

Applewood United Church
An Affirming Community
Sunday, August 10, 2025
Worship with Westminster UC
Ninth Sunday After Pentecost
(please stand in body or in spirit)*
Bold words are for all to share

Music for Gathering

Territorial Acknowledgment and Announcements

We understand that the land on which we live, work and worship is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee and later the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. The territory is mutually covered by the "Dish with One Spoon" Wampum Belt agreement. In the spirit of reconciliation, we commit to building relationships with all created beings, those who were here before, those who have settled, and those who continue to settle on this land. We commit to partnering with our Indigenous neighbours in being stewards and caretakers of God's Creation. Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we seek to live as reconciled people through our respect for, and our learning and understanding of, our Indigenous siblings.

Centering Music: "Lord Prepare Me" MV 18

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer:

One: We gather in God's presence today -

All: sharing our faith, sharing our worship.

One: We experience God's presence in the seen and unseen -

All: in hearts lifted in prayer and voices lifted in praise,

One: in word and in story, in symbols of our faith displayed.

All: We gather with hope and expectation,

One: with readiness to encounter God, Christ and Spirit here.

All: We gather ready to worship God.

One: Let's pray together -

**All: God who is both Present and Presence,
we thank you for the ways in which you surprise us
with your grace and your love.
We thank you for moments of revelation,
moments of contemplation,**

moments when we are stirred to action.
Through your creative energy
the invisible becomes visible:
faith becomes bread for the hungry,
compassion becomes covering and shelter
for the naked and vulnerable,
and hope becomes safe space.
Lead us into the possibilities of preparedness –
ready to be transformed
ready to accept your truth,
ready to witness to your love.
We pray in the name of Jesus,
your Beloved One and our Saviour. Amen

Opening Hymn: “God, We Praise You for the Morning” VU 415

Prayer for Reflection and Revelation: “A Right Relationship” by Kathy Galloway

- One: Here's a man,
tramping the dusty roads of his country,
drawing inspiration from the land,
loving its fruitfulness,
sailing its waters,
stilling its storms.
- Two: We thank you for our lands and geography,
and for the people,
some of them nomadic as he was,
who are also moved by their love
to struggle for a right relationship between land and people.
- One: Here's a man,
born to a mother who broke the rules and said, 'yes',
parented by a man who was not his father,
knowing his ancient lineage
yet calling people to be born again into a new community.
- Two: We thank you for our families and history,
and for the people,
some of them single parents,

who bear love back into the world
and struggle for a right relationship between persons.

One: Here's a man,
throwing up a steady job to follow his calling,
keeping bad company, often sleeping rough,
touching people who were considered untouchable,
raising up those who were overlooked.

Two: We thank you for all who have trusted us, believed in us and valued us,
and for the people, homeless, jobless, unappreciated, some of them,
who will not let their dreams or spirits die,
and who struggle for a right relationship within communities.

One: Here's a man,
refusing to be less than free,
refusing to be less than utterly committed,
refusing to bow down and serve the empires of the world.

Two: We thank you for all whose faith and courage has kept alive for us
the vision of God's Kingdom,
and for the people, mocked and persecuted some of them,
who struggle for a right relationship among the nations.

One: Young man Jesus,
in tenderness, justice and joy,
in forgiving and healing,
you lived the promise of a new relationship with God,
you died making it real,
and as the new branches spring from the deepest roots
when the tree is cut down,
your life, grounded in God, could not be destroyed.

Two: In joy and sorrow,
in failure and accomplishment,
bring us into right relationship with the God of love and life.

Musical response: "O God, We Call" VU 411

Scripture Readings:

Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-16 *The Inclusive Bible*

Luke 12:32-40 *The Inclusive Bible*

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks be to God.

Musical Reflection: *Coro from "Water Music"* (Handel)

Reflection: Visible from the invisible

Hymn: "In the Bulb There is A Flower" VU 703

Invitation to the Offering

Offering of Music: "You Say"

Hymn of Dedication: "Know That God Is Good" MV 104

Offering Prayer (*together*)

**All: Generous God, our gifts represent our readiness
to share your love with the whole of creation.**

**May what we offer be transformed -
may hope grow, may justice thrive,
may what we give be blessed. Amen**

Prayers of the People

Creating and Loving God, we bring our thanks to you today,
our gratitude for all that brings us joy and wonder,
all that gives us hope and inspiration.

