

Worship on Truth and Reconciliation Sunday

10:00 am September 27, 2026

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

Vocalist: Lynn Vaughan Elder: Renita MacCallum

Children's time : Vivian Houg Reader: Carlos Sheridan

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: As we gather, we come together as people of the cross and resurrection.

P: We come as children of the Father

L: Reconciled by grace through the Son

P: And filled with God's love through the Spirit

Opening praise: *How great is our God*

Prayers of approach and confession

Our Lord, we come before you as a very imperfect people in a very imperfect world. We confess that we often do little to improve what is around us.

We harbour bitterness, pride, and judgmental attitudes. We claim that our hatred for some people is justified; we make jokes about it in order to defend our anger and point to evil people instead of evil deeds and practices. We fetishize holy anger. We refuse to remove the plank from our own eyes before attacking others made in Your holy image, and we forget that the people we despise are also people for whom Christ died.

Most often we do not intend to do wrong. Yet we hurl harsh criticisms, pretend to have righteous indignation, and curse those we should bless, gossiping about people instead of talking to them.

We harm others emotionally, focus too much on ourselves, and become jealous of what is in our neighbours' yards or on social media, while forgetting all we have. We help just enough to stay safe but keep a distance from those who need us most. While we should be praying for and encouraging others, we prefer to leave them to their own devices and blame them for not doing better.

We are often the shortest with the people we claim to love the most, and we reject reconciliation even though we are not above preaching it. At times we simply withhold kindness. We treat You as secondary and Your Word as optional. Genuine devotion and trust are rare, and we hold onto idols like success, approval, and control—all of which compete with You, our Lord, for priority. We find Your promises

hard to believe and Your grace harder still to accept.

We practice favouritism not only toward people of the same race or political views but also based on how useful they can be to us. We pass by those without homes, ignore those who are sick with addictions, and chase money and prominence. We look into closets filled with clothes and claim we have nothing to wear, just as we stare into refrigerators and pantries filled with food while claiming there is nothing to eat. We have multiple coats but will not give up even one for someone who has nothing. We pit justice and mercy against each other, insist on being right more than being loving, and fail to live up to the standards for which we were made.

We call on You now for mercy, knowing and believing that it has already been offered and that our sins were forgiven long before we came to ask.

Creator God of love and justice, we acknowledge the sin of your church, our complicity in colonization and residential schools, taking children from their families. We are sorry and we repent. We commit to work for truth, healing and reconciliation, but we recognize that for many, that change comes too late.

Creator God, hear our prayer and send healing.

Comforting God, we pray for

healing for the families of all impacted by residential schools, for the nations whose children and futures were taken, and for those whose children, siblings, family and friends were taken from home but did not return.

Jesus, hear our prayer and send healing.

We repent and renew our commitment to walk a new path. We honour the children lost and pray for strength and healing for all those still living with the harm the schools caused.

For ourselves, we ask for transformation and for the will to do the work reconciliation requires.

Holy Spirit, hear our prayer and send healing. .

Forgive us, Lord, for all that we have been or done in error. Lead us to see our mistakes, help us reflect on our wrongs, and show us new and better paths to follow, so that we may become more and more like Your Son with each passing moment, reflecting Your light and rebuilding the world around us as You see fit. Forgive us, Lord, in Your loving mercy. Amen

Response: *I will trust in the Lord*

Assurance of God's pardon

Scripture says:

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) And again: "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (Romans 8:1) So hear this clearly:

In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Your guilt is taken away. You are washed clean. You are accepted and loved—not because you have earned it, but because Christ has already paid for it in full.

Believe this good news.
Live in the freedom it gives.
And go forward with gratitude and hope. Amen.

