



Thornbury, Ontario
Grace United Church
Bold. Nurturing. Liberal. Christian.

September 14th, 2025

Music Sunday

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Find this service at www.graceunitedthornbury.ca/live

Leading us today in Worship:

Worship Leader & Music Director Dr. Christopher Burton

Guest Musician: Kerri McGonigle - Cello

Lay Reader: Debby Weale

Leader: regular font ~ All: bold font ~ *Sung words: bold italics.*

Asterisk * Indicates when the congregation may stand if able.

We Gather Together in Community

PRELUDE:

A few hymns & "Fantasy Piece #1" - R. Schumann

GREETING: (2 Cor. 13:13)

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

WELCOME:

It is sometimes (wrongly) said that nobody dies an atheist.

A few unfounded claims circulate of famous
atheists/agnostics from Charles Darwin to Christopher
Hitchens who are said to have had conversion
experiences as they approached death. We'll never know
for sure. But it doesn't matter anyway--because faithful
Christians understand that our purpose is to be welcoming
of all, whether they believe in God or not. Today might be

a good day to reflect upon and demonstrate the welcoming ministry of our congregation.

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE:

The light of understanding, the light of compassion, the light of community are all represented by the light that shines out from this candle. Let that light illumine our lives, our worship, and our way forward, as we gather as God's people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY/DECLARATION OF SAFER SPACE:

Long before settlers discovered this land, there were people who lived here and cared for the land and water for the generations of children who would follow them; people who worshipped their creator. Grace United Church is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Six Nations of the Grand River, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat-Wyandot-Wyandotte peoples, located within the boundary of Treaty 18 region of 1818. We humbly acknowledge the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada as traditional stewards of the land on which we work and worship and are committed to working actively toward genuine restitution and reconciliation.

At Grace, we strive to make all of our spaces – including our sanctuary during worship – as safe a place as possible.

We celebrate and honour the holy truth that all people are made in the image of God and are innately entitled to dignity and respect.

Any practice, religious or otherwise, which explicitly or implicitly indicates that some people are more beloved than others, goes against our core beliefs here at Grace.

We join together in an ongoing commitment to learning how we can live out genuinely welcoming and inclusive behaviour in all ways and at all times.

CALL to WORSHIP:

The roads we travelled today to this place helped us experience a small part of God's beautiful creation. We glory in the foods that are produced in our midst:

the awesome diversity of corn and zucchini, squash and tomatoes, pumpkins and green beans.

God feeds us through the warmth of sunshine, the rain and the rich soil. We are God's creation partners who sow the seeds and keep threats to growth to a minimum.

We do our part as co-creators in our small corners.

And yet, God's creation is so much bigger than we can even imagine. The universe is filled with things we have not even seen.

We cannot understand the whole picture of creation, but we can move back from time to time to remember that we are not the only ones God has created.

Let us worship our Creator God, with praise, with love, and with hope!

OPENING PRAYER:

Heavenly Creator of us all, receive our prayers brought to you this morning. We pray for wisdom when we care for creation. Help us to make the right decisions to ensure your beautiful world is appropriately tended and nourished. We pray for the wisdom of our municipal, provincial, and federal leaders that they too will make the best decisions that will hold your creation in the highest regard and respect. We pray that, as disciples of Jesus who seek to live with respect in creation, we may be like the sun shining on a cloudless dawn, the sun that makes the grass sparkle after a rain. We ask this in Christ's name.
Amen.

***OPENING HYMN: MV #83 “Let My Spirit Always Sing”**

1. *Let my spirit always sing,
though my heart be wintering,
though the season of despair
give no sign that you are there,
God to whom my days belong,
let there always be a song.*

2. *Though my body be confined,
let your word engage my mind,
let the inner eye discern
how much more there is to learn,
see the world becoming whole
through the window of the soul.*

3. *Let your wisdom grace my years,
choose my words and chase my fears,
give me wit to welcome change,
to accept, and not estrange,
let my joy be full and deep
in the knowledge that I keep.*

4. *Let my spirit always sing,
to your Spirit answering,
through the silence, through the pain
know my hope is not in vain,
like a feather on your breath
trust your love, through life and death.*

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

As music floods our souls,
quietens our busy minds,
and softens our hearts,
we pause to remember
that we are not all that we are called to be.
We falter. We fail. We fall.

We break faith with our best selves.
 We let ourselves and others down.
 (silent prayer)

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

When we cry out to God from the hard places in our lives,
 we find Christ's hand outstretched to catch us where we
 are.

