otherwise struggling.

Community like ours is a sign of Divine Love wrapping healing arms around each and all,

Even when we cannot physically wrap arms around each other.

The path of harmony - an outward journey throughout the world.

As Martin Luther King Jr reminded us , beloved community is not just for our particular, individual congregations

It's a dream for whole nations and beyond-

For all God's children everywhere-

The ancient prophet's dream remains- of a peaceable kindom,

For every race and ethnic origin and faith and sexual orientation and identity,

For first peoples, for settlers, for those of African origin, for immigrants and refugees,

For all nations-

Where the spirit in each can greet the spirit in each other-

Where we honour spirit in creation itself, seeking the good of all living beings, and of earth and water and air.

Where we seek peace with justice for all,

That all may have their place in the divine choir of harmonies heard and unheard. May it be so!

Music of Reflection

Dona Nobis pacem. [Grant us peace]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8M8v7I9zsAM>

sung by the One Ascension Virtual Choir

Stewardship Seconds

*Stewards help to create a new heaven and a new earth
by living as though they are already here.*

Offering Prayer

God of many gifts, we give thanks for the unique gifts and the special ministry of each person in our church family. WE receive what you offer us through the people around us. We give what we have and what we are, for the good of each other and the good of this world. Through our giving and receiving, may we grow in care and compassion for each other and for all your beloved. Amen.

Prayer as We Move from Pentecost to Advent

[inspired by scriptures and by Carolyn McDade's song This ancient love]

God of ancient love,
you are with us through the evening of a dying year,
the midnight of our winter hearts,
the long awaiting of a fresh morning and springtime awakening.

Hold us gently in your heart,
when our own hearts grow too heavy with sadness.
Spread your healing arms beneath us and around us,
when our spirits sink too low.

Blessed and blessing Spirit,
hide in the shadow of your wings
all those who live in fear of violence, of hunger, of homelessness, or hopelessness.
Breathe your transforming power into all places wounded by injustice, greed, cruelty or indifference.
Inflame within all of us a longing for a new heaven and a new earth.

God of aching love,
wrap your strong arms around each one who feels lonely or dispirited,
each one who mourns the loss of those they love, or the loss of love,
each one who is ill in body or mind,
each one who is weary from caregiving,
each one who is worn down by giving too much and receiving too little.
We pray also for ourselves in our places of heartache,
And now we hold in Love and Light all who need our prayers...

These prayers and the longings deep within our hearts we trust to that Quiet Centre, that Holy Mystery, that Ground of all Being in which all is held together- expressed for us in Jesus whose prayer we say together now as one community with those all over the earth:

Announcements and Joys and Concerns

Advent begins next week with a 10 a.m. service at Wesley- during Advent all on-site Wesley worship will be at 10 a.m. not 9:30. An at home service will be also be offered every week. St James next gathering is a very special outdoor/parking lot one - Dec. 20 at 1 p.m. Stay tuned.

Blessing by Joseph Cleveland

May we hear the melody of Life and find ourselves singing harmony.
May we be open to the dissonances in the Song of the Land and Its People,
that we might be part of the World's urging toward Justice, Peace, and Love.
May we feel in our bones the rhythms of Life and the Land,
and find ourselves dancing.

We Go Forth Singing

There Will Be Sunshine in The Morning

<https://vimeo.com/461675060>

spiritual sung by Jim and Jean Strathdee

Prayers by Jane Doull except where indicated.



Anyone wishing to place poinsettia in Wesley for the Christmas season,
please speak with Barb 506 469 4631 or email barbsheen@hotmail.com Thanks x
Please let us know if you would like something specific as a dedication that we can include on our bulletins and website.



Emma's Graduate Presentation

Monday, 23th November 1 – 3 pm available by Zoom

AST Fall 2020 Graduate Project Presentations Upswelling: Voices to Nourish a Changing Church

November 2020 (all times in Atlantic Time) Join us to celebrate and learn about the important research that final-year AST students have been undertaking this year. You'll be fascinated, challenged, and inspired by each presentation. View [Graduate Projects List](#). To join online presentations at the scheduled time [use this link](#)., Emma's presentation is on allyship with indigenous people.

Wild Wisdom

Tuesday 24th November 2:30 – 4 pm available by Zoom

We will be reading the book, "Coming Back to Life", by Joanne Macy, and reflecting on its themes of enlightened and compassionate environmental activism. Led by Carole Martignacco, the group is a wonderful source of inspiration and support.

This is open to all, so please contact Francie (francie.rosie@gmail.com) if you are interested in attending. ZOOM <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3067392185>

Walk Wesley's Labyrinth

Thursday 26th November 1 – 4 pm



"Book a half hour session to walk Wesley's meditative labyrinth on November 26, Thursday between 1:00 and 4:00 pm. By pre-booking, we ensure that you have the labyrinth to yourself. It's Covid-free and so peaceful! Contact Francie at francie.rosie@gmail.com if you would like to book a time."

Dedications are most welcome remembering, honouring, celebrating a special person, event or season! Please email wesleyunitedstandrews@gmail.com with your request. Thanks!

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