

Sunday June 15, 2025
Trinity Sunday
Keene and Hiawatha United Churches
“Your Second Home in the heart of Keene”

PREPARE

LIFE AND WORK OF CHURCH

Talent Auction update and thanks

Service of Remembrance for Neil Allen on June 28 from 1-3 p.m. with words of remembrance at 2 p.m. at Lang Pioneer Village – Agricultural Hall of Fame building.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Yesterday the folks from Hiawatha hosted an Indigenous People’s gathering - a time of honouring culture, celebrating creation, expressing joy in community. As is the understanding, it begins with the land; every blade of grass, every creature that crawls, walks, swims, flies are part of this magnificent family. Some species have been in existence since the beginning of time. Some have evolved and adapted over the years. Some have ceased to be.

For the parts of creation that are familiar to us in our own backyards and the lands and places that are farther from our understanding, we offer thanks for the interconnectedness of our lives - our dependency on each other reminds us that we are not alone.

National Indigenous People’s Day is on June 21 and honours how Indigenous People have always lived in a spirit of relationship, knowledge, care for the land, creation and one another. Take some time on June 21 to learn more about the richness of indigenous culture and spirituality. Familiarize yourself with the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and may we all, in our own way, work and live in respectful ways to empower people to live their truth and form community that works for the reconciling of all living things. Let us open our hearts to the spirit to move within us.

INTROIT: MV 79 Spirit, Open my Heart

Refrain:

Spirit Open my heart to the joy and pain of living
as you loved may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit open my heart.

May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another.

Refrain

WELCOME

Italian author Umberto Eco (1932-2016) once wrote: "I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by the little scraps of wisdom." Happy Father's Day to all the people who are and have been fatherly figures to us - offering wisdom, companionship, care.

Today is also Trinity Sunday - a Sunday when we explore the mystery of the tri-nature of God as Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. It's not as much about understanding or explaining the Trinity as it is about honouring the value that God places on relationships; the interconnectedness of parts coming together to be one; the sharing a part of Godself with Jesus, the Spirit and all of creation. Throughout the year we have been participating in intergenerational activities as a way of getting to know one another; relate to each other in ways that identify shared common interests and/or passions.

As a welcome to one another, I invite all the odd numbered rows 1,3,5,7, 9 you get the idea - to turn around and speak to the people behind you. As a group of 3 or 4 try to identify 3 things you have in common. It might be age, where you live, hair colour - the only thing you can't use is "what church you go to" - that's too obvious. For the next few minutes learn something about the things you have in common. When you hear Barbara play music, please end your conversation and we will hear some of the commonalities that we share.

***OPENING HYMN: 226 For the beauty of the earth**

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

There are three things a candle needs in order to burn: heat is provided by the spark and initiates the chemical reaction of combustion, fuel is the material that burns, in the candle's case - the wick, and oxygen is the element in the air that feeds the flame and supports combustion. Just as there are three things that keep the flame alive, so too does the candle represent the nature of God who is the source of love, Christ who reveals God's love in the world, and the Holy Spirit that is loves power that moves among and within us.

All three things are needed for our candle to burn.

All three natures of God offer the richness of love expressed and lived in many ways.

Let us pray.

OPENING PRAYER

God, your love lights a fire of hope within us and fuels us with the desire to live with kindness and compassion in our world.

We look to the stories of Jesus who teaches us;

To share the truth of our lives;

To work for healing in our world;

To be a source of joy and hope wherever and whenever we can.

May it be your love that fuels us and your way of justice that motivates us,

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

TIME FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES -

PONDER

Invitation to the Table:

For over 100 years, members and friends of the United Church of Canada have been gathering around tables - to share the stories of life; to grieve when life ends; to ponder the words of faith; to be strengthened and nourished to go into the world, spreading Jesus' message of hope and healing.

Today we come together again to celebrate this very act of communion.

This looks like an ordinary table because it is.

This looks like an ordinary space of fellowship where we have gathered many times before.

In this familiar setting and act the food we share and the conversation we hold is blessed.

The words hold significant power and meaning and the act of our sharing them together reflects the sacredness of our meal.

Our understanding of welcome and hospitality has grown over the years as we have learned how to get to know people with differing perspectives and theologies, learned to honour different spiritual paths and continue to strive to walk in respectful relationships and ways. The table has expanded with our deeper learning; leaves added to make room for all to gather, seated one beside the other in a statement of belonging.

On the foundations of deep love, all are welcome to partake in this sacred meal.

Age, background, experience, gender - all barriers are removed, and everyone is invited/has access to the sharing of bread and cup.

