

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

MARCH & GATHERING



Saturday, September 30th, from 9:45 AM - 12:30 PM

9:45 Meet: Municipal parking lot on High Street (behind Algonquin Theatre).

10:00 March: Minerva Street East to River Mill Park.

11:00 Ceremony: River Mill Park with Special Guest Speaker Jan Beaver
Drumming Performance by Chippewa Travellers

WEAR ORANGE ** RAIN OR SHINE EVENT

Sunday Worship, September 24, 2023

Season of Creation 4

LAKE OF BAYS PASTORAL CHARGE

Knox, Dorset – 9:00 a.m.
Stewart Memorial, Dwight – 10:15 a.m.
Pioneer, Hillside– 11:30 a.m.

Minister: Rev Meg Jordan (705-789-6600)
lakeofbayspastoralcharge196@gmail.com
Bookkeeper/Administrator: Linda Pinkerton
Leadership Chair: Jennifer Parker
Musician, Knox: Cynthia MacLean

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WE GATHER

Welcome, Life and Work of the Church
Lighting of the Christ Candle
Acknowledgement of the Land

Call to Worship:

We gather in worship to encounter God,
Holy Mystery who is Wholly Love

We gather as a community
seeking to follow Jesus in God's Way

We gather to be inspired by God's Spirit.

We gather to worship God:
Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

Opening Hymn: God We Praise You for the Morning VU#415

1 God, we praise you for the morning;
hope springs forth with each new day,
new beginning, prayer, and promise,
joy in work and in play.

- 2 God, we praise you for creation,
mountains, seas, and prairie land.
Waking souls find joy and healing
in your bountiful hand.
- 3 God, we praise you for compassion,
all the loving that you show;
human touching, tears, and laughter,
help your children to grow.
- 4 God, we praise you for your Spirit,
Comforter and daily friend,
restless searcher, gentle teacher,
strength and courage you send.
- 5 God, we praise you for the Saviour,
come that we may know your ways.
In his loving, dying, rising,
Christ is Lord of our days.
- 6 Hallelujah, hallelujah,
hallelujah, hallelujah!
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Christ is Lord of our days!

Prayer of Approach:

Gracious God,
Compassionate Friend,
Ever-Present Spirit,
As we worship together this morning,
We long for transformation.
Empower us and enable us,
So that we may live more deeply,
Love more boldly and act more bravely
in the name of Jesus,
our Wisdom and our Way.
Amen.

WE LISTEN

Scripture reading: Matthew 20:1-16

Leader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church

Response: Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: God Who gives to Life its Goodness VU#260

God who gives to life its goodness,

God creator of all joy,

God who gives to us our freedom,
God who blesses tool and toy:
teach us now to laugh and praise you,
deep within your praises sing,
till the whole creation dances
for the goodness of its King.

God who fills the earth with beauty,
God who binds each friend to friend,
God who names us co-creators
God who wills that chaos end:
grant us now creative spirits,
minds responsive to your mind,
hearts and wills your rule extending
all our acts by Love refined.

Sermon: God's Economy of Generosity

One of the Old Testament lection options for this Sunday—the story of the manna in the wilderness (Exod. 16:2–15)—provides a helpful, though often ignored, lens for interpreting the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Out in the wilderness with Israel, God is creating a new people who will embody an alternative to the ways of Egypt, the ways of domination and submission, rich and poor, powerful and powerless. Central to the formation of that people is the gift of manna. The manna is nothing fancy or luxurious; it is basic sustenance, “daily bread.” Most importantly, however, manna is a gift that cannot be hoarded. Indeed, when people try to gather more than their share, the extra manna becomes worm ridden and foul (Exod. 16:20). With manna, everyone has plenty, but no one has too much. The leaders and the servants receive the same amount. The people who work all day and the people who have little to do receive the same amount. The able and the disabled receive the same amount: plenty, but not too much—and it is all a gift. The story becomes an embodiment of the Lord's Prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt. 6:11). It is reenacted by Jesus out in the wilderness, when he feeds thousands with a few loaves and a couple of fish, and everyone has plenty and no one has too much. While the parallels should not be forced, the story of the manna in the wilderness does provide a lens for considering the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard. Jesus also seeks to create a new people, a new order. He speaks the parable to the disciples as they struggle to understand the reign of God within the old frameworks of the world (i.e., rich and poor, superior and inferior; see Matt. 19:13–30).