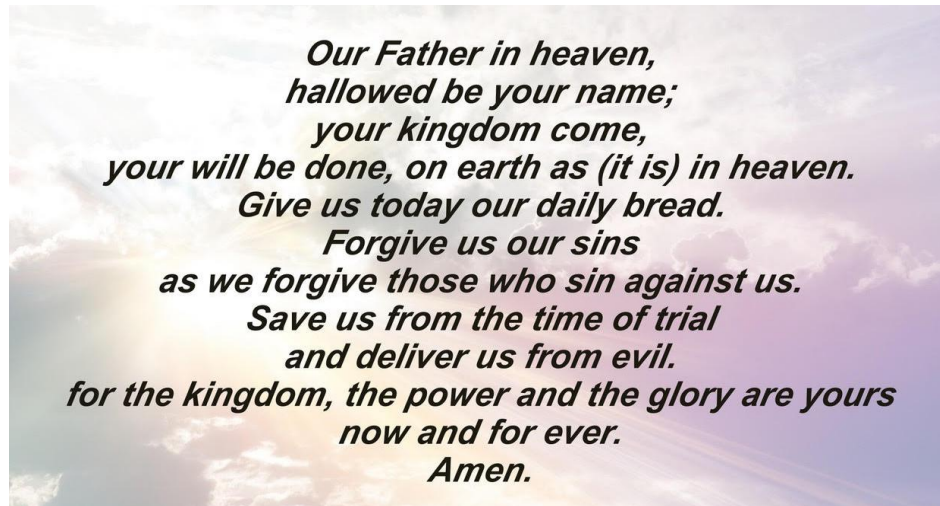
We listen for the voice of God

Song: *Jesus loves me*

373

Children's time and Lord's Prayer

535



Song: *When the spirit of the Lord moves in my soul*

398

Scripture readings: Philippians 2:1–13 % Matthew 21:23–32

Response: *Glory to the Father*

Message: Thoughts and Prayers

When Jesus is asked where his authority comes from, he answers with a parable about two sons and how they respond to their father's will. In life, we have choices, and one is whether we will be the first son in the story or the second.

We hear it all the time. Someone faces loss or hardship, and the replies pour in almost immediately: “My thoughts and prayers are with you.” Those words can be sincere. Prayer matters deeply. Caring thoughts matter. They can bring real comfort when offered from a genuine heart. But the book of James reminds us that faith without action is incomplete. Words alone do not feed the hungry or help the hurting. Real love also shows up and does the work. It is easy to speak kindly from a distance. It is harder to step into someone’s need and actually carry some of the weight with them.

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, the chief priests and elders came to him and demanded to know the source of his authority to teach. Their question was like a manager asking an employee in front of the whole team, “When did you stop cutting corners on your reports?” Whether the employee says “I never did” or tries to explain the question itself is designed to make them look guilty. The religious leaders did the same to Jesus, framing a question with no safe answer. They were not

seeking truth. They were setting a snare.

They expected a parable reply: either a claim of divine authority, which they could twist into a charge of blasphemy, or an admission of merely human authority, which they could dismiss since they had never authorized him. The question was never a genuine request for information. The leaders already opposed Jesus. They wanted evidence they could use against him either publicly before the crowds or later in legal proceedings. It was more like a skeptical friend who asks, "So why do you believe God is real?" only to interrupt the moment you begin answering with, "See, that doesn't prove anything." Their goal was never understanding. It was to look superior or shut the conversation down. They had already made up their minds. The exchange was only a formality designed to protect their own position.

Jesus sidesteps the trap by asking them a question of his own: Where did John the Baptist's authority come from, from heaven or men? Because John was popular with the people, the leaders were afraid to condemn him, so they claimed they didn't know. In effect, Jesus turned the tables on them. It was like a teenager being grilled by a parent: "Who said you could take the car?" who calmly replies, "Did you give my older brother permission last weekend when he did the exact same thing?" Suddenly the parent is the one on the defensive. Jesus forces the leaders to confront the authority they had already rejected in John. Their silence revealed more than any answer could have. Then he tells them, "If you won't tell me where John's authority came from, neither will I tell you where mine comes from." He would not play their game on their terms.

Next Jesus tells a parable. A father asks his two sons to work in the vineyard. The first says "No," but later changes his mind and goes.

I suspect we've all done this at some point. Here's a little story I came across this week. Marcus's dad asked him to mow the lawn before the family cookout that evening. Marcus didn't even look up from his phone. "No way. I've got plans with my friends. I'm not doing it."

An hour later, while hanging out at the park, Marcus kept thinking about the look on his dad's face. The cookout mattered to the whole family, and the yard was a mess. He finally sighed, told his friends he'd catch up with them later, and headed home. Without saying another word, he pulled the mower out of the garage and finished the whole lawn just before the first guests arrived. He never made a big speech about changing his mind. He just did what needed to be done. This is the first son. He started with refusal but ended with obedience. His actions finally matched the father's request.

The second son immediately says "Yes," yet never goes. And did you notice that the second son adds a little flair to his answer too? He says "Yes, sir."

Who here remembers the show Leave It to Beaver?

Eddie Haskell was the master of sounding respectful. Whenever he stood in the

Cleavers' living room, he turned on the charm. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Cleaver. That's a lovely dress you're wearing. Is there anything I can do to help around the house?" Mrs. Cleaver would smile and say, "Why, Eddie, how thoughtful. Would you mind taking the trash out for me?"

