

## Worship for August 15, 2021

### Opening responses:

Peace on each one who comes in need,  
PEACE ON EACH ONE WHO COMES IN JOY.  
Peace on each one who offers prayers,  
PEACE ON EACH ONE WHO OFFERS SONG.  
Peace of the Maker, Peace of the Son,  
PEACE OF THE SPIRIT, THE TRIUNE ONE.

### Collect:

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and sent into our hearts  
the Spirit of your Son. Give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,  
that all people may know the glorious liberty of the children of God;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God now and forever. Amen

### Prayer:

O God, for your love for us, warm and brooding,  
which has brought us to birth and opened our eyes  
to the wonder and beauty of creation,

WE GIVE YOU THANKS.  
For your love for us, wild and freeing,  
which has awakened us to the energy of creation:  
to the sap that flows,  
the blood that pulses,  
the heart that sings.

WE GIVE YOU THANKS.  
For your love for us, compassionate and patient,  
which has carried us through our pain,  
wept beside us in our sin,  
and waited with us in our confusion.

WE GIVE YOU THANKS.  
For your love for us, strong and challenging,  
which has called us to risk for you,  
asked for the best in us,  
and shown us how to serve.

WE GIVE YOU THANKS.  
O God we come to celebrate  
that your Holy Spirit is present deep within us,  
and at the heart of all life.

Forgive us when we forget your gift of love  
made known to us in Jesus,  
and draw us into your presence. Amen

**Word of God:**

**1 Kings 2:10-12; 3:3-14**

2:10 Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David.

2:11 The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years; he reigned seven years in Hebron, and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

2:12 So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established.

3:3 Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David; only, he sacrificed and offered incense at the high places.

3:4 The king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the principal high place; Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar.

3:5 At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you."

3:6 And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today.

3:7 And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

3:8 And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted.

3:9 Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?"

3:10 It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this.

3:11 God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right,

3:12 I now do according to your word. Indeed I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.

3:13 I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you.

3:14 If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life."

### **Psalm 111**

111:1 Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

111:2 Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.

111:3 Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

111:4 He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful.

111:5 He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

111:6 He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

111:7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

111:8 They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

111:9 He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.

111:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

### **Ephesians 5:15-20**

5:15 Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise,

5:16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

5:17 So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

5:18 Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,

5:19 as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

5:20 giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **John 6:51-58**

6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

6:52 The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

6:53 So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

6:54 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day;

6:55 for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.

6:56 Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.

6:57 Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me.

6:58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever."

### **Sermon:**

#### **Kintsugi**

I am beginning this reflection with the Japanese word, Kintsugi; which means golden scar. It is a Japanese art form that fills the cracks of broken objects with gold. (I owe this awareness to Gail Bowen whose new mystery was just delivered to me). Our scripture today points to the brokenness of all humanity and how God offers healing for our scars, as individuals and communities. God is always prepared to offer us gifts that even in the midst of our weakness and brokenness, there is a pathway to redemption, healing and hope. I like to think that the Potter God fills our cracks with gold. No one is ever thrown away in the eyes of God.

As is always true, the figures in scripture are complicated and struggle to be faithful to God within their own human weakness. It is not easy for Solomon to continue in the shadow of his father David. In this passage we can see Solomon already falling short in his position as King. Solomon makes a seemingly impressive speech to God about wanting to follow in his father's footsteps. In reality it comes across as a less than spectacular or honorable desire. Every generation takes the gifts of the past and carries them into the future with hopefully new insights. God chooses to offer Solomon wisdom and the ability to discern what is righteous. His future will not be a copy of what David did, even though Solomon thought that's what God would want. Instead he is challenged to turn his back on kingly power and

wealth to have a wise and discerning mind and heart. Not what Solomon expected, and we too need to hear and discern the unexpectedness of God.

