

## **Worship on the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

10:00 am August 30, 2026

Minister: The Rev. Brad Childs Music Director: Binu Kapadia

Vocalist: Cheryl and Peter Sheridan Elder: Jane de Caen

Children's time: Fionna McCrostie Reader: Saber Fort

### **We gather to worship God**

*Music prelude*

#### **Greeting**

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you

**P: and also with you**

#### **Lighting of the Christ candle**

#### **Welcome and announcements**

#### **Preparation for worship**

#### **Call to worship:**

L: Give thanks to God and tell of God's gifts.

**P: We will sing praises for all that God has done.**

L: Let your hearts be joyful!

**P: Let your hearts be joyful!**

L: Call to mind God's wonderful works.

**P: We will always remember the blessings of God and glorify God forever!**

#### **Opening praise: *Everlasting God***

#### **Prayers of approach and confession**

Holy, mysterious, eternal and ever-loving God,

in you we live and move and have our being.

You are the start and the finish of everything.

In the depths of who you are we keep finding mystery.

In the wideness of your care we feel your steady hold.

We stand amazed that you love us at all—

tiny pieces of a creation that is already so full of you.

Yet in Jesus we meet your open-handed grace.

In the Spirit you walk beside us,

pushing us into action and filling us with real hope.

Our best thinking never runs out your wisdom,

and our deepest feelings never measure your mercy.

So we bring you our ordinary, honest praise,

Holy God, always Three and always One,

right now and always.

Because we want a clean start with you and with each other,  
we tell you the truth about ourselves:  
Faithful and forgiving God,  
we confess that we do not live out the love and mercy you call us to.  
We cling to old wounds and the habits that feel safe.  
We feed anger and envy instead of starving them.  
We get so wrapped up in ourselves that we turn away from people who need us.  
We soft-pedal evil when it is convenient,  
and we repay small harms with colder silence or sharper words.  
Forgive what we have been.  
Change who we are.  
And point us toward the people we can become—  
people who hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good,  
and overcome darkness with stubborn, practical love—  
all by your generous grace.

**Response:** *I waited, I waited on you, Lord*

### **Assurance of God's pardon**

The Apostle Paul declared that from now on, we regard no one from a human point of view. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Thanks be to God that we can all make a new start through God's embracing grace.

**Musical offering:** Fort Family

### **We listen for the voice of God**

**Song:** *Open our eyes Lord* 445

**Children's time and The Lord's Prayer** 535



*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name;  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as (it is) in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.*

**Song:** *Take up your cross* 211

**Scripture readings:** Jeremiah 15:15-21 & Romans 12:9-21

**Response:** *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet*

**Message:** Called to hate some things

Paul was a Hellenistic Jewish Pharisee. When he planted churches, he did so with an already built-in groundswell of Jewish Christians (People who had been anticipating a Messianic Figure). His church founders and leaders generally had Jewish backgrounds or came from a group called “the God-fearers,” Gentiles sympathetic to Judaism who often worshiped in the outer courts. Not all, but Most of Paul’s books deal with tensions between Jewish Christian subgroups in the Church who often argued about the extent to which newcomers would need to be Jewish before embracing the Jewish Messiah. But Romans is different.

When Paul wrote to the Romans from Jerusalem, possibly in 56 AD, he had never been to the Church there. What’s more, in Rome, the shoe was on the other foot. Seven years before, Emperor Claudius expelled all Jews from Rome (including the Jewish Christ followers). As a result, the only Christians in the Roman church were former pagan converts hiding in plain sight. In other words, they are Gentiles. So, when Paul writes specifically to the Romans about what it means to love one another, he’s not asking Jewish Christians to be more accepting of Gentile Christians (like he would be asking in Philippians, for example). No, instead, he’s asking Gentile Christians to be accepting of **everyone on earth**, including the government authorities who had exiled their brothers and sisters and were about to start executing people. It’s love, not just when it’s easy but when it’s hard. It’s love not for the lovable but for the people you find unworthy. That’s real and sincere love.

Paul starts, “Love must be sincere.”

