



FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.



**Fairlawn Avenue United Church
Sunday, June 25, 2023, 10:30am
Celebrating Covenant Fulfillment**

Rev. Ron Ewart, Presiding
Rev. Douglas duCharme
Rev. Jean Ward
Eleanor Daley, Director of Music
Fairlawn Avenue Senior Choir

2.

***Indicates when the congregation is to stand, if able.**

Pre-Service Music

Welcome

Gathering Words

Lead a life worthy of your calling.

***We cannot do this alone,
we dare not try this alone,
so we gather as God's people.***

Lead a life filled with the gifts of your calling,
gifts to be used with service and humility.

***We come to build up Christ's Body,
in humility and gentleness,
with patience and love.***

Lead a life which reflects your calling,
that life of peace grounded in the Spirit.

***We rejoice in our oneness in Christ;
we seek to share the grace offered to us.***

Live a life worthy of the calling
to which you have been called.

***We gather as God's people, imperfect, flawed,
but rooted in a love that can do more
than we can ever imagine.***

***Opening Hymn** Creating God, Your Fingers Trace

VU #265

**Creating God, your fingers trace
the bold designs of farthest space;
let sun and moon and stars and light
and what lies hidden praise your might.**

**Sustaining God, your hands uphold
earth's mysteries known or yet untold;
let waters fragile blend with air,
enabling life, proclaim your care.**

**Redeeming God, your arms embrace
all now despised for creed or race;
let peace, descending like a dove,
make known on earth your healing love.**

**Indwelling God, your gospel claims
one family with a billion names;
let every life be touched by grace
until we praise you face to face.**

Opening Prayer

Gentle God:
we have traveled through many waters
to reach this place,
but share one baptism;
we arrive from different backgrounds and traditions,
yet share one faith;
we are, each of us, unique and precious to you,
and are members of one Body;
we have different dreams and doubts,
yet our hearts beat with one hope;
we are graced with different gifts,
but we offer them in the same service. of grace and love.

God in Community, One in Holiness,
be with us in our worship as we give thanks for relationships built,
and transformations experienced; and yet as we cherish precious memories,
prepare us to move forward with excitement and anticipation,
for what lies ahead is the future you are shaping.

Call to Reconciliation

When we try to sugarcoat what goes on in our lives, scripture stares us down,
reminding us of the truth of what it is to be human. When we seek to romanticize
why we have failed to live as faithful people, God refuses to go along, waiting for us
to confess our lack of wholeness. Let us join together as God's children, lifting our
prayers to the One who is generous in love.

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

***Compassionate One: It is not easy for us to confront those deeds which do not
please you. We are so busy looking for the miracles we desire, we cannot see the
gift of your presence in others. We spend so much of our lives bemoaning the acts
of others, we have no time to look in the mirror and see our secret faces.***

4.

Forgive us, Steadfast Love. Grace us with your mercy, so we might be made whole. Touch our inner being and heal us, so we might know joy and gladness. Create new hearts within us, so they might beat as one: with compassion for the other whether friend or foe, beat with the love we have seen in Jesus, the one we dare to call your Son, our Lord, and our Saviour.

Introit Your Mercy Will Not Fail Us E. Daley

Your mercy will not fail us, nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us, the victory shall be won;
and then, by earth and heaven, your name shall be adored,
and this shall be our anthem: one church, one faith, one Lord.
(Edward Plumptre, 1821-1891)

Assurance of Pardon

Despite knowing us as we really are, God chooses to call us;
seeing our emptiness, God chooses to feed us;
holding our shattered hearts, God chooses to heal us.
This is the good news: God loves us.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Lighting the Christ Candle

Sharing Peace

Scripture Ephesians 4:1-6 Reader: Morrey Ewing

People of God, I want you to get out there and walk - better yet, run! - on the road God called you to travel. I don't want any of you sitting around on your hands. I don't want anyone strolling off, down some path that goes nowhere. And mark that you do this with humility and discipline—not in fits and starts, but steadily, pouring yourselves out for each other in acts of love, alert at noticing differences and quick at mending fences.

You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. You have one faith, one baptism, one God who is over all, works through all, and is present in us all. Everything you are and think and do is permeated with Oneness.

In this reading we hear God's voice.

God is still speaking, thanks be to God.

Anthem

We Are Not Alone
 Mezzo Soprano – Andrea Ludwig

Pepper Choplin (b. 1957)

We are not alone, God is with us.
 We are never alone, for God is with us.
 Now, through all our days, always.
 Forever and ever, we are never alone.
 And God will make us strong, for God is with us.
 We will press on, for God is with us.
 Now, through all our days, always.
 Forever and ever, we are never alone.
 Our God is with us now.
 (Pepper Choplin)

Reflection

Letting Go, Before Letting Be

Rev. Ron Ewart
 Rev. Douglas duCharme
 Rev. Jean Ward

Offering and Offertory Anthem A Celtic Blessing of Light

E. Daley

May the blessing of light be upon you,
 light without and light within.
 May the blessed sunlight shine upon you
 and warm your heart till it glows.
 May the light shine out of the eyes of you,
 bidding the wanderer to come in from the storm.
 May the blessing of the great rains be upon you,
 washing your spirit fair and clean.
 May the blessing of the rain be upon you –
 the soft, sweet rain.
 May the blessing of the earth be upon you.
 May the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly.
 May the blessing of light be upon you.
 (Anon.)

