

PRIDE SUNDAY

COMMUNITY WELCOME

- Tawow, Bienvenue, Welcome to this time of worship. While we continue to join remotely in our individual or family places of social isolation and physical distancing, please be mindful that in this moment we are joining in a spiritual way with the entire community of St. Albert United Church and others who are also participating in this same worship opportunity from their homes and places of safe physical distancing.

- Items to gather together before beginning:

➤ **Bread and beverage for communion**

➤ ***A Voices United* and a *More Voices* hymn book if you have them**

- As you and/or your family move through the service, I invite you to read aloud the words of the prayers, readings, etc. Even if you are alone, speaking the words aloud can help internalize and deepen the worship experience. If there are other loved ones gathered with you, I invite you to share the leader parts with all who are comfortable with and able to read.

- In addition, at points in the service below there will be links to YouTube videos of an opening, the Message and celebration of Communion. There will also be links to some music/sung hymns that unfortunately are not local but are legally accessible on the internet. I have included them because we are all aware that music is such an important aspect of worshiping. When you click on these links you may have to shut down the ads that pop up first and close the link as soon as the hymn is finished before it goes to another that may or may not be appropriate.

WELCOME TO OUR VIRTUAL WORSHIP

[PRIDE SUNDAY COMMUNITY WELCOME JUNE 7](#)

This worship service is a combination of two commissioned for Affirming PIE Day 2020 by AU/SE and Affirming Connections from *enfleshed*, which has its roots in the United Methodist church in the USA and beyond. We thank them for providing a Public, Intentional, and Explicit liturgy that offers a welcome of gender and sexual-diverse people into the sacred space of community worship. Thank you to all in the wider affirming movements across northern Turtle Island/Canada for all you have and will offer in worship, and for creating safer sacred spaces.

So often people who are trans, non-binary, gender queer, queer, Two-Spirit, intersex, and many more identities are made invisible in worship. Often these friends of ours become part of a generic welcome to everyone, or are cast as being welcome “regardless” or “despite” our diversity, not because of it. This is especially true for many racialized and Indigenous LGBTQIA+ people, as well as LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit people with disabilities.

Thus as we come together virtually in worship today, we acknowledge that we do so in the traditional lands of Treaty 6 First Nations and at a significant trading community of the Metis Nation. We also affirm that all are welcome to share fully in our life and work regardless of age, race, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, belief, economic circumstance, ability or background – including specifically all Lesbian; Gay; Bi-sexual; Transgender; Queer; Questioning; Two-Spirited; Intersex and Non-Binary folk for who you are, as you are!

(The liturgy and its prayers today have been taken and adapted slightly from *Worship Service and Communion Liturgy for Affirming PIE Day* © 2020 The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution Non-commercial Share Alike

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CALL TO WORSHIP

One: All you who delight in the Sacred Strange, come and worship our non-binary Creator.

All: Thanks be to God who blesses the peculiar and rejoices in the uniqueness of every body and being.

The Holy takes on flesh in every gender and sexual orientation, every race and ability, every body size and body type.

Each embodied difference is a unique glimpse of Holy Wonder.

Blessed are those who search for God among the lives of the oppressed, the betrayed, the turned-away, and the condemned.

Blessed are those who receive with joy the gifts of God enfleshed among us.

The Sacred is with us. Let us worship and be transformed.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

PRAYER OF APPROACH (in unison)

God, when you called each of us into being, you delighted in your works. You gifted us with differences that illuminate the breadth of beauty, wisdom, and practices of love in your creation. In whatever ways we still struggle to accept and celebrate our own unique offerings, free us from narrow thinking that confines, constrains, or condemns your good work in us. Holy Wisdom, come. We long for your truth that sets the captives free. Bring us your Word that liberates. Quiet all that turns us against ourselves, one another, or any of your creatures and creations. Lead us in love that mends and restores. Amen.

HYMN: [All Are Welcome](#)

- written by Marty Haugen

(If you would like to sing along the words can be found at #1 of More Voices)

TIME FOR ALL AGES: Sometimes there are voices that say you can't be or feel or do what you know inside is right for you and who God made you to be. Sometimes you need to trust what God's voice is saying inside you and keep looking until you find the people who can help you reach all your dreams. This story is like that: [10,000 Dresses by Marcus Ewert](#)

HYMN: [You Gotta Sing When Your Spirit Says Sing](#)

SCRIPTURE READINGS - Please share the reading among those who gather physically with you.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION

As Greg Care suggests in his commentary in *The Christian Century* this week: "I see the creation stories, [the one we will read today] and the one about the garden, calling attention to divine relationality. In both stories the Creator assigns names to things. Why do that in the absence of relationship? In both stories the Creator establishes an intimate interaction between humankind and God's own self. Both stories feature a God who relishes in creation and chooses to share that creation with self-aware mortal partners: us. And remarkably, in both stories the Creator speaks of a self-referential "us," as if relationality occurs at the core the divine mystery."

