



FAIRLAWN

Connect with what matters in life.



EVERY CHILD MATTERS

ORANGE
SHIRT
DAY



Fairlawn Avenue United Church
Sunday, September 24, 2023, 10:30am

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts
Rev. Jean Ward
Eleanor Daley, Director of Music
Fairlawn Avenue Senior Choir

2.

PREPARATION

There is a table at the front of the sanctuary with stars on it. They are kindled in the light of the Christ Candle. Before we begin, we invite you to come and pick up one or two. You may keep one for yourself, as a reminder that you bear the image of the heavenly. You may take another for the moment in the service when we pass the peace, to offer to another, to thank them for bringing Creation's light to your life. Or to simply say "peace to you."

GRIEF

Welcome and Acknowledgements

Reading

Birch¹

by Rosemary Clewes

The truncated birch pointing
bony arms to sky
does not notice her feet.

The gown of her bark flares
open and where once flowed
an ocean of sap

the breached secret of her womb
tells now of wings, metamorphosis and
the virtue of roots.

In May the buzz saw
will fell the rest of her.
By fall, who will remember her shade?

***Hymn** Bring Many Names

VU #268 (verses 1, 2, 3 and 6)

***Bring many names, beautiful and good,
celebrate, in parable and story,
holiness and glory, loving, living God.
Hail and hosanna! Bring many names.***

***Strong mother God, working night and day,
planning all the wonders of creation,
setting each equation, genius at play.
Hail and hosanna, strong mother God.***

***Warm aching God, hugging every child,
feeling all the strains of human living,
caring and forgiving, till we're reconciled:
Hail and hosanna, warm father God.***

***Great, living God, never fully known,
joyful darkness far beyond our seeing,
closer yet than breathing, everlasting home:
Hail and hosanna, great, living God.***

Gathering Prayer²

Powerful Christ,
we are grateful that you came to us as a child,
who grew out of a community that nurtured, supported, and taught you
the way of your ancestors.

You have asked us to do the same:

***to treat every child as we would treat you,
to love every person as you have loved us.***

We are grateful that

***your power is rooted in love, not force;
your strength is displayed through community, not might.***

You have taught us to work toward a better world where all of creation thrives,

and where every child matters.

On this Orange Shirt Day,
we remember Phyllis Webstad as a child,
and the stolen childhood of all the children forcibly raised by church-run
institutions, known as residential schools.

**We lament how these institutions
stole from children the opportunity to grow in a safe and loving
environment,**

4.

**stole from Elders the opportunity to share their teachings and
wisdom with younger generations;
and stole from communities the opportunity to live
intergenerationally.**

We mourn the children who never made it home,

***the communities that were destroyed,
the broken hearts,
the stories never shared, and
the shattered relationships.***

We humbly ask that through us you would provide
comfort to all who are seeking healing
and who daily wrestle with the ongoing harmful legacy
of these colonial institutions,
strength to all who name how colonial powers have harmed us as
peoples and as a nation;
often at great personal cost,
and courage to all who are working toward reconciliation.

***Christ Child,
as you grew,
you reminded us to always welcome and care for children.***

We remember your children today.
We lament and acknowledge the sinful ways that colonial powers tried to eradicate
Indigenous cultures within Canada,
breaking Indigenous families,
removing children from their homes while destroying communities.
And we pray for healing,
so that we who live together in this country
can also work together to build a better future
where all children are cherished, beloved,
and given what they need to thrive.
So that we may treat all children as we would treat you,
our Beloved.

***May it be so.
Amen.***

REPENTANCE

Introit

God Has Entrusted to Us

E. Daley

God has entrusted to us the message of reconciliation.
Now we are ambassadors in the name of Christ.
(2 Corinthians 5:19, 20)

Scripture Reading Matthew 22:1-14 (New Century Version)

Once again Jesus used stories to teach the people:

The kingdom of heaven is like what happened when a king gave a wedding banquet for his son. The king sent some servants to tell the invited guests to come to the banquet, but the guests refused. He sent other servants to say to the guests, "The banquet is ready! My cattle and prize calves have all been prepared. Everything is ready. Come to the banquet!"