Fulfilling Our Covenant

Statement of Purpose

When a minister comes into our church, we covenant with one another; we promise to journey with one another caring and being cared for. While God's covenant never ceases, our covenants with one another do. Today we mark the ending of the covenant between Douglas, Fairlawn Avenue United Church, and Shining Waters Regional Council.

Return of Symbols of Ministry

When I came among you, to serve with you as an Intentional Interim Minister of Word, Sacrament, and Pastoral Care, you shared some symbols of ministry with me that I now return to you so that you may enter into a new covenant relationship:

Bible (*placed on the Communion table*)

The Bible is a symbol of the ministry of the Word among us. May God's Word continue to challenge, nurture, and inspire us.

***We will continue to place scripture at the centre of our life.
The Word of God lives among us. Thanks be to God.***

Water (*poured into the Baptismal font*)

The font is the symbol of our baptism, the place of our new birth into Christ. May you continue to welcome new members through the living waters of faith.

***We will continue to celebrate new life in baptism:
the font of blessing welcomes all. Thanks be to God.***

Bread and Cup (*placed on the Communion table*)

The table is the symbol of our sharing of life in Christ, a source of nourishment and strength.

May you continue to share food, share life, and work for justice, as a community of compassionate hospitality, diversity, and welcome.

***We will continue to break the bread and share the cup.
The table invites us to taste and see God's abundance
together, with joy. Thanks be to God.***

Towel and Basin (*placed on the Communion table*)

The towel and basin are symbols of our calling to justice and service, following the example of Jesus, who washed the feet of his friends.

May you continue to walk and to serve in the way of Jesus.

***We will continue to serve others and to work for justice,
walking in the way of Jesus, with love. Thanks be to God.***

Empowering Symbols

There are also symbolic gifts that we can share in this moment, as we each move on in our journeys of life and of faith. These speak a bit more personally to what we have shared that shapes us for what lies ahead:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Rev. Douglas duCharme – | Shares a gift for the Fairlawn Avenue United faith community. |
| Morrey Ewing – | Shares a gift for Douglas from the Fairlawn Avenue United faith community. |
| Chris Bennett – | Liaison, Shining Waters Regional Council, video message (please see insert for text). |
| Amanda Hancox – | Message on behalf of Fairlawn Avenue United Governing Council |

Litany of Thanksgiving and Forgiveness

We are all called by God to offer our unique gifts and work.

But some are called to lead in particular ways.

We are all called by God to speak our faith.

But some are called to preach to the community with prophetic words of compassion and justice.

We are all called by God to comfort those who suffer.

But some are called to share in the pain of the entire community.

We give thanks for Douglas who has been with us in turbulent times as a guide, a coach, a pastor, and a friend.

One who has led us, taught us, challenged us, and shared both our suffering and our joy.

Douglas: I give thanks for the prayers that surround me as I complete my ministry among you. I ask you to forgive me for the mistakes I've made, the dreams not realized, and the expectations not met.

Yes, we forgive you and bless you. We rejoice in the ways we have been blessed by your ministry among us. We ask your forgiveness for mistakes made and for expectations not met.

Douglas: I receive your gratitude and forgive your shortcomings.

Do you, Douglas, release this pastoral charge from the vows and promises made at your covenanting?

Douglas: I do, God being my helper.

8.

Do you, the members and friends of Fairlawn Avenue United Church, release Douglas from the duties of ministry among you?

We do, God being our helper.

(Lighting a candle from the Christ candle).

We invite you to accept this candle to remember us.

Remember that God's light always burns within you.

Go now, surrounded by our love

and led by God, the Christ, and the Spirit.

Amen.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Jan Schlee

God, heart of the world:

revealed through every aspect of creation:

understood through our awareness.

May we honour the holiness of creation

and act accordingly

so that your love is reflected in the way we live.

May we always be thankful

for the food we eat and the friends we have.

May we forgive those who transgress against us

and be forgiven for our own.

In the freedom of love may we live as your heartbeat

and not be compromised by hesitation.

Through our freedom, may your justice be seen and heard

and experienced forever and ever. Amen.

(Sherri J. Weinberg)

Living Our Mission

***Closing Hymn** Lord, You Give the Great Commission

VU #512 (verses 1, 3 and 5)

Lord, you give the great commission:

"Heal the sick and preach the word."

Lest the church neglect its mission,

and the gospel go unheard,

help us witness to your purpose

with renewed integrity;

with the Spirit's gifts empow'r us

for the work of ministry.

