



Richmond Hill United Church
An Affirming Ministry



September 13, 2020: Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The following resource is offered to help you worship at home, either on your own or online. Worship is livestreamed on Zoom. Log-in details are sent weekly by email to those on RHUC's contact list. For a recording of the service, click the following link: www.facebook.com/RichmondHillUnitedChurch/. This will take you to our Facebook page. We may be apart physically but we are still a community of faith spiritually, and digitally.

Centred in Christ

Lighting the Community Candle: *As the candle in the sanctuary is lit, you are invited to light your own candle at home. We may be dispersed, but together we shine in love.*

Acknowledgement of the Land: *We take time to give thanks for the land and for the Indigenous communities who continue to steward it. We extend greetings in Ojibway, Portuguese and Korean.*

Introductory Words and Opening Prayer (*based on Psalm 103*)

The psalmist writes eloquently of the saving love we encounter in God. And so, we come together, trusting in that same gift of living presence, holding us with understanding, like a loving parent.

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, Holy Love, full of compassion and ever gracious.
Though we often forget your ways, preferring to walk a worldlier road,
you are always there to welcome us, encouraging us to turn once more to you.
Grateful for your promise of forgiveness, we pray for the grace to release the past
and trust in a future of hearts healed and lives restored,
not just for us but for all of creation.
We pray in the name of Jesus, your Beloved Child. **Amen.**

Hymn: "Come, Let Us to the God of Love" (*Voices United #653*)

- 1. Come, let us to the God of love, with contrite hearts return:
our God is gracious, nor will leave the desolate to mourn.**
- 2. God's voice commands the tempest forth and stills the stormy wave;
and though God's arm be strong to smite, 'tis also strong to save.**
- 3. Long has the night of sorrow reigned, the dawn shall bring us light;
God shall appear, and we shall rise with gladness at that sight.**
- 4. As dew upon the tender herb diffusing fragrance round,
as showers that usher in the spring and cheer the thirsty ground,**
- 5. So shall God's presence bless our souls and shed a joyful light,
that hallowed morn shall chase away the sorrows of the night.**

Reflecting Together as a Community

Prayer for Openness

Voice of peace, speak once more your grace to our hearts.
Like Peter we have burdens we are reluctant to lay down,
too ready to keep score of other's offenses.
Gently remind us of your limitless compassion,
and open our hearts to be as quick to forgive.
May we be freed from the tyranny of vengeance,
able instead to live with mercy and with joy. **Amen.**

Reading: Matthew 18:21-35

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Should I forgive as many as seven times?"

Jesus said, "Not just seven times, but rather as many as seventy-seven times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle accounts, they brought to him a servant who owed him ten thousand bags of gold. Because the servant didn't have enough to pay it back, the master ordered that he should be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, and that the proceeds should be used as payment. But the servant fell down, knelt before him, and said, 'Please, be patient with me, and I'll pay you back.' The master had compassion on that servant, released him, and forgave the loan.

"When that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred coins. He grabbed him around the throat and said, 'Pay me back what you owe me.'

"Then his fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I'll pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he threw him into prison until he paid back his debt.

"When his fellow servants saw what happened, they were deeply offended. They came and told their master all that happened. His master called the first servant and said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you appealed to me. Shouldn't you also have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' His master was furious and handed him over to the guard responsible for punishing prisoners, until he had paid the whole debt.

"My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if you don't forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Solo: "Lord God of Abraham" (From the oratorio *Elijah*, by Felix Mendelssohn; Sung by Doug Loweth)

Reading: "All Night" by Lisel Mueller

All night the knot in the shoelace
waits for its liberation,
and the match on the table packs its head
with anticipation of light.
The faucet sweats out a bead of water,
which gathers strength for the free fall,
while the lettuce in the refrigerator
succumbs to its brown killer.
And in the novel I put down
before I fall asleep,

the paneled walls of a room
are condemned to stand and wait
for tomorrow, when I'll get to the page
where the prisoner finds the secret door
and steps into air and the scent of lilacs.

Message: "Sin and Forgiveness"

A Minute for Meditation: "Watermark" (Enya)

Prayers of the People (composed by Julia Ye)

The Prayer of Jesus

Hymn: "New Every Morning" (*Voices United* #405)

- 1. New every morning is the love our wakening and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought, restored to life and power and thought.**
- 2. New mercies, each returning day, hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven, new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.**
- 3. If, on our daily course, our mind be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still of countless price God will provide for sacrifice.**
- 4. The trivial round, the common task, will furnish all we ought to ask,
room to deny ourselves, a road to bring us daily nearer God.**
- 5. Only, O God, in your dear love fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day, to live more nearly as we pray.**

Blessing and Sending Forth

One: As we go forth from here:

All: may we be strong in spirit, courageous in will, and gentle of heart.

One: Each day may our actions be:

All: rooted in wisdom, nurtured by hope and open to love.

One: May we meet others as we would wish to be met:

All: with a heart of compassion, in a spirit of healing & grounded in joy.

Postlude: "Ricerca" (Palestrina)