COMMUNION HYMN: "As we Gather at Your Table" VU 457

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

Celebrant: God be with you.

People: and also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts

People: we lift them up to God.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to God.

People: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Let us pray:

We thank you God, for your spirit that could not be contained within the heavens and burst forth into our world, creating the waters, the plants, the animals we know

and offering humanity life.

We thank you for the gift of the prophets -ones to whom you give words to speak, revealing visions of your world and messages of faithfulness to share.

We thank you for the disciples in every age, who, with courage have chosen to follow Jesus, breaking down barriers of race, religion, ethnicity - overturning anything that separates us one from another.

As we gather around this table, we continue the age-old tradition that connects us to Christians around the world. We also think of all the people with whom we have broken bread and raised the cup. Their images come to mind; their life stories touch our hearts; their love continues to fill us.

Sung Response: MV 203

O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes and bears your name always!

WORDS OF REMEMBRANCE:

Our hearts and minds move to the many people and places in our world where there is instability, chaos, war and grief.

In these times of uncertainty we continue to offer thanks to God for Jesus who reveals to us God's love for all creation - showing compassion by laughing, weeping and being fully present to all people. In his reaching out to others he healed the sick, shared the life of social outcasts, challenged the systems of his time- giving individuals the gift of community; offering the hurting the gift of companionship; and to the oppressed, the example of justice.

We long for people to know of the depth of God's love.
It is in remembrance of your call to serve that we proclaim the mystery of our faith, singing:

Sung Response: MV 204

Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died, and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION:

We remember how, on the night before he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to God for it, broke it and gave it to his friends saying "Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

And after they had eaten, Jesus took a cup of wine, gave thanks to God and gave it to his friends saying “Drink this all of you. This is my blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me.”

BLESSING ON THE ELEMENTS

Remembering this event, we offer our prayers to God. Let us pray:

Sanctify and bless this bread and this cup, O God.

That by our participation in this sacrament, they may be for us the bread of life and the cup of forgiveness, forever transforming us by your grace and calling us, equipping us, empowering us for service.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, the one who taught us to pray saying:

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 those who 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. And so, we sing:

Sung Response: MV 205

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and Amen!

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and Amen!

Fraction, Distribution

The body of Christ broken for you.

The blood of Christ shed for you.

These are the gifts of God for us, the people of God.

All is ready! Eat and be filled. Drink deeply of God's grace.

Distribution of the Bread and Cup

MINISTRY OF MUSIC: Remember Me - with special thanks to Astrid Manske

Partaking in the bread and cup

Jesus Christ, the bread of life. (eat the bread)

Jesus Christ, the true vine (drink from the cup)

Post Communion Prayer

Thank you for the opportunity to remember Jesus

in the ordinary things of our lives.

When we eat our daily bread,

we remember how you shared what you had with your friends,

When we drink from the fruits of our harvest,

we are reminded of how you continually bless us

with your teachings.

Thank you, Jesus for these gifts.

And the gift of the Spirit which strengthens and guides us. Amen.

—a prayer from *Parables, Prayers, and Promises: Daily Devotions on Jesus* (UCPH, 2016)

*HYMN OF ILLUMINATION: VU 376 Spirit of the Living God

INTRODUCTION TO SCRIPTURE

This is the fifth and final promise of the “Advocate” (the Spirit) in the gospel of John. It appears in what is called “the farewell discourse” when Jesus spent time with his disciples before he died. So basically these are the last words they hear from Jesus. And it is a promise yet to be fulfilled.

Just to give you some context, chapters 1-12 in John cover a time span of 3 years and chapters 14-18 cover a time span of 1 night.

Knowing this, emphasizes the importance of Jesus wanting to prepare his disciples for what is to come - his death, his resurrection, his ascension and the promise of the Holy Spirit to guide and accompany them through it all.

SCRIPTURE READING: John 16:12-15

¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

WORDS OF REFLECTION -

by Rev. Nancy Wilson

Sunday June 15, 2025

Based on John 16:12-15

Too much to take in! There have been different moments in my life, and maybe yours, when the space in my mind and heart are maxed out and any more information, details, cannot be absorbed in my mind; any more news of devastation or tragedy or disappointment is overwhelming and consuming every space in my heart.

In this passage it is comforting to hear that Jesus understands the limitations of human capacity to take in too much all at once. He specifically says to his disciples, I still have so much to share with you, so much to teach you but I know you can't bear it all at once. So, even when I am gone, I will send you the Spirit of truth who, when the time is right, will share with you what you need to know and how to respond in keeping with my teachings and ways.