**Lord, you make the common holy:
 "This my body, this my blood."
 Let us all, for earth's true glory,
 daily lift life heavenward,
 asking that the world around us
 share your children's liberty;
 with the Spirit's gifts empow'r us
 for the work of ministry.**

**Lord, you bless with words assuring:
 "I am with you to the end."
 Faith and hope and love restoring,
 may we serve as you intend,
 and, amid the cares that claim us,
 hold in mind eternity;
 with the Spirit's gifts empow'r us
 for the work of ministry.**

***Blessing**

The world now is too dangerous
 and too beautiful for anything but love.
 May your eyes be so blessed you see God in everyone.
 Your ears, so you hear the cry of the poor.
 May your hands be so blessed
 that everything you touch is a sacrament.
 Your lips, so you speak nothing but the truth with love.
 May your feet be so blessed you run
 to those who need you.
 And may your heart be so opened,
 so set on fire, that your love,
 your love, changes everything. Amen.

***Choral Commissioning**

E. Daley

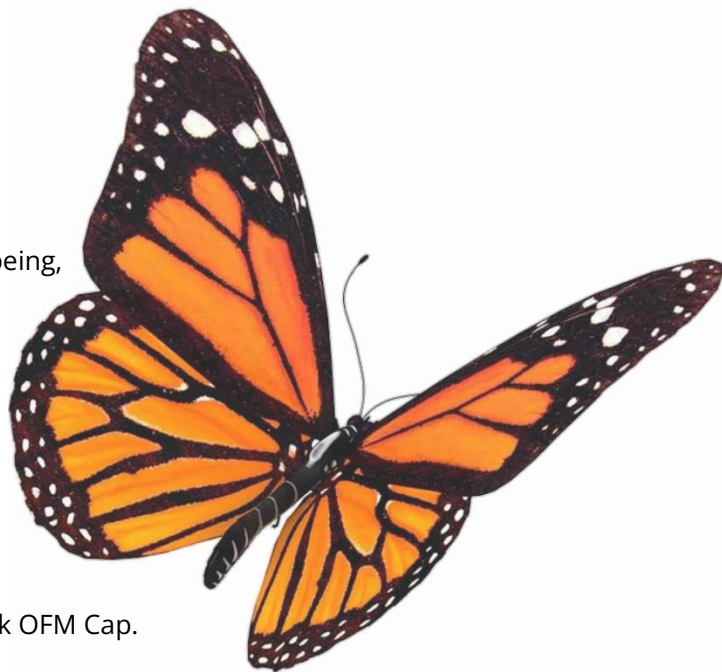
God be with you 'til we meet again,
 loving counsels guide, uphold you,
 With a shepherd's care enfold you;
 God be with you 'til we meet again.
 (Jeremiah Rankin - 1880)

Cocoon

Do not expect cocooning
 To be easy.
 It is not a time of rest
 But of rebirth.
 They used to think
 That the Caterpillar
 Merely slept there,
 Awaiting the wonder of wings.
 This is not true.
 To cocoon means
 The breaking down of self,
 Of letting go of all
 that may be considered
 Caterpillar.
 Yielding to the chrysalis call.
 Dropping all that is old identity,
 All that is desire,
 All that is hungry,
 All that is eating, eating, eating,
 Endlessly.
 When the moment comes, called
 To go to the cool dark underleaf, underlog place,
 To spin the silk of silent self,
 The Caterpillar dissolves,
 Touches the point of nothingness
 Of being;
 Become now
 Neither Caterpillar
 Nor Butterfly
 Become simply, potential,
 Until new form is found,
 Until the self-made tomb is too tight
 And Butterfly is birthed,
 bursting blessing, beauty.



A journey through stillness
into freedom,
Into flight,
No one who knew the Caterpillar
Would know it in the Butterfly,
No one who knows the Butterfly
Would see in it
Even the memory
Of Caterpillar,
Yet within there is
A continuity of being
A new recipe out of old ingredients
A life remade, a seed flowered, a potency fulfilled,
There is pain in this
I am sure.
How could there not be?
There is always pain
In surrender,
In transformation,
In new life, new birth
Death before resurrection,
Letting go, before letting be
This is the divine order of things
This is why there hides
Even here, even now,
In all your old Caterpillar desiring,
In the hunger at the core of your being,
The promise of Butterfly
If you would but surrender
To the call
Of the cocoon.
If you would know,
even for a day,
The wonder of wings
The freedom of flight.



'Cocoon' - Brother Richard Hendrick OFM Cap.
8th May 2020



Please join us in the Assembly Hall after the service as we celebrate Douglas's time with us with a farewell party. Parties generally involve gifts and this is an invitation for you to provide your own gift of words for him. We invite you to write a message for Douglas. Perhaps you recall a story that illustrates what his time at Fairlawn has meant to you. Or you might want to share how in your view, he has enriched our community of faith. Or maybe a funny anecdote. Or simply words of thanks. We have cards available downstairs for you to write your thoughts or message, and place in our special Memory Box for Douglas.

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