Dave Davila, age 24, took a job in Chicago and had to leave his close-knit family in East Moline, Illinois. But family gatherings just weren’t the same without Dave. And so, partially as a joke, Dave’s family came up with an idea. And Dave’s mom, who missed him terribly, went ahead and ran with it. She took a digital photo of Dave and had it blown up to Dave’s actual height – 5 feet 8 inches – and mounted it on heavy cardboard from a neighbour’s new refrigerator box. So there’s Dave, standing casually around his mother’s house, hands in pockets, a blue button-down shirt hanging untucked over his khaki shorts. They all call him “Flat Dave”.

At first, Flat Dave just showed up and stood quietly by at family gatherings and Sunday dinners. Then word spread throughout the community and town, until Flat Dave became something of a celebrity in East Moline. Complete strangers came by the house and wanted to pose with him for pictures. Dave’s mom started putting him in the passenger seat when she ran errands around town. As she drives by, people wave to Flat Dave. He even makes appearances at parties.

Sometimes things get somewhat awkward for the real Dave – the one the family now affectionately calls “Thick Dave”.

The real Dave says, “I’m in Chicago talking to my mom on the phone, and she says, ‘Hold on, I’m going shopping, and I’ve got to **load you into the van.**’ It’s a little weird.” (1001 ill. 472)

Flat Dave isn’t bad, and he’s actually a little fun. But he’s no substitute for the real thing, and when “thick Dave” shows up for Holidays, his silly, flatter self gets put in the garage where he belongs.

Paul writes that “Love must be sincere”. Though the passage speaks more accurately in the negative. The word is (Anu-pok-ri-tos) ἀνυπόκριτος *anypokritos* or “without hypocrisy”. The term actually comes from the Greek theatre. Literally, it means “without a mask”. Paul says that, this is what real love is like. It’s totally honest, and nothing is hidden. It’s not some “flat” version of you. It’s the whole, real, revealed you.

The play-acting is over, the costume comes off, and you are left with the real, whole person. That’s where love starts.

And that got me wondering... How many of us truly love sincerely, without barriers or masks... without any tricks or self-centeredness... without ulterior motives, without the person we love being “worthy”, but just completely selflessly?

And how many of us give others a **flat** version of ourselves as a stand-in instead... something that’s nice enough and well-meaning enough, but just not quite the real deal? Like an Instagram page – I think it’s often just a little too perfect, a little too often.

Real love can never be flat. Love, real love, is sincere; it’s maskless and complicated sometimes, and it’s thick.

Paul then continues on by explaining what that kind of love looks like. He begins with, “Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.” Notice Paul does not say, “Hate WHO is evil”. It’s acts he is talking about, not people. And then Paul defines the word love for us by two different kinds of instructions: 1) “10 Be devoted to one another. 2) Honour one another above yourselves.”

Rabbi Michael Weissler lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, about 30 minutes from my mom's place. And for 3 years, a fellow by the name of Larry Trapp (a self-proclaimed Nazi & Ku Klux Klansman) directed a torrent of hate-filled mailings & phone calls toward Rabbi Weissler and his family.

Trapp promoted white supremacy, anti-Semitism, & basically any other messages of prejudice he could find. He was well known locally for declaring his apartment the KKK state headquarters & himself the Grand Dragon. His whole purpose in life was to “promote the white race”.

At first, the Weissler’s were so afraid that they locked their doors and worried themselves almost sick over the safety of their family. But one day Mr. Weissler did a little research, and when he did, he found out that Trapp was actually a 42-year-old clinically blind, double amputee who couldn’t leave his apartment without assistance.

The fear sort of subsided. Weisser became convinced that Trapp's own physical helplessness was actually the true source of his hate, and so Weisser decided to do the unexpected. The next time Trapp called him, yelling about whatever rant he found himself on that day, Weisser **would listen to it (beginning to end)**. So when the call came, Weisser listened **to the whole thing**. 8 minutes of rambling hate speech and swear words about him and his wife and statistics, his synagogue, his people and even strangers he'd never met, and his kids.

No interruptions, no hang-ups, just open ears. And when Trapp **hung up**, Weisser **called him back** to talk some more. After a few days, **Weisser** was leaving his own messages **on Trapp's answering machine**, telling him of another side of life...a life free of hatred and racism. Weisser never said a rude or bad word. He spoke only in the positive. Sure he hated what is evil but he held on only to what is good.