Accept the grace that meets us with mercy and
 understanding.

Be renewed in the new life of Christ in us and with us,
 today and always.

We Listen Together

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:

inspired by Psalm 19

Gracious God, you have created our blessed sun and set
 it upon its joyful, heavenly course.

As we receive your word today, help us to love and know
 you and your perfect law, as reflected in your good
 creation and in the words of scripture. Thus may the
 purified words of our mouths and the meditation of our
 hearts produce fruit worthy of you; gifts and praises as
 consistently beautiful as the daily splendour of sunrise and
 sunset.

In Christ's name, we pray, trusting in your grace.

Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

PSALM 14 and 53

Refrain: **Dear God, who loves all humankind, forgive our
 foolish ways.**

The foolish have spoken in their heart,

and said "There is no God,"
They are corrupt; they do abominable things;
there is no one who does what is good.
 God looks down from heaven upon us all,
 to see if any are wise and seek after God.
But all have gone astray; all alike are corrupted;
there is no one who does good; no, not one.

Refrain: **Dear God, who loves all humankind, forgive our
 foolish ways.**

Have they no knowledge, all those who do evil?
They devour my people like so much bread,
and do not pray to God,
 But see, they will tremble with fear,
 for God is on the side of the righteous.
Do not mock the hope of the poor,
for God is their refuge.

O that deliverance for God's people would come forth
 from Zion!

When God restores the fortunes of the people,
then shall Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad.

Refrain: **Dear God, who loves all humankind, forgive our
 foolish ways.**

***Special Music: HYMN: MV #81 "Love Us into Fullness"**

1. *Love us into fullness,
 touch us with your grace;
 Jesus, in your mercy,
 draw us to your face.*
2. *Love us into fullness,
 hold us in your care,
 cheer us with your presence
 here and everywhere.*

**3. *Love us into fullness,
and we will be strong;
Jesus, walk beside us,
fill our hearts with song.***

Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28 (New International Version)

The land shall be desolation; the earth shall mourn
At that time this people and Jerusalem will be told, "A
scorching wind from the barren heights in the desert blows
toward my people, but not to winnow or cleanse;
a wind too strong for that comes from me. Now I
pronounce my judgments against them."

"My people are fools;

they do not know me.

They are senseless children;

they have no understanding.

They are skilled in doing evil;

they know not how to do good."

I looked at the earth,

and it was formless and empty;

and at the heavens,

and their light was gone.

I looked at the mountains,

and they were quaking;

all the hills were swaying.

I looked, and there were no people;

every bird in the sky had flown away.

I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert;

all its towns lay in ruins

before the Lord, before his fierce anger.

This is what the Lord says:

"The whole land will be ruined,
though I will not destroy it completely.

Therefore the earth will mourn

and the heavens above grow dark,

because I have spoken and will not relent,
I have decided and will not turn back."

RESPONSE:

These words from scripture are meant to guide us, nurture us, and teach us.

Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM: "Blest are They" - D. Haas

SPECIAL MUSIC: "Fantasy Piece #2" - R. Schumann

***HYMN:** VU #504 "How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord"

**1 *How clear is our vocation, Lord,
 when once we heed your call:
 to live according to your word,
 and daily learn, refreshed, restored,
 that you are over all
 and will not let us fall.***

**2 *But if, forgetful, we should find
 your yoke is hard to bear,
 if worldly pressures fray the mind
 and love itself cannot unwind
 its tangled skein of care:
 our inward life repair.***

**3 *We mark your saints, how they become
 in hindrances more sure,
 whose joyful virtues put to shame
 the casual way we wear your name,
 and by our faults obscure
 your power to cleanse and cure.***

4 *In what you give us, here, to do,*

*together or alone,
in old routines and ventures new,
may we not cease to look to you,
the cross you hung upon -
all you endeavoured done.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

A Prayer for Christians who are Stuck.

By Meg Bucher

“Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all!” - Romans 12:16 NLT

What happens to us, Christians, after we have an encounter with Jesus so immense it changes the course of our eternity that we lose our sense of who He is and why He came? Paul warned the Roman church in his letter, and we would be wise to take note today not to throw people into different categories of Christianity. He was specifically referring to the way they were tempted to shut those out who they could not gain anything from. “Ordinary” people.

