



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

July 26th 2026

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 12

Find this service at www.graceunitedthornbury.ca/live

Leading us today in Worship:

**Worship Leader: Phyllis Fleming, Licensed Lay Worship
Leader**

Music Leader: Dr. Christopher Burton

Scripture Reader from Grace: Shirley Woolner

Scripture Reader from St. George's: Wayne Powney

Scripture Reader from St. Paul's: Judy Heffer

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 Selection of Hymns – C. Burton

A Stewardship Second:

How we spend our money reflects our spiritual priorities.

GREETING: (2 Cor. 13:13)

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

And also with you!

WELCOME:

LIGHTING the CHRIST CANDLE:

Hot weather can drain us of energy, but the warmth of Christ's love that we feel in our inmost being can build us up. We light the Christ candle as a symbol of that wonderful love.
(the candle is lit)

Thanks be to God for this everlasting love.

SONG: "Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies" - VU 336, v. 1
(tune VU 81)

***Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true, the only
light,
sun of Righteousness, arise, triumph o'er the shades of
night.
Day-spring from on high, be near; day-star, in my heart
appear.***

OUR COMMITMENT to SAFER SPACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the LAND:

As a designated Affirming Ministry of the United Church of Canada, Grace United Church is inclusive and intentionally embraces people of all gender identities and sexual preferences. Everyone belongs here and is valued. In gratitude and respect, The United Church of Canada gathers, worships, and works on Indigenous lands across Canada.

CALL to WORSHIP:

Welcome, people of God! Welcome to this time of prayer, reflection, and song.

**We might not be ready. Do we need to set aside
everything about our day-to-day lives in order to enter
fully into worship?**

No, because God welcomes all of who we are, each one of us.

Then let us offer our whole selves – body, mind, and spirit –
to this time of worship.
Come, let us worship God!

***OPENING HYMN: VU 220 - "Praise to the Lord"**

**1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation;
O my soul, praise him, at all times your health and
salvation.**

**Come, all who hear, brothers and sisters draw near,
joining in glad adoration.**

**2 Praise to the Lord, above all things so mightily reigning,
keeping us safe at his side, and so gently sustaining.
Have you not seen, how all you needed has been
met by God's gracious ordaining?**

**3 Praise to the Lord, who will prosper our work and defend
us;
surely his goodness and mercy shall daily attend us:
ponder anew what the Almighty can do
who out of love will befriend us.**

**4 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that has life and breath come now with praises before
him!**

**Let the Amen sound from God's people again:
gladly with praise we adore him.**

OPENING PRAYER:

God of the ages,
God of the present time,
we lift our voices to praise you this day.
Jesus our teacher and guide,
Christ our redeemer,
we honour you and glorify your name.
Holy Spirit,

Great Mystery,
 we release our cares into your loving presence.
 O Holy Trinity, inspire us, teach us, and love us, we pray.
 Amen.

We Listen Together

ANTHEM: Not the Building but the People

Theme Conversation and Lighting of the Children's Lantern:

INVITATION to CONFESSION:

PRAYER of CONFESSION:

O Great Source of Love, we long to share your love with
 the world,
 but sometimes we forget that your love is for everyone,
 even for those who have wounded us.

O God, forgive us when we forget.

O Great Creator, we experience all that is around us in
 Creation and are blessed by beauty, but sometimes we
 forget to be good stewards of the earth.

O God, forgive us when we forget.

O Eternal Spirit, we want to follow the way of Jesus, but
 sometimes we forget to pay attention to your presence,
 and our words and actions may not reflect our best selves.

O God, forgive us when we forget.

In silence, we think of times that we have forgotten these
 things.

(a time of silent prayer)

Forgive us, O God. Amen.

WORDS of ASSURANCE:

Friends, God's love and mercy are for everyone, and nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. God's compassion for us never fails.

Thanks be to God!

PRAYER for ILLUMINATION:

O God, as we open your holy book filled with words written so long ago, open our minds and hearts to receive your word for us today. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Psalms 139:1-18 23-24 (Voices United page 861) – led by Shirley Woolner

Refrain: God, you have searched me, you know me through and through.

O God, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar.

You discern my path and the places I rest; you are familiar with all my ways.

Before a word is on my tongue, you know it, O God, completely. You guard me from behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

It is beyond my knowledge; It is a mystery; I cannot fathom it.

Refrain: God, you have searched me, you know me through and through.

Where can I escape from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I lie down in the grave, you are even there.

If I take wing with the dawn and alight at the sea's farthest limits,

**there also your hand will be guiding me, your powerful
hand holding me fast.**

If I say, "Let the darkness cover me and my day be turned
to night,"

**even darkness is not dark to you: the night is as bright as
the day, for darkness is as light to you.**

**Refrain: God, you have searched me, you know me
through and through.**

It was you who formed my inward parts; you fashioned
me in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully, wonderfully made.

Wondrous are your works; that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was being
fashioned in secret,

intricately woven in the mystery of clay.

