

Order of Service - June 28th 2020

Celebrating PRIDE and the LGBTQIA+ and Two-spirited people community.

Honouring the Land.

As we gather together as a community of faith, we celebrate the lakes, rivers and streams which run through the ancestral lands of our First Nations sisters and brothers in the area. Those waters shimmer with the Great Spirit of all Creation and the spirits of the mothers and fathers that come ahead of us. In our time together, let the ground on which we meet be sacred ground.

Gathering prayer

Gathered together, we proclaim the good news of God publicly, intentionally, and explicitly: This community joyfully affirms God's love for LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit people. The presence of God welcomes the fullness of who we are. We are people who desire. Who long. Who practice love in many ways. We celebrate love that is platonic and love that is erotic. Love that is queer and love that is collective. We are people who want to know and be known—for who we've been, who we are, and who we are becoming. We honour identities in transition. We delight in authentic self-expression. Whether trans or intersex or cis, God moves in our becoming. How wonderful are the many works of God's creative hand! May all who long for Love's embrace feel their holy worth.

Centering prayer

Since its beginning, the church was meant to be a place of chosen family—a community of outcasts and outlaws, dreamers, prophets, and humble disciples of Love. In the company of Divine Presence, we create belonging and nurture justice. God of Justice, even as we celebrate your love for the LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit community today, we remember the church has not always done so. We acknowledge the harm that continues to be done in your name today. We bring also a renewed commitment to interrupting prejudice and practicing solidarity. We press on together until people of every sexual orientation and gender identity can live freely and without fear, receiving the love and support all people deserve. Thanks be to you, our guide and our help in making it so. Amen.

Prayer of Illumination

Holy Wisdom, come. We long for your truth that sets the captives free. Bring us your Word that liberates and quiet all that turns us against ourselves, one another, or any of your creatures and creations. Lead us in love that mends and restores. Amen.

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 (NIV) Unity and Diversity in the Body

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Straight or gay, white or black, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as she wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

Prayer of confession

We gather here, each a beloved miracle of divine creation. God have given us so much: We have each other. We have beauty, and courage, and the capacity to dream. These precious lives of ours—so short and vulnerable—are meant to be lived abundantly, rich in joy, meaning, and connection.

We know, however, that forces of evil work to suppress God's intentions for our lives. White supremacy, anti-LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit oppression, sexism, and poverty work to strip from individuals, communities, and the earth the ability to thrive. And so, the miracle of life becomes a burden. People struggle with the will to live. We turn on each other. We hoard resources and numb ourselves to pain and desire. We lose touch with the power of God that illuminates possibilities for collective liberation.

Assurance

Beloved One, your embrace is a refuge from violence and hatred. Assured of our worth and renewed in hope, send us the power of your Spirit, to proclaim the good news that binds the broken-hearted, frees the oppressed, and rids the world of evil's lies that demean and destroy. Those who have been turned away, forgotten, or persecuted find belonging in you. We hope to embody such love. May we each be a sanctuary, a shelter, a safe place to turn. May we endeavor to learn from each other and grow together in love that protects and uplifts. Amen.

Benediction

Beloveds, let us go with hearts full of courage, that we might practice love that disrupts bigotry. Let us go with minds open to experiencing God in ways strange and unexpected, in ways ordinary and every day. And let us go with joy, for the Creator of all life goes with us.

Amen.

(adapted from UCC worship resources)