Genesis 1:1-2:4a (The Scripture quotation contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and are used by permission. All rights reserved.)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

GOSPEL INTRODUCTION

The world, or “kosmos,” is the order of dominance, social hierarchy, and all the forms of control that live in and through systemic, institutional, and ideological powers. To be strange (definition of queer) is to be out of alignment with the world’s order of things. And it means being hated, because it threatens the order. Strangeness breaks open possibilities for the world of living and loving differently. LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit people have long modeled this in the world—especially for each other. However, everyone is called to be strange in some form—to deviate from complicity with the world’s order and break open new possibilities for love and life. We are all called to be strange like Jesus was strange. Likewise, we are called to be in solidarity with the strange of the world, abandoning no one to the hatred that comes with refusing to “belong” to the hierarchy or comply with its temptations or threats. Hear in our reading from John how Jesus addresses this divide that is experienced as a hate that needs to be overcome.

JOHN 15: 12-27 (The Scripture quotation contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and are used by permission. All rights reserved.)

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "Servants are not greater than their master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, "They hated me without a cause.' "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

SILENT REFLECTION: *Please take time to reflect on all we have heard.*

ANTHEM: [Canticle of the Turning - Rory Cooney](#)

(Also known as *My Soul Cries Out* in More Voices hymnbook # 120)

MESSAGE: [PRIDE SUNDAY COMMUNION SERVICE JUNE 7](#)

by Rev. Mervin Gallant

SHARING OF GIFTS

Since its beginning, the church was meant to be a place of chosen family—a community of outcasts and outlaws, dreamers, prophets, and humble disciples of Love. In the company of Divine Presence, we create belonging and nurture justice. With gratitude for the sacred labours of love in this place, let us bring our offerings to God and one another.

Thank you to all of you for the various ways in which you continue to support the ongoing ministry of St Albert United Church through sharing your gifts of time, connection, prayer, talent and resources with God's people. Please, consider continuing to support agencies and associations which have relied on your financial support prior to these changing world circumstances.

For these first two weeks of Pride month (June 7 & 14) the Affirm Team of St Albert United Church invite you to support the [CHEW Project](#) which stands for "Community Health Empowerment & Wellness". This Edmonton organization provides frontline support, resources, and education for LGBTQ2S+ youth and young adults (ages 14-29) facing barriers such as mental health, violence, poverty, homelessness, substance use, sexual health, sexual exploitation/sex work, and others. CHEW provides a safe place for youth to get basic needs, get off the street, and find hope. The CHEW Project provides support such as counselling, interventions, harm reduction, social services, cultural connections, STI testing and much more for no cost. To learn more and to donate please click this link [CHEW Project](#)

We recognize that during these difficult times, personal finances may be severely diminished. However, please consider contributing financially as

you are able to support St. Albert United Church's ministry. Expenses continue even with the suspension of services and operations. Please check the church website for ways in which you can support ministry with time, talents and resources.

<https://stalbertunited.ca/donations/>

PRAYER OF DEDICATION (in unison)

God of Justice, even as we celebrate your love for the LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit community today, we remember the church has not always done so. We acknowledge the harm that continues to be done in your name today. As we bring our offerings, we bring also a renewed commitment to interrupting prejudice and practicing solidarity. We press on together until people of every sexual orientation and gender identity of every race and ethnic background can live freely and without fear, receiving the love and support all people deserve. Thanks be to you, our guide and our help in making it so. Amen.

HYMN: [*Eat This Bread and Never Hunger*](#)

(If you would like to sing along the words can be found at #471 of Voices United.)

SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION:

[PRIDE SUNDAY COMMUNION SERVICE JUNE 7](#)

WELCOMING ALL TO THE TABLE

One: Because all of our bread has its source in one Creator, we who are many and unique in our genders, gender expressions, sexual orientations, ages, beliefs, economic circumstances and in the varied venues from which

we join this meal, are one body...