But the guests did not pay any attention. Some of them left for their farms, and some went to their places of business. Others grabbed the servants, then beat them up and killed them.

This made the king so furious that he sent an army to kill those murderers and burn down their city. Then he said to the servants, "It is time for the wedding banquet, and the invited guests don't deserve to come. Go out to the street corners and tell everyone you meet to come to the banquet." They went out on the streets and brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike. And the banquet room was filled with guests.

When the king went in to meet the guests, he found that one of them wasn't wearing the right kind of clothes for the wedding. The king asked, "Friend, why didn't you wear proper clothes for the wedding?" But the guest had no excuse. So the king gave orders for that person to be tied hand and foot and to be thrown outside into the dark. That's where people will cry and grit their teeth in pain. Many are invited, but only a few are chosen.

Anthem

Be Not Afraid

Craig Courtney (b. 1948)

Be not afraid: for I have redeemed you;
 be not afraid: I have called you by name.
 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 when you pass through the floods, they will not sweep o'er you;
 when you walk through the fire, you will not be consumed;
 you are mine, you are precious in my sight.

My love for you is everlasting,
 my love for you shall have no end.
 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
 when you pass through the floods, they will not sweep o'er you;
 when you walk through the fire, you will not be consumed;
 you are mine, you are precious in my sight.
 (based on Isaiah 43:1-4)

Reflection

Shoes On Your Doorstep

Rev. Dr. Cameron Watts

A Prayer for the Beauty of the Lost³

Great and Holy Mystery, Comforter, Advocate,
 God of the broken and the broken-hearted
 You who know what is to be vulnerable, receive our prayers,

***For the beautiful Indigenous children whose spirits were crushed
 For the beautiful Indigenous girls whose lives were cruelly shortened
 For the beautiful Indigenous women
 who were robbed of their potential
 For the beautiful two-spirited people
 who were targeted because of bigotry.***

You who know what it is to grieve the loss of a child, receive our prayers,

***For the families who have been waiting to hear news
 of their loved ones
 For the families who have been waiting to talk
 about obstacles to justice
 For the families who have been waiting to share ideas, solutions,
 and the wisdom acquired from their painful experiences.***

God of compassion, receive our prayers

***For the opportunity to listen with open hearts, open minds,
and open spirits eager to learn;
how as a caring community we must do better;
for the promise of those entrusted with the sacred responsibility of
leadership in determining the way forward.***

God of wisdom, receive our prayers

***For governments, for police forces,
for coroners and forensic scientists, for the courts,
and for all institutions of justice and service who have roles to play
to stop the violence and protect the vulnerable.
For Indigenous leaders who strive to create safety and security
for their people and to recover and strengthen traditional values
and practices of community.***

God of healing

***You know that many are worried and troubled
You know that some are losing hope and losing faith.***

Receive our prayers

***For the needs of families to come first
For good judgment and intelligence to prevail in decision-making
For courage and perseverance to overcome obstacles,
to risk making hard choices, and to share hard truths.***

God of justice, receive our prayers

***For the elimination of racism and discrimination that endanger Indigenous
girls, women, and two-spirited people
and impede the pursuit of justice for them.***

God of peace, receive our prayers

***For the beautiful Indigenous children growing up across this country.
May they always be able to enjoy times of learning, times of play,
and time at home safely***

8.

***For the beautiful Indigenous elders working hard for their families
and communities
May they always be able to enjoy times of relaxation and respite from
their cares, securely and free from fear.***

***For the beautiful two-spirited people blessing all those with whom they
come into contact
May they always be able to enjoy the cities, the towns,
and the countryside of this great land
in comfort and with a sense of welcome wherever they go.***

God of grace, receive our prayers
For the justice we all hope for and long for so very much
In the name of all our relations. Amen.

