

## Worship for August 1, 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, your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry  
with the bread of his life and the word of his kingdom.  
Renew your people with your heavenly grace,  
and in all our weakness sustain us by your true and living bread,  
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

## **The Word of God:**

### **2 Samuel 11:26 - 12:13a**

11:26 When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him.

11:27 When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD,

12:1 and the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor.

12:2 The rich man had very many flocks and herds;

12:3 but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meager fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him.

12:4 Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him."

12:5 Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die;

12:6 he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

12:7 Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul;

12:8 I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more.

12:9 Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.

12:10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

12:11 Thus says the LORD: I will raise up trouble against you from within your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this very sun.

12:12 For you did it secretly; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

12:13a David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

### **Psalm 51:1-12**

51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

51:3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

51:4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass judgment.

51:5 Indeed, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me.

51:6 You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

51:7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

51:8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

51:9 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

51:11 Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

51:12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit.

### **Ephesians 4:1-16**

4:1 I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,

4:2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

4:3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling,

4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism,

4:6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

4:7 But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift.

4:8 Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people."

4:9 (When it says, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth?

4:10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)

4:11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,

4:12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

4:13 until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

4:14 We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming.

4:15 But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

4:16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

### **John 6:24-35**

6:24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.

6:25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?"

6:26 Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

6:27 Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal."

6:28 Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?"

6:29 Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

6:30 So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?"

6:31 Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

6:32 Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

6:33 For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

6:34 They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."

6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

### **Sermon:**

I spoke to someone recently about their faith journey. As part of that discernment, she attended theological college. Her description of the impact of that experience totally resonated with my own. Suddenly we found ourselves opening up and maturing in our faith through our studies. I remember thinking that if I was never ordained it would be alright; the real gift was learning and deepening in faith and understanding. All our readings today are reminding us that we do not arrive at believing; we are expected to grow and mature and that is a lifelong mission. If we stop at what we learned in Sunday School then we are missing out on God using our pathways to help us grow up and share our God given gifts for a needy world.

David had already come a long way in serving God and the Hebrew people. In some ways, he might have felt that he had arrived when he became King. David took his privilege and put his needs above others. What resulted was the death of a man at his order. He might have justified his actions by thinking he was protecting Bethsheba, but ultimately he was being unfaithful to God. David did take responsibility for his actions. He did not make excuses or offer deflections, which is a mature way to take accountability. Maturing can be painful and it is important for us to persevere and grow through all our questioning and tough roads ahead.

Racism exists because there is a belief in privilege and entitlement. David's entitlement caused the death of someone. Privilege of wealth and power can become a weapon if we do not mature in our faith and understanding. I grew up very poor in a rural community. I had to fight hard to be educated. With my education, I realized that I had privilege even if I wasn't wealthy. As a person of privilege, I need to learn how to get out of the way of those without those opportunities. I participated in a forum about community development and faith groups. A woman from New Brunswick shared a mapping of toxic sites as communities developed. History shows that toxic sites were always placed near an Indigenous or a Black community. Knowing that is important for future planning. We need to learn or we cannot make full use of our God given gifts and contribute to a faithful future.

It is not easy sometimes to look in a mirror and see Residential Schools, Racism, and a history of first world greed. As the Psalmist proclaims; that my transgression is ever before me. As I said earlier, faith does not guarantee a journey without pain or challenges. What the Psalm assures us is God looks deep within us and finds the truth that will give us life. We can be mature in our faith by not looking away from guilt. God can make our hearts clean within us if we have courage to face guilt and fear. The Body of Christ will always survive any future although some institutions of the Church may not. St. George's Church knows very well that God-given joy comes not from the building but rather in the engagement of the community around it.

Paul tells the Ephesians that the way forward is in patience, humility and love. God has given us varied gifts and there is an expectation that we will grow in greater and greater faith maturity. The journey of deepening faith is not paved with privilege, wealth and power. Money and position are not wrong, but our hearts need to be persuaded to grow through other values. Our journey is life long and we ought always be available to grow in understanding and faithfulness. God does not need us to be right living but we need God to be just and holy in our actions towards others. There is One Body and One God.

The only Body that is truly broken at the altar is the Body of Christ. True Bread gives life. The people in the Gospel of John were distracted by the food that filled their bellies. We seek God to fill something much deeper in ourselves. Because we might arrive at privilege, wealth or any place of perceived security, the Gospel begs us to look beyond and grow into the fullness that God seeks for all God's children. You might not think highly of your own gifts in this moment of time but all our gifts are needed for the wholeness of the Body. Dear people of God, keep growing, keep learning, keep questioning faith, keep using what you have been given for others and through humility and love discover your Faith alive with God.

What does the Lord require of you-to love kindness, to seek justice  
and to walk humbly with your 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 Cheryl McCoy and her family at the death of her sister, Vivian
- Those who continue to mourn the death of a spouse
- Those who are living through instability and facing challenges
- For those celebrating birthdays: Sandra McCurdy, Clare Phillips, Carol Bagshaw, Verna Templer, Janina Lis and Ellie Stittle
- For those celebrating Weddings: Tara Raymond and Justin Kelly on August 7

We bring to God,  
someone who is hurting and needs our prayer  
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
- The people of Barrie, devastated by a tornado and actions of compassion and support
- 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