

## Announcements and Notices

Please send any announcements or news to share to the church email.

Congratulations on completion of the last round of your chemo treatments, Linda MacCharles! Now let us all pray for a thorough, full recovery for Linda!

Sheila and Reg Goldsmith would like you to know that their woods paths in Round Hill are open to people from our congregation to take a break and a nice walk. They lead to a pond and a cabin and are well maintained for walking. Give them a call at 902-532-2979

Readings for next week's worship and Bible study

Acts 15:1-11

Galatians 5:1-6

Bible study is every Tuesday morning by video tune in from 9:30-10:30. If you wish to participate its simple: call or email Rev. Elisabeth

Commissioning: 2 Timothy 1:7

**“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind”.**

Blessing: [ More Voices # 218]

May the love of the Lord rest upon your soul.  
May God's love dwell in you, throughout every day.  
May God's countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God's Spirit be upon you as you leave this place.

## *Welcome!*

St. George & St. Andrew United Church

*Open Doors, Open Minds, Open Hearts*



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**June 14, 2020**  
**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Covid Lockdown**

*“Who am I to think that I should stand in God's way?!” Acts 11:17*

## Gathering the Community

*Please spend a moment in preparation for worship. Have a candle or tealight ready, and look for an object that symbolizes community for you. Set a small table with candle and a photo or newspaper clipping that shows someone who is of a different culture and skin colour than you are. If you have a cross, you may also want to place it on your worship table. Calm your breath.*

### Lighting of the Christ Candle

*Light a candle or tealight in your home, saying:*

We light this light in the name of **Creator** who said “Let there be light” - and there was light.

We light this light in the name of **Christ**, who said: “I am the light of the world, whoever walks in my footsteps will not be in darkness

We light this light in the name of **Holy Spirit**, who is our inner light and the light of God’s presence in the world.

*Be still for a moment and become aware of God’s light within you and of God’s presence in all of God’s creation.*

### Call to Worship:(based on the Galatians reading)

In Christ Jesus we are all children of God through faith:

There is no longer Jew or Greek  
**There is no longer slave or free**

There is no longer male and female

**There is no longer old or young**

There is no longer gay and straight

**There is no longer black or white**

There is no longer poor and rich

**There is no longer abled and disabled**

For all of us are one in Christ Jesus

**Come, let us worship our God, who makes us one!**

### Prayer of brokenness/confession:

God of Wholeness, we confess that we are broken as individuals and communities.

We want to be good and generous people, but in our ignorance have acted in ways that are hurtful to people who are minorities in our society.

Sometimes, in our minds we have drawn lines in the sand and have been smug and content to acknowledge and honour only those who are like us. We have kept some people in, but kept many more out.

Forgive us for our dividing ways, loving God. Heal us from our wounds of division.

Comfort us when we have been left out.

Call us into accountability when we have been the ones who have ignored, ridiculed or pushed out others. Lead us into the margins, across the boundaries out of our comfort zones, to be the body of Christ in this world. It is in Christ’s name that we

pray, who became broken for us, so that we might be made whole. Amen.

Blessing/Assurance of Pardon:

You are a beloved child of God. There is nothing you can do, no place you can go, where God cannot find you, comfort you, heal you, and love you. God loves you, and desires the fullness of life for you. Go and live into God's forgiveness, restoration and love. Amen.

~ Prayers created /adapted from Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, rev-olution.org.

**Hymn:** Voices United # Joyful joyful we adore  
Thee: to sing along, click here:

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Msyc6xr\\_CaE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Msyc6xr_CaE)**

Discovery Time : *“Ask a scientist: One family!” find a number of pictures of people of different cultures and ethnicities . Make sure you have at least 2 pictures of children who share a skin colour: European, Asian and African children or adults. Lay them out next to each other. Which children/adults are more “alike”? Who is “different”?*

*Ask yourself: How do we choose who is “alike” and who is “different?” Do we go by skin colour? Their facial expression? What they are*

*wearing? by “Race”? But skin colour is not important at all! Scientists who study the human gene tell us that 2 people on the African continent are more different from each other than 2 people in many other parts of the world! A child from Ethiopia and a child from Sudan are likely to be more genetically different from one another than an Italian and a Chinese child. And even those differences are tiny! Did you know that people, no matter how different they look, are all made exactly the same inside? Learn about how scientists (genetics) have discovered that the idea of different “races” is biologically nonsense. On the outside, differences may seem big (how we dress, eat, what skin colour we have, how we style our hair..) but on the inside, in our genes, we are all 99.9% the same! Biologically, our differences are really insignificant compared to what we share! We are indeed one human family across the globe.*

**Hymn:** Voices United #691 “Though ancient walls”  
to sing along click here:

**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKkhzZC\\_p10](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKkhzZC_p10)**

## Hearing the Story

### Prayer for Illumination

Great Trinity, Divine Wisdom in community-  
Make your presence known in this time,  
through our worship, our prayer,  
the reading of your Word.

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit

Make yourself known to us  
in new ways, exciting ways,  
challenging ways.

Empower us, inspire us,

Great Trinity, Divine Wisdom in community!