TRANSFORMATION

The Peace of the Christ Candle

***Hymn** Wake, Now, My Senses (Tune: *Slane*) Traditional Irish Melody

***Wake, now, my senses, and hear the earth call;
feel the deep power of being in all;
keep, with the web of creation your vow,
giving, receiving as love shows us how.***

***Wake, now, my reason, reach out to the new,
join with each pilgrim who quests for the true;
honour the beauty and wisdom of time;
suffer your limit, and praise the sublime.***

***Wake, now, compassion, give heed to the cry;
voices of suffering fill the wide sky;
take as your neighbour both stranger and friend,
praying and striving their hardship to end.***

***Wake, now, my conscience, with justice your guide;
join with all people whose rights are denied;
take not for granted a privileged place;
God's love embraces the whole human race.***

***Wake, now, my vision of ministry clear;
brighten my pathway with radiance here;
mingle my calling with all who will share;
work toward a planet transformed by our care.***

(T. J. S. Mikelson, 1936-2020)

Living Our Mission and “More Than One Story”

Introduction of Offering

Offertory Anthem We Are Not Alone

Pepper Choplin (b. 1957)

Mezzo Soprano – Andrea Ludwig

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.

Our God is with us now.

(Pepper Choplin)

***Presentation of the Offering**

In gratitude and humble trust

We bring our best today,

To serve your cause and share your love

With all along life's way.

O God, who gave yourself to us

In Jesus Christ, your Son,

Teach us to give ourselves each day

Until life's work is done.

The Covenant of the Shoes

10.

***Sending Out, from A Song of Faith**

We witness to Holy Mystery that is Wholly Love.

***God is creative and self-giving,
generously moving
in all the near and distant corners of the universe.***

Nothing exists that does not find its source in God.

Our first response to God's providence is gratitude.

We sing thanksgiving.

***Finding ourselves in a world of beauty and mystery,
of living things, diverse and interdependent,
of complex patterns of growth and evolution,
of subatomic particles and cosmic swirls,***

***we sing of God the Creator,
the Maker and Source of all that is.***

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator,
who is both in creation and beyond it.

All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related.

All creation is good.

***We sing of the Creator,
who made humans to live and move
and have their being in God.***

***In and with God,
we can direct our lives toward right relationship
with each other and with God.***

We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.

We can grow in wisdom and compassion.

We can recognize all people as kin.

***We can accept our mortality and finitude, not as a curse,
but as a challenge to make our lives and choices matter.***

***Choral Commissioning**

E. Daley

(The choir will sing through once, and then the congregation is invited to join in.)

***May God's love surround you,
may God's wisdom guide you,
may God's light shine upon you,
until we meet again.***

Postlude

¹ With the permission of the author

² United Church of Canada, 2023, with permission

³ Adapted from a prayer offered for the families of missing and murdered Indigenous Women, with permission, United Church of Canada

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12.

Orange Shirt Day ~ Saturday, September 30, 2023

People all across Canada will wear orange shirts to remember and honour Indigenous children who were taken from their communities and families to residential institutions.

Indigenous communities across the country continue to share the truth they have always known: that many of the children who never returned home remain on the grounds of those institutions in unmarked burial sites. These communities are now seeking to honour the missing children.

On Orange Shirt Day we also observe the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. For non-Indigenous Christians in particular, this is a time to reflect on their role in colonialism and the ongoing responsibility to make reparations.

Why Orange? Phyllis Jack Webstad from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation went to St. Joseph Mission Residential School. On her first day of school, Phyllis wore an orange shirt that her grandmother had given her. It was immediately taken away, and that marked the beginning of Phyllis's long separation from her family and community, a separation caused by actions of the church and federal government.

Orange Shirt Day is a time for us all to remember those events and their ongoing impact.

- United Church of Canada

A National Residential School Crisis Line is available to provide support to former Residential School students and their families. You can access emotional and crisis referral services by calling the free of charge 24-Hour National Crisis Line at 1-866-925-4419.

Indigenous peoples across Canada can also connect with The Hope for Wellness Help Line 24 hours a day, seven days a week for counselling and crisis intervention. Call the toll-free help line at 1-855-242-3310 or connect to the online chat at at.hopeforwellness.ca.

Talk4Healing is a culturally grounded, fully confidential help line available in 14 languages for Indigenous women in Ontario. Call the toll-free number at 1-855-554-HEAL (4325).

Free and confidential mental health support is available at wellnesstogether.ca/en-ca/ to anyone who may be affected.