Division always distracts us from the main thing, and the main thing is Jesus. He was crystal clear in dictating doctrine when confronted by Pharisees and very adamant about what the greatest command is: Love God with all your heart and love your neighbor as yourself. Love God. Love people. Today, we run the risk of being written off altogether, when one group of Christians looks down upon another group of Christians. The Bible is clear about correction within the church. I believe it's important to make quick work of it and move on to the task at hand ...because reaching the far corners of the world is no small task, and it will take all of us. The

seemingly important and the not so noteworthy. The “fake” Christians ... the party crowd ... and those not like us. Don’t put it past Jesus to reach people through anyone.

Let’s pray today that we don’t get stuck categorizing Christians when there are still so many people who have yet to know who Jesus is.

Father,

We come to You today humbled and ready to remove any and all stigmas we have placed on other people.

Father, we get so caught up in healthy boundaries we start letting our pride, offensiveness, and impatience write people off our timecard. We are reminded today, Father, that You punch that timecard! Author of our days and Creator of our hearts, we surrender our lives anew to You today, God. We freely release our scheduled perimeters and trust You anew to design our days, knowing You are not a God of chaos but purpose and promise.

Thank You, Jesus, for Your sacrifice for us. Thank You for allowing us to be a part of Your plan for people. What a privilege and a joy to walk alongside others in this life.

Thank You for placing us purposefully, among other people, God. We trust who You have placed in our lives. We believe the community You set us in is where we are supposed to be.

Father, when we get impatient and are tempted to quit, renew our strength and re-fix our perspective. Let us see through Your filter of love, God.

In Jesus’ Name,
Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER: (Spoken, traditional words, VU 921)

We lift this prayer in the words that Jesus gave his disciples
to pray together, and so, together, we say:
Our Father...

We Respond to God's Word

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST: (Kerri & Chris)

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING:

People who have a lot of money and no time, we call rich. People who have a lot of time and no money, we call poor. Yet the most precious gifts of love, friendship, and compassion grow only in the sweet soil of "unproductive" or given time. We give our offering.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS:

O God, we praise you today in song.
Please take our gifts and make them into action.
We want your song to be heard by everyone.
Make our gifts resonate with your love and ours.
Bless us, God, with your Spirit. Amen

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or **Offering Plate at the back of the sanctuary.**

Tap your debit card at the door of the church, or Donate to Grace United Church Thornbury through **CanadaHelps.org**. Our account is set up with them now and it is easy to register. Tax receipts are given automatically at the time of giving.

Care, Prayer, Share

What's Up at Grace?

We Go Out to Serve

*CLOSING HYMN:

VU #422 "God Be with You till We Meet Again"

- 1 God be with you till we meet again;
 loving counsels guide, uphold you,
 with a shepherd's care enfold you;
 God be with you till we meet again.
 Till we meet, till we meet,
 till we meet at Jesus' feet;
 till we meet, till we meet,
 God be with you till we meet again.

- 2 God be with you till we meet again;
 unseen wings protecting hide you,
 daily manna still provide you;
 God be with you till we meet again.
 Till we meet, till we meet,
 till we meet at Jesus' feet;
 till we meet, till we meet,
 God be with you till we meet again.

- 3 God be with you till we meet again;
 when life's perils thick confound you,
 put unfailing arms around you;
 God be with you till we meet again.
 Till we meet, till we meet,
 till we meet at Jesus' feet;
 till we meet, till we meet,
 God be with you till we meet again.

- 4 God be with you till we meet again;
 keep love's banner floating o'er you,
 smite death's threatening wave before you;
 God be with you till we meet again.

***Till we meet, till we meet,
till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet,
God be with you till we meet again.***

***COMMISSIONING & BENEDICTION:**

Rejoice in the one true God.

We will praise God, creator and originator of our planet, our galaxy. We will worship God, who has given life to humankind. We will respond to God, at work among peoples everywhere caring for Creation. We will acknowledge God, in the days of rejoicing and the days of hard testing. We will serve God with compassion and patience. We will honour God with courage and hard questions.

Rejoice in the one true God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

***CHORAL SENDING: "GO NOW IN PEACE"**

(Arrangement by Kerri and Chris)

***Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day,
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true,
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, *within, around, above.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.
Amen, amen, amen.***

****alternate words: watching from above***

POSTLUDE: "Fantasy Piece #3" - R. Schumann

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Prelude: "Fantasy Piece #1" - R. Schumann

Anthem: "Blest Are They" - D. Haas

Postlude: "Fantasy Piece #3" - R. Schumann