**Your eyes saw my substance taking shape; in your book
my every day was recorded;**

**all my days were fashioned, even before they came to
be.**

**Refrain: God, you have searched me, you know me
through and through.**

How deep your designs are to me, O God! How great
their number!

**I try to count them but they are more than the sand. I
come to the end - I am still with you.**

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

test me and know my thoughts.

Watch closely, lest I follow a path of error

and guide me in the everlasting way.

**Refrain: God, you have searched me, you know me
through and through.**

Romans 8:26-39- read by Wayne Powney, from the New Revised Standard Version

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.

And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?

As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 – read by Judy Heffer, from the Contemporary English Version

Jesus told the people another story:

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a farmer plants a mustard seed in a field. Although it is the smallest of all seeds, it grows larger than any garden plant and becomes a tree. Birds even come and nest on its branches.

Jesus also said:

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a woman mixes a little yeast into three big batches of flour.

Finally, all the dough rises.

Afterwards, Jesus said to his disciples:

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when someone finds a treasure hidden in a field and buries it again. Such a person is happy and goes and sells everything in order to buy that field.

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a shop owner is looking for fine pearls. After finding a very valuable one, the owner goes and sells everything in order to buy that pearl.

The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a net is thrown into a lake and catches all kinds of fish. When the net is full, it is dragged to the shore, and the fishermen sit down to separate the fish. They keep the good ones, but throw the bad ones away. That's how it will be at the end of time. Angels will come and separate the evil people from the ones who have done right. Then those evil people will be thrown into a flaming furnace, where they will cry and grit their teeth in pain.

Jesus asked his disciples if they understood all these things.

They said, "Yes, we do."

So he told them, "Every student of the Scriptures who becomes a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like someone who brings out new and old treasures from the storeroom."

RESPONSE:

The word of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God!

MESSAGE:

We Respond to God's Word

***HYMN: VU 660 – "How Firm a Foundation"**

**1 How firm a foundation, you servants of God,
 is laid for your faith in his excellent word!**

**What more can be said than to you has been said,
 to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?**

**2 "Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed!
 For I am your God and will still give you aid;
 I'll strengthen and help you, and cause you to stand,
 upheld by my righteous omnipotent hand.**

**3 "When through the deep waters I call you to go,
 the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
 for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,
 and sanctify to you your deepest distress.**

**4 "When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,
 my grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply:
 the flame shall not hurt you, I only design**

your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.

**5 "The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not -- I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavour to shake,
I'll never -- no, never -- no, never forsake!"**

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE:

THE LORD'S PRAYER (Spoken, traditional words, VU 910)

And as a child turns to a loving caregiver who watches over them, we turn in prayer to you O God, who are our heavenly parent, our mother,
Our Father, who art in heaven...

INVITATION to the OFFERING:

There are many ways that we partner with God in advancing God's kingdom, by sharing our time, our talents, and our treasure in God's service. At church, we have an opportunity to donate money towards this work. There are offering boxes at the back of the sanctuary for each of the three churches (Grace United, St. George's Anglican, and St. Paul's Presbyterian), which you can use to make your offering today after the service. If you did not bring an envelope and you would like a tax receipt, there are envelopes beside the boxes and you can select which church you would like to receive your offering. Let us honour all the gifts of time, talent and treasure given this week as we pray our prayer of dedication:

PRAYER of DEDICATION for OUR OFFERINGS

O God, please accept the work of our hands, the prayers of our hearts, and the financial gifts given here today, as well as those we have given by preauthorized remittance, or online, or by E-transfer. May these all help to bring more

of your love into this world which you love so much. This
we pray in Jesus's name. Amen.

Care, Prayer, Share

WHAT'S UP AT GRACE and ST. PAUL'S and ST. GEORGE'S?

We Go Out to Serve

***HYMN:** VU 240 – *Praise, My Soul, the God of Heaven*

1 *Praise, my soul, the God of heaven; glad of heart your
carols raise;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven who, like me, should
sing God's praise?*

Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise the Maker all your days!

2 *Praise God for the grace and favour shown our
forebears in distress;
God is still the same forever, slow to chide, and swift to
bless:*

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Sing our Maker's faithfulness!

3 *Like a loving parent caring, God knows well our feeble
frame;
gladly all our burdens bearing, still to countless years the
same.*

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! All within me, praise God's name!

4 *Frail as summer's flower we flourish, blows the wind and
it is gone;*

*but, while mortals rise and perish, God endures
unchanging on.*

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise the high eternal one.

*5 Angels, teach us adoration, you behold God face to
face;*

*sun and moon and all creation, dwellers all in time and
space.*

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise with us the God of grace!

***COMMISSIONING:**

At the beginning of the world,
God was there.

At the end of the world,
God will be there.

In our time, in this place,
God is here.

Go now to love and serve God, and remember that
nothing can separate us from God's love.

We will remember this as we go. Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Amen.

***BENEDICTION:**

***SUNG BLESSING: "Go Now in Peace"**

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: Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring – J.S. Bach, Arr.
Myra Hess (1926)

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