Eddie would place a hand over his heart. "Of course, Mrs. Cleaver. I'd be happy to. You can count on me." Then he'd flash that smooth smile, walk out the front door, and head straight to Wally's room to plan their next scheme, completely forgetting the trash.

Later, when Mrs. Cleaver noticed the cans still sitting by the garage, Eddie would already be long gone, or if caught, he'd have another polite excuse ready. He said all the right words. He just never did the work. He specialized in looking cooperative while remaining completely unreliable.

That's the second son in Jesus' parable: the one who answers "Yes sir" with perfect manners, then never goes to the vineyard. His words were polished. His follow-through was nonexistent.

Jesus asks which son did the will of the father. The answer is obvious: the one who actually went, not the one with the polite words. It's like two coworkers asked to stay late for a critical project. The first groans, "I can't tonight," but later texts that he'll come in early and gets the work done. The second cheerfully says, "Absolutely count on me!" then never shows up. Who actually helped the team? The one whose actions matched the need. Polite promises mean little when the work is still waiting.

Jesus then drives the point home. It is not the religious leaders who claimed to follow God who are doing the Father's will, but the marginalized outcasts the tax collectors and prostitutes who believed John repented and responded. Jesus says they will enter the kingdom of God ahead of the chief priests. It is like a church that holds a special outreach dinner. Many of the long-time members who know all the right answers stay home or arrive late. But a group of new people, some with messy pasts, some who had never set foot in a church, show up early, listen carefully, and stay to help clean up. The ones who looked least likely were the ones who actually responded. Their lives had been changed, and it showed in what they did, not just in what they said.

So when we say "My thoughts and prayers are with you," let's mean it. Prayer is powerful. Care is real. But Jesus is clear: words without action fall short. The first son eventually did the work. The first son was the crowd who accepted that John and Jesus' authority came from God and changed their lives because of it. The second son only talked about it. He represents the chief priests who talked a good game but only had their words.

The same choice stands before us every day. We can offer polite spiritual language and walk away, or we can let our faith move us into real obedience. The question Jesus leaves us with is simple. Which son are we?

We respond to serve God

Our time of giving

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Prayer of thanksgiving and intercession

We bring you our prayers for the world, for people and communities harmed by conflict and war, discrimination and hate, poverty and injustice. We pray for our loved ones, and for our neighbours, both friend and stranger.

reator God, you created us in your image and set us in the world to live in peace with you and one another. We pray for those facing hunger or housing insecurity. We pray for those who are hurt and hurting because of discrimination related to race, class, or gender. We pray for those facing conflict and war, and those who love and are afraid for their sake. Bring your comfort and justice.

Comforting God, we pray for strength and healing for Survivors, intergenerational Survivors, their families and communities, and all people who were impacted by residential schools. May your loving care bring strength and courage for healing.

God of transforming love, the wounds of injustice continue to this day, imbedded in the fabric of our institutions and governments. Let your compassion and wisdom flow through all public policies and practices. Where power is hoarded, bring your equity and justice. Where racism is resisted, bring your courage and strength to acknowledge and address it. We pray that our communities, churches and country will be places where there is justice and where people protect the dignity of all creation.

We pray:

...for people whose bodies, minds and souls are in pain and those struggling with physical or mental illness;

...for people who experience violence in their relationships, in their home, workplace, community or country, and for those who have been displaced by war, unjust economic systems, the climate crisis, and ongoing impacts of colonization around the world;

...for people living with housing insecurity: where home is inadequate for the needs of the people it must shelter, is unsafe, unaffordable, or inaccessible;

...for people who are struggling with economic insecurity, barriers to education or employment, unfairness in policies or practices, for those struggling with the cost of food;

...for people at the frontlines of social support systems who daily face the evidence of systemic injustice and continue to strive for the safety and dignity of people and creation. ...for human rights advocates, land defenders and peacebuilders; strengthen and empower them.

Song: *Go ye, go ye into the world* 755

Sending out with God's blessing

Go into God's good creation praying that the Spirit will open our minds to receive truth, open our hearts to seek peace, and strengthen our bodies to work for justice. Let the Spirit guide you in ways of love and justice, to walk lightly and humbly and seek truth, reconciliation, healing, and wholeness. And may the blessing of Creator, Christ and Spirit rest upon you this day and everyday.

Response: *Benediction (as you go)*

Music postlude

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