We thank you for microscopic creatures like bacteria that help to keep us healthy
and for giant ones like the blue whale that are part of the web of creation.
We thank you for smooth sand and green grass that cushions our feet,
we thank you for rocky stream beds and mountain trails that challenge us.

We are grateful for all that science has revealed to us of your creation,
and grateful for those who make it their life's work to help us to discover
new marvels in the world – and the universe.

We thank you, God, for those people who surround us and support us –
our families, our friends, our companions and those for whom we care.
We are grateful to share worship with our Westminster and Applewood faith families,
we are thankful for all those who help to make worship happen here.

We remember, Holy One, those who are facing challenges today –
we pray for those who are ill in body, mind or spirit,
we pray for any who are waiting for tests or procedures or results,
we pray for those who are lonely or afraid.

We pray for those who are closest to us, those whose names we carry on our hearts,
and those for whom we worry

We pray, God, that you will reveal yourself to us in ways that inspire us to action
and contemplation, to serve you and to serve others, in Jesus' name we pray.

The Lord's Prayer (*sung*) VU 960

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Closing Hymn: "Bless Now, O God, the Journey" VU 633

Commissioning/Benediction

Sung Amen VU 967

Music for Scattering

Reflection: Visible from the invisible

Prayer: May all that we hear, all that we imagine, all that we contemplate bring us closer to understanding your way for us, God. Amen

In our epistle this morning, the author of Hebrews writes, “By faith, we understand that the world was created by the word from God, and that what is visible came into being through the invisible.”

This one sentence really grabbed my attention, because I have always been fascinated by what we consider being invisible to our human eyes becoming visible to us. I remember being awestruck by the first images from electron microscope that I encountered - a thistle mite that is usually almost invisible to the naked eye can be seen with great detail, resembling some monster only a nightmare might produce. The surface of the human skin magnified to look like an alien landscape. The invisible becoming spectacularly visible through God’s gift of science.

Our universe has also been revealed to us – tiny specks of light and colour in the sky becoming detailed nebulas, images of spiral galaxies and colourful galactic phenomenon through powerful lenses like the James Webb Space Telescope. The invisible has become visible to us.

Of course, the writer of Hebrews had no knowledge or experience of these marvels – but is referring to the creation of all things by God, an act that brought into our vision the world around us, and consequently our faith and belief in what cannot be seen at all.

The world that God created has many examples of the invisible becoming the visible – plants growing from seeds buried in the earth, new life growing in the dark and hidden warmth of a mother’s womb, unseeable water vapour becoming visible rain or snow. Even the return of the sun each morning is a reminder that God’s plan is for the hidden to be constantly revealed.

God does see, our faith tradition tells us. So, what do we imagine can God see that we can’t? Each individual grain of sand on every shoreline, every hair on our heads, every feather on every bird, into every cell in our bodies. Into our very souls, perhaps. Even when science helps us to see what we had previously thought unseeable, God will always see more than we can imagine.

Yet there are times when we find it difficult to trust in our unseen God, to have that faith that what we cannot yet see will be exposed. When the future seems uncertain and indiscernible because of challenges in our lives, when injustice seems to be entrenched and true justice only a dream, when those with power serve only those with whom they want to give power and the vulnerable seem hidden from their view, it can be hard to have faith. Even when we trust the out-of-sight computers in our cars, we trust intangible Wi-Fi connections and the internet, we sometimes forget to trust God. In our quest to know everything, see everything, God may seem too hidden, too undetectable.

But God is not like a message written in invisible ink – revealed to us using some trick that we can manipulate. God, as Jesus reminds us in this passage from Luke's gospel, is always ready to reveal Godself to us, in an instant, when we least expect it, when we are ready and when we aren't ready. We become ready, in part, by our own actions of turning the invisible into the visible:

Compassion is not visible, but when practised those on the margins are seen and heard.

Justice as a concept is not visible, but when put into practice empty bellies are filled with good food, the imprisoned become the freed.

Prayer is not a visible act, but can become visible when our hearts are tuned to the needs of others, and we act on those needs providing care and comfort to one another.

Who knows what will be revealed to us tomorrow – or in any moment - If we stay ready, if we stay open to the possibilities of encountering the visible from the invisible, if we continue in the path of following Jesus. Perhaps we will find new insight into the compassion that comes from the unseeable grace of God, perhaps we will find renewed energy to live out the justice seeking that can grow from the invisible seeds of God's love growing in our own hearts.

Perhaps God's kin-dom will be revealed to us all. May it be so. Amen