

Wesley Home Worship Sunday 18th July 2021

Gathering Words:

"It is a serious thing
just to be alive
on this fresh morning
in the broken world."

Mary Oliver, from Invitation



Music

#268VU ~ Bring Many Names

<https://youtu.be/Aj7Ms2Z35Tc>

Prayer

ALL READ (School Prayer - a poem by Diane Ackerman, adapted)

Spirit of Life, God of Many Names, we pray: "In the name of the daybreak/ and the eyelids of morning/ and the wayfaring moon/ and the night when it departs,/ I swear I will not dishonor/ my soul with hatred/ but offer myself humbly/ as a guardian of nature/ as a healer of misery/ as a messenger of wonder/ as an architect of peace...I will honor all life/ —wherever and in whatever form it may dwell — on Earth my home,/ and in the mansions of the stars."

Kindling the Flame (Please light a flame; words from the Passover Haggadah)

May the light we now kindle inspire us to use our powers to heal and not to harm, to help and not to hinder, to bless and not to curse, to serve you, Most Holy Spirit of Freedom.

We Hear Words of Wisdom

Readings

1. Jeremiah 23: 1-2

What sorrow awaits the leaders of my people, the shepherds of my sheep, for they have destroyed and scattered the very ones they were expected to care for, says the Lord. Therefore, this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says to these shepherds: "Instead of caring for my flock and leading them to safety, you have deserted them and driven them to destruction. Now I will pour out judgment on you for the evil you have done to them. But I will gather together the remnant of my flock...I will bring them back to their own sheepfold, and appoint responsible shepherds who will care for them, and they will never be afraid again. Not a single one will be lost or missing. I, the Lord, have spoken!

2. Mark 6:30-34

The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

3. "For Calling the Spirit Back from Wandering the Earth in Its Human Feet an excerpt from a poem Joy Harjo, member of the Myskoke Nation

Open the door, then close it behind you.

Take a breath offered by friendly winds. They travel the earth gathering essences of plants to clean.
Give it back with gratitude.

If you sing it will give your spirit lift to fly to the stars' ears and back.

Acknowledge the earth that has cared for you since you were a dream planting itself precisely within
your parents' desire.

Let your moccasin feet take you to the encampment of the guardians who have known you before
time, who will be there after time. They sit before the fire that has been there without time.

Be respectful of the small insects, birds and animal people who accompany you. Ask their
forgiveness for the harm we humans have brought down upon them.

Don't worry. Do not hold regrets.

When you find your way to the circle, to the fire kept burning by the keepers of your soul, you will be
welcomed.

Reflection

Reverend Carole Martignacco

"Minding the Gap" (in brief)

We are in a time of great transition - not just our world, but here at Wesley. This time of transition requires of us a careful footing, as we observe the guidelines of the UCC for retiring ministers and congregations. As a caring community we have a solid history of reaching out to care and nurture each other. As a retired - but not retiring - minister, I offer my encouragement in the work of processing grief and loss. For more insights, google the work of depth psychologist Arielle Schwartz who coined the phrase "post traumatic growth" as a way of dealing with societal PTSD. Writing a new story to supplant the old can be a way of actively healing the spirit, and overturning decades of oppression.

In the gap between one ministry and another, the world still turns, life with all its joys and sorrows continues. On the world stage, the news is often so horrific we find it difficult to process. One such event is the recent "discovery" of unmarked graves on former residential school sites. The image of young native children holding hands, caption reading, "It's okay now. They found us." Such news - coming as it does as part of a daily barrage of "breaking" news - how do we manage not to be broken? One way is to observe the wisdom of healthy grieving - not turning away in denial, refusing to face the reality. This happened. We are not required to abandon our ancestors but we are called to right their wrongs and create a better world out of what we know. One way to positively heal is to reach out in solidarity to our indigenous siblings in whatever way is available to us. To feel with instead of for them, till their suffering truly becomes our own. Sharing the loss of these beautiful young children full of promise and gifts the world will never know - all humanity has been impoverished. Expressing loving concern for the well being, just as we do for each other and those closest to us when we are in grief and mourning. Asking forgiveness on behalf of our misguided ancestors, and refusing to perpetuate the many forms of oppression. Along with speeches and orange shirts, clean water for First Nations, equal to that of Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal (Jagmeet Singh, Liberal - House of Commons) would be a practical start.

On the other hand, one way to make reparation is to commit to learning about their traditions and teachings, centered on a oneness with nature and placing a high value on relatedness. Integrating their wisdom at a time of climate crises it is so desperately needed. What we will discover is they take great joy in sharing their ancient wisdom when we come humbly and in love and peace.

Finally it is not just about doing but being. In the midst of so much personal, societal and planetary suffering, let us be gentle with ourselves and each other. We must balance our concern for justice and the state of the world with a true joy in living, lest we forget what we are trying to save. Commit to the spiritual discipline of finding one thing to delight in each day - and as you practice, don't limit yourself to just one! Find the quiet centre and learn to love yourself, radiating that out to others. Spirit of gentleness, come and heal us.

Music

#374VU ~ Come and Find the Quiet Centre

https://youtu.be/Mpb_nHwex-A

We Go Forth to Love the World

Offering Prayer

Spirit of Life, of Goodness and Love, Holy Spirit from whom all gifts unceasingly flow, we know this life is a sacred dance of giving and receiving. Bless us as we offer ourselves and our best energies in service to all that is good and holy. May this sharing together from the abundance we enjoy bless and sustain this, or sacred gathering space, and the work of this beloved community. Help us accomplish our mission of creating a more just, equitable and compassionate world.

Prayer of The People (including words adapted from of Frederick E Gillis)

Spirit of Infinite Love, be with us now in this beloved community as we turn our minds and hearts toward one another, seeking to bring into our circle of concern all who need our love and support, those who are ill, those who are in pain, either in body, mind or spirit, those who are lonely, those who have been wronged. Those who wait for justice and mercy that can only come to them from you through our own acts of caring We pray especially for all those in the European Union, in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands affected by devastating flash floods. our Indigenous siblings who mourn again and forever the loss of their beloved children, all those affected by the horrific fires in the Pacific Northwest, including the animals and plant life. And for those closest to us in heart and spirit. *(Let us share a moment of silence for those we know who are in need of our prayers.)* **We are part of a web of life that makes us one with all humanity, one with all the universe. We are grateful for the miracle of consciousness that we share, the consciousness that gives us the power to remember, to love, to care.**

Responsorial Psalm 23 (New Living Translation)

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.

He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams.

He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, brining honor to his name.

Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid., for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me, You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.

You honor me by anointing my head with oil, my cup overflows with blessings.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life.

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Music

#375VU ~ Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

<https://youtu.be/n7G5CqBHYE>

Closing Words (words of Rev. E. Brian Chenowith)

"I believe in...all the prophets and saviors, the begotten children of all people,
Born under every banner and tribe, nation and state, parcel and plot,
Whose suffering, struggles, and wisdom free me from injustice,
And lift me up so that I, too, can lift others,
To create that beloved community, that heaven on earth,
So that all souls shall find peace and joy and freedom."

And this from the Talmud: Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now, love mercy now, walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it."

Benediction (Please extinguish the flame) Go now in peace.