

EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH
Seventh Sunday After Pentecost
July 12, 2026

Gathering In Community

Prelude

Peace Greeting: The Sower has planted us in the fertile ground of this church. May the peace of Christ create in us budding blooms of faith and hope. We are grateful for the love that grows within this community of faith. Let us offer one another signs of Christ's peace.....

The peace of Christ be with you,

And also with you

Opening Hymn God, We Praise You for the Morning VU: 415

Territorial Acknowledgement

Mandy Bertozzi

The Land Acknowledgement we speak today is based on a tradition or protocol carried out by Indigenous communities in Canada throughout the ages. It is intended as a way for guests to show their respect for the Indigenous community that they are visiting. The acknowledgement confirms that the visitors come with peaceful intentions.

Today, we acknowledge with respect the history, spirituality and culture of the Anishinaabe Peoples, the Haudenosaunee Peoples, the Huron-Wendat Peoples, and the Mississaugas of the Credit Nation. We also acknowledge the Attawandaron and Métis Peoples. We gather for worship today on the traditional territory inhabited by these peoples throughout the ages.

The Anishinaabe Peoples include people of the Ojibwe, Odawa and Pottawatami Nations who joined together to form the Three Fires Confederacy around the year 800 AD. The Haudenosaunee Peoples are the Iroquoian peoples of the Six Nations, which includes members of the Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca and Tuscarora Nations.

As we gather for worship, we acknowledge that treaties have not been honoured, nor have First Nations peoples been treated with dignity and respect. We have much work to do to create right relationships.

Announcements

Reverend Jan

Words of Welcome

Theme Introduction

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Call to Worship

In the seed that lies unseen, resting,
cold, and still, God is----

and hope grows.

In the possibilities that await us,
unknown, unimagined, God is ---

and life grows.

In our hurt and our emptiness,
masked, buried, overlooked, God is ---

and healing grows.

In this time of worship,
singing, praying, and being,
we come to know this God who is ---

and we grow.

We gather to worship and to remember,
that even in the most barren of times,
God is at work.

**The Holy Spirit nourishes us as we grow.
Come, let us worship the Sower,
who plants us in the fields of life.**

Opening Prayer

**Great Sower, cast us like seeds
upon the winds of your mercy,
that we may grow in fertile ground.
Keep our lives from stoney pathways,
where the heat of life's cares and strife
strip our strength and vitality.
Protect us from thorny gullies,
where the snares of life's worries and fears
block the sunshine of your Spirit.
Land us safely in rich soil, Master Gardener,
and bless us with the kiss of gentle rain,
that our faith may deepen
and our joy increase.**

Amen

Hymn: When Seed Falls on Good Soil

VU: 503

Seeking to Grow Spiritually

Prayer for Illumination

Mandy Bertozzi

Let us pray:

Loving God, your Word is a lamp before our feet,
a light to open our minds,
and grace to soothe our souls.
May the Word we hear bless us and guide us
and bear fruit in our lives
and the lives of others.

Amen

Genesis 25: 19-34

These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, ²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. ²¹ Isaac prayed to the Lord for his wife because she was barren, and the Lord granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. ²² The children struggled together within her, and she said, "If it is to be this way, why do I live?" ^[a] So she went to inquire of the Lord. ²³ And the Lord said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples born of you shall be divided;
the one shall be stronger than the other;
the elder shall serve the younger."

²⁴ When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. ²⁵ The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle, so they named him Esau. ²⁶ Afterward his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel, so he was named Jacob. ^[b] Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

²⁷ When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents.

²⁸ Isaac loved Esau because he was fond of game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. ³⁰ Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!" (Therefore he was called Edom. ^[c]) ³¹ Jacob said, "First sell

me your birthright." ³² Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" ³³ Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and rose and went his way. Thus, Esau despised his birthright.

Gospel Reading

New Revised Standard Version

Matthew 13: 1-9; 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ² Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³ And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴ And as he sowed, some seeds fell on a path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵ Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. ⁶ But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. ⁸ Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹ If you have ears, [\[a\]](#) hear!"

Hear, then, the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. ²⁰ As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, ²¹ yet such a person has no root but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. [\[a\]](#) ²² As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of this [\[b\]](#) age and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³ But as for what was sown on good soil, this

is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

**May God bless this reading of the Holy Word to our insight
and our understanding.**

Thanks be to God.

