



NATIONAL LGBTQ COMING OUT CELEBRATION

Sunday October 10, 2021 5pm

Welcome and Announcements:

Opening Songs: (*Sing along*)

Born this Way

Brave

All Are Welcome in this Place

Lady Gaga (on screen)

Sara Bareilles (on screen)

CCS 276 Beyond the Walls

Choristers (on screen)

Opening Call to Worship:

Leader: God is calling us
Out of the places we hide
Out of insecurity
Out of shame
Out from under that which silences love and justice.
Come out, people of God!
Though we may be afraid
Though we will be at risk
Though our honesty may be viewed as a threat
God calls us to courage!

Our God is a god of resurrection. Of new life and new creation.
Of hope in the grip of evil.
And so we dare to proclaim, with pride and faith, our truths:
We believe in the power of love.
We believe in solidarity with the suffering.
We believe we are each valuable.

We believe that our togetherness is transformative.
The world is longing for Holy truths that reveal, voices that speak real words of hope.
Come out, people of God!

Sharing the Peace:

Presider The goodness, strength, and peace of God be with you all.

People And also with you.

The people greet each other with socially distant signs of peace (namaste, peace signs, virtual hug)

Leader: Let us join the celebration of God's marvelous creation in its full expression:

As God created the heavens and the earth and called them good,

People: God created each and every one of us, and calls us good!

Leader: As God's creation includes and exhibits diversity and unity alike,

People: God created us as diverse persons, yet with the desire that we live together with all of creation in peace and unity!

Leader: As a multicolored rainbow reflects the spectrum of light,

People: We reflect the spectrum of human sexuality!

Leader: As straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons,

People: We strive to affirm and be who we have been created to be!

Leader: As we encounter attitudes and acts of prejudice and injustice

People: We remain assured that God is always with us and for us, and that God wills for our lives wholeness and well-being!

Leader: As we discern the next step of our coming out, whether it be to our families of origin, families of choice, friends, coworkers, whomever,

People: We recognize that to live life fully we must take the next step, even though we cannot guarantee the reactions of others.

All: We give thanks that we are never completely alone, that there are others whom we find along the path of our life's journey who can provide love and support and genuine acceptance – including God!

The Word of God *(Please be seated)*

First Reading: A reading from the book Genesis (1: 26-28a, *The Message*)

“Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. And God blessed them.”

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

People: Praise to the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 139: 13-18 (*The Message*) *(Read aloud in unison)*

Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out;
you formed me in my mother's womb.

I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking!

Body and soul, I am marvelously made!

I worship in adoration—what a creation!

You know me inside and out,

you know every bone in my body;

You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit,

how I was sculpted from nothing into something.

Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth;

all the stages of my life were spread out before you,

The days of my life all prepared

before I'd even lived one day.

Your thoughts—how rare, how beautiful!

God, I'll never comprehend them!
I couldn't even begin to count them—
any more than I could count the sand of the sea.
Oh, let me rise in the morning and live always with you!

Second Reading: A reading from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians
(5: 16-18) *The Message*

Because of this decision, we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong, as you know. We certainly don't look at him that way anymore. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life emerges! Look at it! All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other.

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to us.

People: Praise to the Holy Spirit.

Gospel Anthem

The Voice of Truth by Casting Crowns (screen)

Gospel Reading:

Reader The Good News of Jesus Christ according to Matthew (14: 25-33)

The Message

People: Great are you, Jesus.

Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared to death. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Take courage, it's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water."

He said, "Come ahead."

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-of-heart, what got into you?"

The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, "This is it! You are God's Son for sure!"

Reader This is the Good News of Jesus
People Praise to you, Jesus.

A Prayer for Today:

Presider Let us pray this prayer together.

People: God, you have modeled for us time and time again what it looks like to come out. Since the beginning, you have been revealing your true self - Love - to us in different forms, but we always seem to struggle to understand. By your Spirit, make us the kind of community where those who come out as queer or trans, or in any vulnerable way, can find home, family, and embrace. Amen.

The Reflection by Rev. Allison and friends

Statement of Belief: From the United Church of Canada

(Said aloud by all, in unison)

We are not alone,
 we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
 who has created and is creating,
 has come in Jesus,
 the Word made flesh,
 to reconcile and make new,

....who works in us and others

....by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:

....to celebrate God's presence,

....to live with respect in Creation,

....to love and serve others,

....to seek justice and resist evil,

....to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,

... our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

....God is with us.

We are not alone.

....Thanks be to God.

The People's Prayers:

Leader: In the midst of all that keeps our spirits frantic, overwhelmed, or troubled, we pause.

We pause to remember each other as those whose precious and precarious lives are inherently bound together.

We pause to remember the basic gifts of nature, of song, of beauty, of the creation we share.

We pause to remember our neighbors – distant and near.

And so to the One who is Love, we bring the prayers of our communities.

Where we share in joy or concern, let us respond together,

“God, hear our prayers.”

We pray...

for all the queer, trans, and gender fluid children, youth, and adults across the globe. For the ones who are struggling with feelings of isolation and shame. For those who have no safe place or people to retreat to.

People: God, hear our prayers.

Leader: For those who must be teachers to others who lack understanding about the rich diversity of God's world in their lives. For those who are unsafe in their communities.

God, hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray for our elders whose struggle and work we are indebted to. For the ones who never tasted the freedom they fought for. For the ones who were forced to the fringes of their own movements. For the allies who suffered beside us, casting their lot with us in true solidarity. For the ones forgotten and betrayed.

God, hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray for all those who hunger for justice and liberation today. For the ones who lay down their lives for their friends. For the ones who tell the truth. For the ones who take risks, who dream, who feed and pray, who fight for acceptance. For the ones who are eager to learn and grow and offer their gifts to the world to make your dreams of harmony a reality.

God, hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray for all who are suffering in the church and the world at the hands of privilege. For those imprisoned, for those whose property and dignity have been taken. For the earth that groans around us. For those without food or shelter. For those who have yet to apologize or change harmful behaviors.

God, hear our prayers.

Leader: Also, we pray in gratitude for all that nourishes and sustains us. For the gifts of beauty and friendship, shared meals, and art, and love. For laughter. For pleasure. For the friends, lovers, and companions who lift our spirits, always by our side when the days are heavy. For the freedom we have in Christ.

People: God, hear our prayers.

Leader: For your presence within and around us, in our highs and lows, our hope and our despair, God, we give you thanks.

ALL: God, hear our prayers and deepen our willingness to show up with and for one another, sharing in each other's burdens and working for one another's protection and care. Amen.

Giving back to God:

Presider: Because God has been so good to us, let us with open and grateful hearts give back to God in thanksgiving.

Song during Offering

More by Matthew West (on screen)

The Lord's Supper

Presider The Holy One be with you

People And also with you

Presider Open your hearts to the One who is Love

People We open our hearts to you, O God

Presider Let us give thanks to God who sets us free

People It is our joy to give you thanks!

Presider Continues

Indeed, we give you thanks, our Divine Creator. You declared from the beginning that we were created in your image, a reflection of what is good and holy, each, in our own way, a glimpse of you. We praise the works of your creative hand that fills our life with beauty. Every flower that blooms, every animal that delights, every body of water that sustains our life – all part of your good works.

Despite the abundance of life around us, often we still turn to destruction. Each in our own ways, we have failed to embrace you by failing to embrace all your people, especially those different than us. We have, at times, sided with political and religious powers that refuse to recognize your image in all people.

And so we praise you joining our voices with angels, archangels and with all the company of heaven who forever sing to proclaim the glory of your name:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

And we turn to Jesus, who showed us what it looks like to live into our true selves as people of God. He was humble yet grounded in your love for him. He sought out the despised and made them friends. He confronted every power that belittled, marginalized, and oppressed. His commitment to living out the image of God in human form could not be swayed, even in the face of death.

On the night of his arrest, he gathered around the table with his companions. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his followers and said, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

He did the same with the cup of wine after the supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out is the new covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink of it, do this in remembrance of me."

Even in death, O God, your love prevailed. Through you Spirit, Christ was raised from the grave. No person, no institution, no force of evil could extinguish the work of your hand.

And so, by the same Spirit, bless these gifts of bread and cup (+) that they may be the living Christ within us today (+); compelling us to be agents of love, uncompromising in our commitment to protect every one of your creatures and creations.

And the people of God say:

AMEN!

The Breaking of the Bread:

(Presider breaks the consecrated bread)

Presider: Just as the grain that was used to make this bread was once scattered over the land and then gathered together to make this one bread, God, gather your people together from all over the world into your one holy and eternal community.

People: **Happy are we who share this holy meal of bread and wine.**

Invitation to Communion:

Presider: This is not my table, this is not St. Stephen's church's table. This is Christ's Table. Jesus invites you to come forward and receive the bread and the wine in this place.

(Please come forward as the priest directs. Put out your hand to receive the bread, move to the side 6 ft, lower/raise mask, consume bread and then replace mask and return to your seat.)

Communion Song

*We are One in the Spirit by Beyond the Walls Choir
CCS 359 (on screen)*

Prayer after Communion:

Presider: *Let us pray:*

All: **God, we give you thanks for the invitation to your Table. No matter who we are, no matter our struggles or regrets, we are never turned away. Like all the gifts you give us, may we never be content to keeping them to ourselves. May this meal compel us to invite others – especially those who are turned away from the tables of their families, their churches, their communities – to our own tables, overflowing with love and nourishment in abundance. Amen.**

Benediction:

Presider: Go in the companionship of the Spirit and be a light to the world and all who are yearning to be free. Embrace your own difference, celebrate the difference of others, and proclaim the Good News: God's love does not conform to the standards of our culture. It is without boundary. It extends to all. And the blessing of God: Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler be with you now and always. **Amen.**

Closing Song: *I'm Coming Out* by Diana Ross (on Screen)

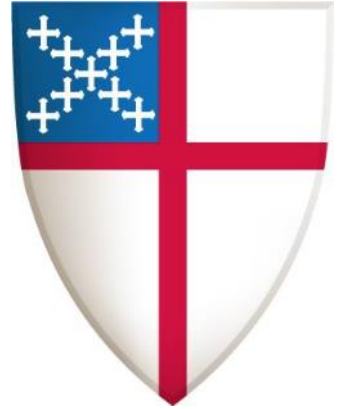
Refreshments on the porch outside following the service. Please join us.



Notice: All church activities may be internet streamed, video recorded, and photographed for church uses. Entry on to the church campus or in to any church building constitutes consent to be streamed, videotaped, or photographed for church purposes.



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Welcome Visitor!!!

Please leave your name and contact info below. If you'd like to speak with someone, please check here

Or you can also use the QRC here to fill this out online.



Info Update Giving Envelopes Mail News Letter

Name _____ (first) _____ (Mid.) _____ (Last)

Hm: _____ Cell _____

Email: _____ Anv. Date _____

Adrs: _____ BrthDate _____

City, St., Zip: _____, _____, _____