All: ... for we all partake of the bread of God.

One: In Christ, God breaks down the walls that make us strangers to ourselves and erases the virtual distance that divides us from one another.

All: We are the body of Christ.

Mervin: At this table we bear witness to our faith.

All: At this table, God brings wholeness out of brokenness, and healing to our world.

One: Let us break bread together.

GREAT THANKSGIVING PRAYER

One: The Holy One be with you.

All: And also with you.

Open your hearts to the One who is Love.

We open our hearts to you, O God.

Let us give thanks to God, our Creator.

For the One who gifts us with life, we give thanks.

We gather here, each a beloved miracle of divine creation. God has given us so much: We have each other. We have beauty, and courage, and the capacity to dream. These precious lives of ours—so short and vulnerable—are meant to be lived abundantly, rich in joy, meaning, and connection.

We know, however, that forces of evil work to suppress God's intentions for our lives. White supremacy, anti-LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit oppression, sexism, and poverty work to strip from individuals, communities, and the earth the ability to thrive.

And so, the miracle of life becomes a burden. People struggle with the will

to live. We turn on each other. We hoard resources and numb ourselves to pain and desire. We lose touch with the power of God that illuminates possibilities for collective liberation.

For this reason, we turn to the table.

At the table, we feast on reminders of God's presence with us.

We taste. We eat. We feel.

We encounter Christ among us and within us.

Here, too, we remember all who go without food, without safety, and in search of belonging. We are made alive again, both to the pain and the pleasure of the world's aches and possibilities.

The bread of life nourishes us for the work of justice.

The cup of blessings revives and restores.

We do this in likeness with those who gathered with Jesus on the night of his arrest. In community, he took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to all of them, and said:

“This is my body which is given for you. Take, eat, and remember me.”

After the supper, he did the same with the cup, saying:

“This is a symbol of the new covenant. Drink in remembrance of me.”

In remembering the life of Jesus, we remember that the suffering of one of us belongs to all of us. And that our joy, our sorrow, and our hope are

entangled together.

And so we pray, pour out your Spirit on this bread and this cup, O God. Through these gifts, renew our commitment to love and to one another. Gift us with a taste of your Kin-dom that we might work to embody it this day and always. It is in this your Spirit that we pray together this paraphrase of the Jesus prayer from New Zealand:

Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-Giver, Source of all that is and shall be. Father and Mother of us all, loving God in whom is heaven: the hallowing of your name echo through the Universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world. Your heavenly will be done by all created beings. Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth. With the bread we need for today feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trials too great to endure, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

PREPARING THE TABLE:

One: The body of Christ,

One: The lifeblood of Christ,

One: The banquet is ready.

All: the bread of life.

All: the cup of blessing.

All: Thanks be to God!

SHARING THE MEAL

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (*in unison*)

All: Holy Mystery, your gifts of grace restore us.

Assured of our worth and renewed in hope,

send us in the power of your Spirit,

to proclaim the good news that binds the broken-hearted,

frees the oppressed, and rids the world of evil's lies that demean and

destroy. Make it so among us, that all life may flourish as you

intended. Amen.

BLESSING AND SENDING FORTH (*in unison*)

Let us go from here to proclaim the good news:

God takes on flesh in the strange and surprising.

Love liberates from the margins.

Together, we have what we need to resist evil and oppression.

With a renewed commitment to solidarity with God and all LGBTQIA+ and

Two-Spirit people, may the Spirit lead us from this place with peace.

SENDING HYMN: [May the God of Hope Go With Us](#)

(If you would like to sing along the words can be found at #424 of Voices United.)

CHORAL BLESSING [The Lord Bless You and Keep You \(John Rutter\) - Virtual Choir by Batavia Madrigal Singers](#)

SPEAKER AFTER WORSHIP: A webinar from United-in-Learning on “Becoming a Trans Ally Accomplice”. Think of this as a program we might run after church where you grab your lunch and regather for a time of learning or if that doesn't work for you today consider it as a mid-week program like our “What Does It Mean to Love Our Neighbours: A Community Exploration” events on Wednesday evenings. The webinar is

an hour and a half long and well worth the time spent to continue our journey of growing into understanding what it means for we at St Albert United Church to be an Affirming Congregation of the United Church of Canada and a loving neighbour to the LGBTQ2SIA+ folks in community in and around us. Please consider taking some time to watch and learn from the amazing and thought provoking stories that are contained in this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlrS0L5HEnQ&feature=youtu.be>