Through the parable Jesus seeks to interrupt the old presuppositions and create the possibility of something new. Through his odd and unsettling story he both envisions the new order of God and unmask the deadly spirits of the old order. In the parable, Jesus holds before the disciples—a new reality; he offers a vision of the “alternative household of God’s empire.”¹² In this household, as in the wilderness, everyone receives the necessary “daily bread,” which undermines the old distinctions and competition that preoccupied the disciples and so often preoccupy us. As Warren Carter writes about the odd and surprising payment to the workers: Instead of maintaining differentiation among the laborers based on performance, instead of reinforcing the superiority of some at the expense of the rest, [the householder] has evened out the distinctions and treated them in solidarity as equals. Instead of using wages to reinforce distinctions, he uses them to express equality and solidarity.¹³ Similarly, Dorothy Day notes this subversive and unsettling use of wages: “[Jesus] spoke of the living wage, not equal pay for equal work, in the parable of those who came at the first and the eleventh hour.”¹⁴ A living wage for everyone, rather than the competitive struggle and inequality of the marketplace. Plenty, but not too much. The parable thus envisions an alternative social order, just as God envisioned and created a similar alternative order out in the wilderness. This odd and startling vision threads its way throughout Scripture. The parable, however, does not just envision. Simultaneously it also exposes. It painfully unmask the deep presuppositions that all too often form the “air we breathe” and shape our lives to such an extent that we cannot even imagine alternatives. It exposes the fundamental metaphors that so often structure our social relations: winner and loser, superior and inferior, insider and outsider, honoured and shamed. It unmask an order that often encourages us to pray, “Give me this day my daily bread,” rather than, “Give us this day our daily bread.” This exposing lies behind the householder’s odd method of payment, in which those who worked the longest must watch everyone else receive the same as they do. Those who worked all day complain, bringing to mind the grumbling of Israel in the wilderness (Exod. 17:3; Num. 11:1; 14:27, 29). Their complaint does not simply concern money; it goes much deeper, to what the money represents. The real issue is superiority: “you have made them equal to us” (v. 12). Work becomes not simply the means for earning daily bread, but a source of division and competition, a means of reinforcing status—the categories of winners and losers, superior and inferior. Work often plays this role in contemporary society don’t it? When people are out of work, they often feel inferior, even worthless, like the workers in the parable who waited all day in the marketplace: “No one has hired us,” they poignantly tell the householder (v. 7). In addition, many people brag about their long hours of work, as a way of feeling superior to those with less demanding jobs. Of course, the money earned from work is itself closely connected to status, often functioning as much to achieve superiority over others as to secure the necessities of life. The complaint of the

daylong workers—“you have made them equal to us”— takes us beneath mere economics to the spirit that underlies so much economic competition—a spirit shaped by the metaphors of winners and losers, superior and inferior. This parable calls us to envision God’s new order and to expose the spirits of the old pre-suppositions that hold us captive. It helps to create the possibility of something completely new.

Amen. May it be so.

WE RESPOND

OFFERING INVITATION: DOXOLOGY VU 540

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living
we may offer faithfully.

DEDICATION OF THE OFFERING

Prayers of the People:

CLOSING HYMN: Canticle of the Turning MV#120

My soul cries out with a joyful shout
That the God of my heart is great
And my spirit sings of the Wondrous things
That you bring to the ones who wait
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight
And my weakness you did not spurn
So from east to west shall my name be blest
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain: My heart shall sing of the day you bring
Let the fires of your justice burn
Wipe away all tears for the dawn draws near
And the world is about to turn!

Though I am small, my God, my all, you
Work great things in me
And your mercy will last from the Depths
Of the past to the end of the age to be
Your very name puts the proud to shame
And to those who would for you yearn
You will show your might
Put the strong to flight

For the world is about to turn **Refrain**

From the halls of power to the fortress tower
Not a stone will be left on stone
Let the king beware for your
Justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne
The hungry poor shall weep no more
For the food they can never eat
There are tables spread, ev'ry
Mouth be fed
For the world is about to turn **Refrain**

Though the nations rage from age to age
We remember Who holds us fast
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound
'Til the spear and rod can be
Crushed by God

Who is turning the world around **Refrain 2x**

BLESSING:

May the grace of God,
deeper than our imagination;
the strength of Christ,
stronger than our need;
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
richer than our expectations;
guide and sustain us today
and in all our tomorrows.
Go forth, for the love of God is ours to share,
the peace of Christ is ours to extend,
the power of the Holy Spirit is ours to offer. Amen

SEASON OF CREATION

Sept 24. Does God care about Economics?

Sept 30: Orange Shirt Day March and Gathering in
am to 12:30 pm.

October 1 Worldwide Communion Sunday

October 4 ZOOM coffee and conversation 10 am.

October 7 Harvest Bazaar at Stewart 1-4:00 p.m.

Huntsville 9:45

October 8 Thanksgiving A Cosmic Blessing
October 29 Joint service at Stewart Memorial,
10:30 a.m Finger food pot luck!!

Stewardship is participation in God's Work

There are several different options for you to make your offering to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge.1. In person and on the plate. (Each congregation has a different practice around this but you can't miss it!)2. Via PAR (preauthorized remittance). Then you don't have to think about it again. Money is withdrawn monthly 3. By e-transfer. The email address for donations via e-transfer is lobunit-edchurches@gmail.com In the subject line/comment please identify to which of the Churches you wish to donate, 4. By cheque: If you send a cheque, please make it out to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge and mail it to: LOB United Churches, P.O. Box 196, Dwight, ON, P0A 1H0, specifying for which church the donation is intended.

Please give generously. Thank you!