Weisser said, "I probably called 10 times, and I left tons of messages before the Grand Dragon finally picked up the phone again and had a real conversation with me. I remember it well because I remember he asked **me** why **I** was **harassing him**. So, I said that I'd like to **help him**. Nothing amazing; I just offered him a ride to the grocery store or to the mall."

Trapp was stunned. Disarmed by the kindness and simple courtesy, he started thinking. Trapp later admitted, through tears, that what he heard in Weisser's voice was "something I hadn't experienced in years. It was love."

Trapp gave up his position with the KKK and trashed all his Nazi regalia. He's now a regular dinner guest at the Weisser home. Trapp regularly babysits the kids so the parents can go out for a movie.

Paul says, <sup>10</sup>"Be devoted to one another." And remember, this is Romans. Paul's not just talking about the people in the Church (Not just other Christians like you - you disagree with a bit - but outsiders that hate you or want to hurt you, governments that do more harm than good, everyone). The command is not to love other Christians but to love those who hate you. It's not to shout at them. It's love that "honours them," "above ourselves."

Now I don't know about you, but I don't regularly experience the type of anger and hatred that Rabbi Michael Weisser endured.

People don't particularly care for Americans, and as a non-visible minority of sorts, I get a good earful on a pretty regular basis overhearing conversations at the coffee shop, but I don't get people calling my house; that's for sure.

I can't help but think that if Mr. Weisser can be kind in the face of **so much hatred**, then perhaps I can be a little more polite on the phone with customer service, calmer in my car during rush hour, more attentive to my family, a little more thoughtful in my interactions with others, more careful with my words, deal a little better and calmer with what I hear on the news and a million other things.

When I was a kid, I used to watch a lot of old TV reruns. I loved Dr. Who and Abbott and Costello. And I liked the old Lone Ranger. Anybody else remember that show? In the old show, The Lone Ranger had a creed. It was written by Fran Striker. And it's incredibly simple. Does anybody here remember the Ranger's Creed? Kids were asked to stand at attention and recite it as a way of giving some moral lesson to an otherwise rather innocuous program. It made parents feel better about their kids staring at the tube all day. It goes like this: "I believe that to have a friend, a man must be one." (1001 Ill. 331) I'm going to make a tiny change to that: "I believe that to have a friend, a person must be a friend." Paul tells the Romans the same thing. "Be devoted to one another. Honour one another **above** yourselves."

That's what love looks like. It despises **what** is evil (not who), it is honest and unmasked and open, and it confronts evil simply by clinging to what is good, not by emulating anger and hatred and compounding the amount of hate in the world exponentially out of some wrong-headed sense of self-superiority.

Paul continues on saying, "<sup>11</sup> Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, **serving the Lord**. <sup>12</sup> Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer."

I feel like one of the biggest misunderstandings in the Christian Faith today comes from a theological perspective often referred to as "prosperity gospel," which is generally quite prevalent in evangelical congregations. In short, it teaches that if you give to the offering, God will give you back more; that God wants you to be successful and rich and happy; and that if you keep on the straight and narrow, that's exactly what you will be. (In reality, it's basically a twisted version of Karma that is completely incompatible with the Bible.) Still, it is a very prevalent idea.

In fact, just this month I heard someone tell her husband that if he was really following God in his life, his business would be doing better. But is that really what the Bible says?

I mean, if that were true, then what exactly did Jesus do to get poor, tortured and crucified? Why wasn't he rich? Or wasn't he on the straight and narrow? Didn't he pray enough?

The Bible never says the faithful are the most blessed. To the contrary, it says, **blessed are the poor in spirit**, the **meek**, the **widows**. It says, "The rain falls on the just and the unjust alike." And by the way, rain was a good thing. We live here in Edmonton and in the city, so maybe we tend to think rain equals bad sometimes (sometimes our basements agree), but rain is also how our food supply grows. The rain was seen as a blessing. So the verse says blessings come to the righteous and the unrighteous alike. So much for prosperity gospel.

The truth is... Even true, real, honest, thick, unmasked love doesn't mean your life is going to be all good things all the time.

The Bible does say we have to "Be joyful **in hope**".

