



March 14, 2021

Welcome & Announcements ~ Sue Stratulate & Joyce Wickstrom

Candle Lighting & Lenten Liturgy

The cross stands before us as a beacon of promise and everlasting grace.

We are drawn to this symbol of eternal life.

The horizontal bar reaches out, embracing us with compassion.

The vertical bar points upward as a sign of awe and downward to the ground of our being.

Week 4: We place a snake onto the cross as a symbol of power, strength, and redemption.

Written by Laura Turnbull, Penticton, B.C. Reprinted, with permission, from page 69 of *gathering* L/E 2021.

Call to Worship

Come into this virtual space, gathered as a cloud of witnesses.

We come, from our living rooms, from our home offices, from our phones, from our tablets, from our computers.

Come and gather in spirit and in truth.

We come in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, discovering new ways to worship as one, leaning into the Spirit's guidance as we share the good news.

Across this community and within our family of faith, let us pray as one:

Written by Gord Dunbar, Kincardine P.C, Kindardine, Ont. Reprinted, with permission, from page 29 of *gathering* L/E 2021.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, we've never done it this way before. We feel at sea, unstable -- with our footing insecure. In our uncertainty, we come to commune with you, Risen Christ. We pray for your strength, for your humility, for your insight, for your caring. May you heal what divides us so that our hearts may be united.

Loving God, you are our companion on this challenging pandemic journey, and we will trust you.

As we search for a new routine, a fresh daily way, you calm us.

You are our companion and we will trust you.

As we keep in steady contact with family members and friends, you reassure us.

You are our companion and we will trust you.

As we are present to those who are anxious, lonely, and frail, you support us.

You are our companion and we will trust you.

**As we find strength in a faith community changed but inspired,
you rejoice with us.**

Amen.

Prayers written by Gord Dunbar and David Sparks, Summerland, B.C. Reprinted, with permission, from pages 29-30 of *gathering* L/E 2021.

Congregational Theme/Story Time

Hymn: *Jesus Loves Me* #365 VU

Words (v 1) by Anna Bartlett Warner & Music: William Batchelder Bradbury, 1862 Are in the Public Domain. Words (v 2 & 3) by © Cherie McGuire, and used with the permission of OneLicence.net Annual Renewal A-605521. Video Version ~ recorded at Strathroy United Church, Andy Cloutier, organist, <https://youtu.be/Ny3fTI1cLe0>

Responsive Reading ~ Psalm 107 (Part 1 & 2 page 831 Voices United)

O give thanks, for God is gracious,

God's steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of God say so, those redeemed from trouble,

whom God gathered in from the lands,

from the East and the West,

from the north and the south

Some lost their way in desert wastes, finding no place to settle;

hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to you, God, in their trouble,

you rescued them from their distress.

You led them by a straight path, till they reached a place to settle.

Let them thank you, O God, for your steadfast love,

for the wonders you do for us.

For you satisfy the thirsty and fill the hungry with good things.

Some suffered because of their sinful ways,

afflicted on account of their wrongdoing.

They loved every kind of food;

they came close to the gates of death.

Then they cried to you, God, in their trouble.

You rescued them from their distress.

You gave the word and healed them; you save them from the grave. Let them

thank you, God, for your steadfast love,

for the wonders you do for us.

Let them offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving,

and tell of your deeds with shouts of joy.

Visual Meditation on our Sacred Story ~ John 3:14-21

A Video created and shared by Fairfield United Church <https://youtu.be/MiVp-sN6A1w?list=PL3ToKXMN1GJ-3HfoVdTmbJizHCbbozGB->

Message ~ Sue Stratulate, RN

Nutrition

Understanding

Rest

Spirituality or self care

Exercise

Hymn ~ *Love Knocks and Waits* #94 More Voices

Words and music: Daniel Charles Damon, 1994 Words copyright © 1996 and music copyright © 1998 Hope Publishing Company. Used with permission of OneLicence.net Annual Renewal A-605521.

Recording from the composer: <https://youtu.be/RqkeawwI4rQ>

Love knocks and waits for us to hear, to open and invite;
Love longs to quiet every fear, and seeks to set things right.

Love offers life, in spite of foes who threatened and condemn;
embracing enemies, Love goes the second mile with them.

Love comes to heal the broken heart, to ease the troubled mind;
without a word Love bids us start to ask and seek and find.

Love knocks and enters at the sound of welcome from within;
Love sings and dances all around, and feels new life begin.

Prayers of Confession

O Holy One, in this time of global illness, we find ourselves wondering how we shall cope, wondering if we shall have enough resources, wondering if we are being careful enough to keep our loved ones safe. Instead of reaching out to you, O Lord, we find ourselves trapped, smothered by our anxieties and fears about the days and nights ahead.

We close our hearts to you, too busy to pray, too fearful to hear your words, even when we know that they will be words of love and reassurance; instead we focus on working more, getting more, saving more.

And so, at this moment, we must pause - to feel the miracle of our breath within us and to focus on your limitless love for all, O Lord, knowing deep in our hearts that we need not live in fear or want but should rather revel in the wonder of your creation, which provides for all unstintingly.

For this we give thanks. Amen.

Words of Assurance

May we remember this day that we are all God's beloved children. May we remember that we are held in God's loving embrace, which keeps our spirits safe. Through Jesus, God offers to us the miracle of God's limitless grace and mercy.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.

Barbara Jones, Queensland U.C., Orleans, Ont. Reprinted, with permission, from page 31 of *gathering* L/E 2021.

Invitation for Offering ~ Minute for Mission ~ We Will Not Give Up On Them ~ Wesley Urban Ministries.

Through Mission & Service, your gifts help community ministries respond to growing homelessness and poverty during the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://united-church.ca/stories/we-will-not-give-them>

Offering Prayer

They seem so little in the world is so big and so overwhelming right now, yet we offer these gifts to you, O God.

Take what we offer and bless it for your mission of love.

In a world of conflict and pandemic, may these gifts, and we ourselves, become agents of change and transformation, in Jesus' name of self-giving love.

Amen

Written by Gord Dunbar. Reprinted, with permission, from page 31 of *gathering* L/E 2021.

Prayers of the People *(written by Kate Crawford, Grand Bend, ON. Reprinted, with permission from page 73 of gathering L/E 2018)*

& The Prayer Jesus Taught, sung version, #959 VU

Recorded as sung by Emma Werboweskey, accompanied by Veronica Weber.

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Commissioning

In a world that is closed in, locked down, and distanced, be a sign of hope and love. Let your faith lead you into a life that blesses the world.

Dare to trust that God's goodness is not at a distance, but in each breath.

Go now, knowing that God goes before you and calls you to come.

Beside you is Christ, our teacher, our healer, our friend.

Surrounding you, like light, like breath, is the Spirit.

Go in peace and serve God, today and each day.

Amen.

Wendy MacLean, Christ U.C, Lyn, Ont. Reprinted, with permission, from page 32 of *gathering* L/E 2021.