What a powerful gift, this gift of the Spirit that is a mystery and at the same time an accompanier and companion to those who follow in the ways of Jesus. Companion means ‘with bread’; to

join together sharing bread - reflecting the way the spirit feeds us as we unite around our tables, connecting us to the people of the past who have gone before us as well as those who currently sit beside us. We are invited to discern the movement of the Spirit, to see her whereabouts in our daily activities and to follow in a way that is in step with her fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:22-23.

This is Jesus' parting gift to those with whom he walked this earth, in the Spirit's act of 'glorifying Jesus', she is making God's presence visible and inviting people into different ways of knowing who God is and what God wants for us in the world. God yearns to be known by us and to know us - beloved children of the faith.

Times can seem bleak with global uncertainty producing fear, anxiety, tension, conflict, war. Climate change, conflicts around the world create costly side effects to the economy - rising costs; people who are barely squeaking by now have the struggle of managing debt. The lands are scarred by effects of war and climate change - forever marked by humanity's greed and desire to consume.

It can seem too much for us to take in!

At the table of shared meals and communion, Jesus says take "bite size" bites. We don't eat the whole loaf of bread in communion or drink the whole jug of juice, we have a little at a time to nourish us and sustain us. And even that little bit reminds us that Jesus is with us and his love and healing is shared with the world by what we do. It is a little taste that has 'big meaning'.

When we look at the 'bigness' or overwhelming nature of world events and how quickly things are changing, let us remember the power of small bits and bites. Look for small glimpses of hope, small lights that flicker, short times of joy and devour these moments. Look for more - trusting that it is in such small acts of kindness, love, joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, patience, faithfulness and self-control that we share the spirit of God with others in the world. Small bits and bites frequently consumed are what gives us sustenance and builds spiritual resilience in this world where human activity and choices overwhelm us.

More is not always better.

Abundance can be found in small bits and bites. A piece of bread; a story of Jesus; an experience of movement of God's spirit; a visible sign of knowing God and being known by God.

These are the morsels of hope that we cling to in an unstable world.

These are the crumbs of faith that, like a mustard seed, give us the nourishment to continue to speak the truth, work for justice and share love in our world.

The small pieces of bread remind us of the 'companion', the Spirit that Jesus promised would come to his disciples to accompany them and us throughout our lives.

Go forth seeking the spirit and following her way of truth, peace, kindness and love in your life.

This is how we come to know and glorify God. Thanks be to God, Amen.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

For many, this is a second home in the heart of Keene.

The OSM Food Cupboard that is hosted here is a necessity in our community and would not be in existence without the space, leadership, volunteers and generosity of people in this community of faith. The numbers of families being served is increasing as people face economic uncertainty. So, the Food Cupboard and the folks we serve are grateful to the church for our ongoing support. Other regularly scheduled activities take place in the Hall - Pickleball, Choir practice and some are taking a break for the summer.

This building is well used, well maintained and cared for and reflects God's desire for people to come together in ways that feed our spirituals, exercise our minds and bodies and create the space for people to share and journey with one another.

Thank you for your contribution to this ministry - we are truly blessed.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bless these gifts O God and bless the giver.

May they be used to in the spirit of truth, in keeping with the teachings of Jesus to make God's presence known in our lives and communities. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

*** OFFERTORY: Holy, holy, holy VU 315 vs 4**

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty!

All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea,

holy, holy, holy, Merciful and mighty,

God in three persons, blessed trinity.

***CLOSING HYMN: Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah VU 651**

COMMISSIONING:

Our prayers need to be more than just words.

Our prayers need to be actions.

So remember: Christ has no body now except yours.

No hands, no feet on earth except yours.

You are his body.

So. Let's go, church!

However we can learn, let's learn.

However we can heal, let's heal.

However we can be hope, let's be hope.

Let's go and be the church!

BENEDICTION- based on Romans 5:1-11

As we clear the table after a delicious meal,

We move from this space knowing that we have peace with God through Jesus.

In Jesus we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand;
and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

Hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Receive this blessing of peace, grace and hope and carry it with you as you go throughout your days.

***CHORAL COMMISSIONING: We Shall Go out with Hope of Resurrection VU 586**

Vs 1

We shall go out with hope of resurrection, we shall go out, from strength to strength go on;
We shall go out and tell our stories boldly,

Tales of a love that will not let us go.

We'll sing our songs of wrongs that can be righted;

We'll dream our dreams of hurts that can be healed,

We'll weave a cloth of all the world united within the vision of new life in Christ.