It says to look forward to things to come with anticipation; to find joy **even in the uncertainty** of things.

It says to be “**patient in affliction**”; to be **longsuffering** just as God is. Not that we won't have pain, **but that we aren't alone in our pain.**

It says to be “faithful in **prayer**”; to give to God the things we can't possibly handle on our own. That is what it says. And all of those things are hard to do from behind a mask while we grumble and give only the thinnest layer of what Love is actually supposed to be to others.

The truth is that this place, our world, is far from perfect. It's a complicated mess, full of people shouting at each other, minds made up, and nobody listening. If you watch the news and you believe it, you probably think it's the end of the world. Every week, someone tells me the sky is falling. Every week the reason changes. And every week, the sky stays exactly where it was before. Essentially, the news media just feeds the little piggies as much hate as we can handle. Of course, if you live in Nigeria right now or Sudan or Congo, you probably look at all the stuff that makes us angry and wonder why we think our issues are so important.

It's not always easy to hate What is evil and cling to what is good. But it never has been.

The Romans kicked the Jewish Christians out and soon took the Gentile Christians to the torture chambers. These are the first people to read and implement this part of the gospel. And if they could do it, we sure better try.

On this side of paradise, there will always be struggles and new evils to face. BUT I will NOT be owned, defined or controlled by it. I won't obsess over it and I won't join in the hate parade.

I am joyful in hope that someday suffering will come to an end because God's love truly does conquer all things.

Until that day is fully realized,

May you Be joyful **in hope**, **patient** in affliction and **faithful in prayer.**

Until that day is fully realized,

May you be sincere in all your relationships,

Leaving the masks behind and the flat version of you in the garage

Until that day is fully realized,

May you be devoted to one another in love, (hating that which is evil not Who you think is)

Until that day is fully realized,

May you honour one another above yourselves (not just the people like you but the people most unlike you, and the ones you don't want to).

**We respond to serve God**

**Our time of giving**

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2. Use Pre-authorized remittance or e-transfer (call the Church Office on Wed or Thurs for info).
3. Click the Donate button on our website (bottom right at [www.DayspringChurch.ca](http://www.DayspringChurch.ca)).
4. On Sundays, ask the Media Team how to use the machine in the Media Room.

**Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession**

O God in whom we live and move and have our being, we come to you in prayer as the summer season draws nearer to its close.

We give you thanks for the occasions we have enjoyed this summer.

Savouring the beauty of your creation right outside our doors, catching up with family and friends, and enjoying times for recreation & restoration.

We recognize how blessed we are with many opportunities to find rest and relaxation in the summer.

Thank you for every good thing that has refreshed us.

Yet we remember those for whom this summer has been difficult: those whose homes and communities have been ravaged by fire, storm or flood; those who go hungry or face violence in forgotten corners of our own community and around the world; Those who face economic struggles at home or at work; those whose crops have withered in heat or drought;

(Keep silence for 10 seconds)

May each one find courage to face tomorrow in your company.

O God, Jesus walked with so many people in their pain and grief. We remember those who have faced crises this summer - through tragic death or unexpected loss, through critical illness or injury, through pain or problems that seem to have no end....

(Keep silence for 10 seconds)

Surround them with your comfort and compassion. O God, Jesus often faced many demands and pressure from his critics.

We pray for all those who have not found rest this summer:

for leaders trying to figure out ways forward for their communities when resources are tight; for those whose jobs and responsibilities present new challenges; and for all who seek secure and affordable housing when supply is low;

(Keep silence for 10 seconds)

May they know your strength and assurance day by day.

O God, we need the embrace of your presence, each in our own way. Bring healing and peace to our lives and to this world you love.

Open our eyes and our hearts so that we may offer healing and peace to those we encounter with hope for the future, and unmasked love in our lives. Amen.

**Song:** *I, the Lord of sea and sky*      592

### **Sending out with God's blessing**

Moses met God unexpectedly, as a bush burst into flame. Consider that you may meet God in unexpected places, for God can make any place holy ground. So may the God of mystery embrace you; the Christ of mercy renew you; and the Spirit of life move with you through each new day.

**Response:** *Go forth into the world*

### ***Music postlude***

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