### **A reading from Paul's letter to the church in Galatia:**

*Galatians 3: 26-28 All one in Christ*

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

(Translation: NIV)

### **A reading from the book of Acts chapter 11:1-18**

*Disagreements: Peter tells how he changed his mind*

The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when

Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

"I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

"The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

"Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life." (Translation: NIV)

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church  
**Thanks be to God.**

Instrumental: Joyful, Joyful we adore thee

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXbnWXlcg2Y>

Reflection/Message Invitation to personal  
Meditation on Acts 11.

“Who am I that should stand in God’s way?” says Peter at the end of a lengthy and dramatic thought process in Acts 11. (Its so lengthy it starts in chapter 10) Peter has come to the humble realization that God’s Spirit is active on a far wider horizon than he and others like him could imagine. Those around the apostle James (Jesus’ brother)- who one would assume get everything right- are of the opinion that strict guidelines should remain in order, as to who can join the community of Jesus, the Messiah (Christ). Everyone who wants to join the community of Jesus the Messiah should and has of course to follow the Jewish law; food and hygienic standards, religious law, etc. They never questioned that “Christians ” are a group of Jews.

But what about those who are not Jews and are still interested in Jesus’ way? Peter, out of love, has begun to eat with them in table fellowship in non Jewish ways, but finds himself soon torn, as James

and others from Jerusalem criticize him sternly.”They have to become “like us “first they say.

*-Let this be an invitation to reflect on the groups you belong to: What do you have to do to “belong”? What are the signs of “belonging?” What are the outer signs (uniforms? Rituals? Behaviour?) What (if any) are the “inner” signs (attitudes?knowledge?ethics?)*

It is normal that human groups have boundaries and standards. We are this and not that. Its important that we know who we are and what we stand for. But ever so often circumstances develop which ask us to tighten or broaden our vision. From a spiritual viewpoint that is the time to discern the Holy Spirit’s guidance. In general, we can be pretty safe that God as Holy Spirit asks us to broaden the circle of our love. The apostle Paul realized that quickly, Peter took a little longer, but understood: God makes no distinction between “us” and “them”. This is a huge insight for the early church.

*-How have you been invited to broaden the circle of your love? What challenging moments have you lived through when you realized that you needed to love someone who was not “like us”?*

Peter realizes in his trance that outer distinctions are not relevant.”Clean and unclean” is not relevant any more; just as Jesus ate with everyone, so must the Christians now, just as Jesus said (Mark 7:15)that nothing on the outside of a person can be unclean,

just as Paul says (Romans 14:14) there is nothing unclean in and of itself. What does then matter? The gentiles have received the gifts of the Holy Spirit, just like the Jews who believe in Christ.  
- *Think about the gifts of people who are very different from you on the outside: What are some of the gifts you, as a person of faith, admire in them?*  
Think about the gifts people from the LGBTQ+ community for example have brought and are bringing to the church. Had the United Church not affirmed their gifts for ministry, how immensely poorer would we be!  
-*To close, identify your own growing edge.*  
*If the Holy Spirit were to send you a dream like Peter's, what might God show you on your sheet?*

## **Responding to the Word**

Music video: Audrey Assad: "Be Thou my Vision"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Optrm7IF16s>

### Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

That from our depth new life emerges - thanks be to you, O God.

That through our body and the bodies of men and women everywhere heaven's creativity is born on earth, children of eternity are conceived in time and everlasting bonds of tenderness and forged amidst the hardness of life's struggles, thanks be to you.

That in our soul and the soul of every human being sacred hopes are hidden,

longings for what has never been are heard and visions for earth's peace and prosperity are glimpsed, thanks be to you.

For those near to us who are in turmoil this day and for every family in its brokenness, for the woundedness of our own life and for every creature that is suffering....

O God of all life, we pray.

John Philip Newell, Sounds of the Eternal

## **The Lord's Prayer**

*Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace..*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWi->

**Plu0WbA**

## Preparing for the coming week

### Stewardship Moment:

*In these uncertain times, it is important to see and experience God's boundless generosity, give thanks for the gifts God gives us, and then reflect that generosity through our own lives.*

*In these times of crisis, when I am anxious, distracted, unsure, tired, or even fearful...*

*How can I be thankful?*

*How can I be generous?*

### Offering our Gifts

*Ways to help, both through the **Mission and Service Fund** and through our local church:*

*If you are able, please send a **cheque** or postdated cheques by mail, sign up for **PAR**, or send an **e-transfer** to [stgeorgeandstandrew@gmail.com](mailto:stgeorgeandstandrew@gmail.com)*



*If you can not financially support us at this time please know we appreciate you in all this! your time and talent, prayers and faithful action. Thank you!*

### Spiritual practice: Openness

Openness is a key quality in the Christian Spiritual Life: “Epaphtah! Be opened “ says Jesus to the deaf and mute man in Mark 7.

The cure may be physical, but for spiritual well being we need openness: Openness to the the guidance of God by the Holy Spirit. How its done was modeled by Peter in Acts 11. We can do this without dramatic visions. We practice openness to what we are offered in a given moment, no matter how modest. We practice openness to where love and charity take us.