The thankfulness of the Psalm is a recognition that God is always gracious and compassionate no matter where our lives take us. The works of God are righteous and just and that is the heritage we carry into eternity. And as with Solomon the gifts God offers through faithfulness are the beginning of wisdom. Somehow the cracks in our souls and bodies are filled with the gold of God's abiding presence. So instead of clinging to power and wealth, people and nations need to discern what is wise and just for more than ourselves. Reconciliation and healing begins with stepping back from power and privilege to embrace the compassion that can bind together the broken hearted. The gold we ought to seek is the gold that binds neighbour to neighbour.

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul places wisdom at the centre of a faithful life. Never underestimate God acting through seemingly broken situations and people. My cousin in England had a devastating stroke that robbed her of speech and even the ability to swallow. Our family thought it would have been better if she had died because she wouldn't have wanted to live like that. I shared power of attorney and went to England to spend some of my sabbatical with her in the nursing home. I had the privilege of visiting with her every day for three weeks and I discovered a miracle that could only be God given. My cousin was not a big smiler in her former life and had very high standards for herself and others. In the Nursing Home she smiled all the time and the staff loved her. She was a key member of the community, though she never said a word. I am not certain if she knew who I was but she enjoyed me reading Harry Potter and singing hymns. My cousin had been a gifted pianist and as I sang she played an imaginary piano with her fingers and mouthed the words of the hymns that I was singing. Paul speaks about singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. Millicent's life did not end with her stroke; she carried on a new mission. God filled the brokenness and cracks of her mind and body with purpose and the enrichment of others. And anyone who has sat at a deathbed knows that songs, psalms and prayer are always recognized by a loved one seemingly already gone.

I cannot imagine saying to anyone that eating flesh and drinking blood would be the way to healing and new life. It is not so confusing now that we have experienced Eucharist; the breaking of bread and sharing of wine. The people in the Gospel of John were definitely confused. Jesus perseveres in making the point that God within us is a real and living reality. God is not an other worldly, spiritual presence; but rather a real presence within all humanity. So much of Christian faith focuses on our own ability to understand and accept God through Jesus Christ. John's Gospel is saying something quite different and we need to have the wisdom to understand. God abides in everyone irrespective of conscious choice. God is always the gift that binds brokenness with the finest gold. The bread is always broken before we receive it inside our bodies. Jesus' body was broken for the total salvation of all people, of all the world. Some mysteries are not fully known to us and maybe we too are confused about God's real presence in our lives. As we see through a mirror dimly, let us pray for wisdom, compassion and justice and know that our wounds are bound together by a loving and gracious God.

Thanks be to God, Amen!

**Prayer:**

We bring to God  
someone whom we have met or remembered today  
and for whom we want to pray;

- For those facing the challenges of chronic illness
- For those celebrating birthdays: Barbara Russell on the 16th and Rev. Helena on the 19th.
- For those celebrating Anniversaries: Cheryl and Patrick McCoy on August 21st.

We bring to God,  
someone who is hurting and needs our prayer

- For Pat Zatylny, diagnosed with stage four cancer and for her family in Saskatchewan
- Those who continue to mourn the death of a spouse
- Those who are living through instability and facing challenges

We bring to God  
a troubled situation in our world

- Victims of Residential Schools and actions of reconciliation and healing
- The Hungry and Homeless and actions for a living income and secure housing
- For the continuing challenges presented by Covid 19 and the Variants

We bring to God,  
someone whom we find hard to forgive or trust

We bring ourselves to God,  
that we might grow in generosity of spirit,  
clarity of mind,  
and the warmth of affection.

**Closing responses:**

O Trinity of Love,  
You have been with us at the world's beginning,  
BE WITH US TILL THE WORLD'S END.

You have been with us at our life's shaping,  
BE WITH US AT OUR LIFE'S END.

You have been with us at the sun's rising,  
BE WITH US TILL THE DAY'S END.

AMEN.

**Blessing:**

This is the day that God has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

We will not offer to God offerings that cost us nothing.

Go in peace to love and to serve; we will seek peace and pursue it.

In the name of the Trinity of Love,

God in Community, Holy and one.

Amen