Amen

Gift of Music

Sam Vacca

Message

Bloom Where We Are Planted

Reverend Jan

Hymn

Soil of God, You and I

MV: 174

Responding In Care

Invitation to the Offering

Doxology

For the Gift of Creation

VU: 538

Offering Prayer

God of Growth,

**as you have sown our lives in a rich and fertile soil,
may we bear much fruit through our giving.**

**With these offerings, may your kingdom come to our world,
as we plant seeds of hope in the fields of life.**

**Bless these gifts and our ministry,
that our world may reap a harvest
of generosity and love.**

Amen

Pastoral Prayers

Lord's Prayer

**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

Reaching Out In Love

Closing Hymn

Sent Forth by God's Blessing

VU: 481

Commissioning

Extinguishing the Christ Candle

Benediction

Three-fold Amen

Postlude

Worship Resources: *Gathering Magazine Lent/Easter, 2026 Year A* (page 15 ,37-51); *Abingdon Worship Annual 2026* (pages 148-151); *Feasting On the Word: Preaching the Revised Common Lectionary, Year A, Volume 3* (pages 236-241); *Texts For Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV – Year A* (pages 397-405). Used with Permission.

EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM STATEMENT

We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity in age, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation, and family configurations fully participating in all aspects of the life and work at East Plains United Church. We commit to continuing education to promote understanding and create a safe environment for all.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LOST & FOUND—If you have misplaced anything such as the pair of reading glasses left in the sanctuary recently, please call the office at 905-634-5562, ext. 21, to leave a message.

Jan's Journal



As we gather for worship on the second Sunday in July, we will continue our exploration of discipleship. In the midst of the 2026 growing season, we will explore the Parable of the Sower. Where do we find “good soil” in which to plant ourselves and our seeds of faith?

A reminder that Barb is now working “**Summer hours**” in the office, which means that the church office is open on **Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Instead of being away on vacation in August, (which was the plan!) I will now be recuperating in August. I am scheduled to have a left hip replacement on August 6th. I am very grateful that I am able to have this surgery done so quickly.

The Horseshoe Falls Regional Council Annual Spring meeting was held on June 26, 27, and 28, 2026 in London Ontario. The meeting was held in partnership with Antler River Watershed Regional Council. East Plains’ Regional Representatives,

Callie Archer and Gail Lorimer attended the meeting in person. I attended on Zoom. Each of us attended different workshops on Friday evening. You will hear more about the meeting content, speakers, and what we learned in the coming days. The Regional Councils are encouraging communities of faith to consider becoming an “**Apartheid-Free Community of Faith.**” This is proposed by the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel (UNJPPI), which is the same organization that has offered webinars and educational lectures which I have attended in the past.

Here is the Apartheid-Free Pledge:

We Affirm ---- our commitment to freedom, justice and equality for the Palestinian people and all people.

We Oppose--- all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression.

We Declare--- ourselves an Apartheid-Free Community and to that end...

We Pledge--- to join others in working to end all support to Israel's Apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

Is this something that the congregation of East Plains would wish to pursue? If so, we would need to have the approval of the Official Board. Please consider this prayerfully. For more information, visit the UNJPPI website.

When I visited Israel in 2020, we spent time at the Sabeel Centre, which is a Palestinian Christian organization in East Jerusalem. Sabeel is an Ecumenical organization. We met staff and volunteers from the Anglican Church, and the Mennonite Church, when we visited.

I receive a weekly prayer request list from Sabeel. In recent weeks, the prayers have been for medical personnel who have been arrested in their homes by Israeli forces and for University students who have been arrested either in their homes or enroute to classes. It seems apparent that the Israeli

government is actively working to prevent Palestinians from pursuing their educational goals. It also seems apparent that the Israeli government is preventing Palestinian citizens from receiving medical care as medical staff are detained for no apparent reason. Both of these strategies are a violation of basic human rights.

How is God calling us to respond?

Although worship is suspended during August, the cost of running the church and maintaining the building does not change. Please consider making your regular offering donations through PAR (speak to Gayle Burnison) or by increasing your offerings in July. This would be greatly appreciated!!

If you have any questions or concerns about anything you have read here, you can reach me at: revjanmcc@gmail.com or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings,

Reverend Jan