

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH

July 30, 2023

Worship Leader: Rev. Lorrie Lowes

Women in the Bible – Hagar

** The live service will be broadcasted and recorded on YouTube, check your email for the link.*

Gathering Music:

*** *Hymn:* Come, Let Us Sing VU222**

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Come, let us sing to the Lord our song;
we have stood silently too long;
surely the Lord deserves our praise,
so joyfully thank God for our days.

O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;
God's living waters will never fail.
Surely the Lord will help you to stand,
strengthened and comforted by God's hand.

You dwell among us and cause us to pray,
and walk with each other following your way;
our precious brothers and sisters will grow
in the fulfilling love they know.

Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing
to the desire of all living things.
Come, all you creatures, high and low;
let your praises endlessly flow.

***Lighting of Christ Candle:* Acolyte: Bev Wilcox**

(Mary Grant, Gathering Pentecost 2 2023. Used with permission.)

With thankful hearts, we gather here where the doors are wide open to all. We come with open hearts and open minds, thankful that we are children of the light of Christ.

Sung Response: Where Two or Three are Gathered – More Voices 14

Where two or three are gathered in my name

I am there, I am there.

(Repeat...)

Welcome & Centering for Worship:

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

Good Morning! I welcome you this morning, friends, family and visitors, for the fifth service in our series on women in the Bible. This week, we will hear the story of Hagar and her relationship to Abraham and Sarah

Please join us in the Main Hall after the service for coffee, refreshments and conversation. announcements...

Friends, I now invite you to centre yourselves in the company of this faith family and in the presence of the Spirit, as we gather for worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively)

(Gill Le Fevre, Gathering Pentecost 2 2023. Used with permission.)

Seeking God's way, unsure of what lies ahead,

Let the wisdom of God's word help us learn to love.

Confronted by difficulty, stretched by possibility,

Let the strength of God's faith help us grow in love.

Challenged by setbacks, disconcerted or confused,

Let the promise of God's grace help us persist in love.

Prayer of Approach: (Responsively)

(Gill Le Fevre, Gathering Pentecost 2 2023. Used with permission.)

When our days hurt like a wilderness, empty of nourishment, deserted of hope,

You call to us with your Spirit, comforting and sustaining us.

If all around us shadows loom, and our resolve is tested, our faith challenged,

You bless us with your presence, strengthening our hearts each day.

Whenever our troubles appear unyielding, the pain unrelenting in our world,

You abide, unyielding by our side; your love is unrelenting in our lives.

For this we thank you, gracious God, as we come to worship. Amen.

Time for the Young at Heart Tamara Connors

The Prayer of Jesus / The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kin-dom come, thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

**Give us this day our daily bread, And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory,

Forever and ever, Amen.

***Song: Draw the Circle Wide** MV145

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Chorus:

Draw the circle wide.

Draw it wider still.

Let this be our song,

No one stands alone,

Standing side by side,

Draw the circle wide.

God the still-point of the circle,
'round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms. *Chorus*

Let our hearts touch far horizons,
so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call. *Chorus*

Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door. *Chorus*

Prayer for Illumination: (Unison)

Reader: Ruth Howes

(Sheryl McLeod, Gathering Pentecost 1 2021. Used with permission.)

We gather this day to experience something new in the old, old stories.

We gather this day to simply be with you.

Open our senses, Loving God, so that we may experience you extravagantly and know you more deeply. Amen.

The Scripture Reading: Genesis 16: 1-16 (NIV)

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; ² so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. ³ So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. ⁴ He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. ⁵ Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you and me.”

⁶ “Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

⁷ The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. ⁸ And he said, “Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?”

“I’m running away from my mistress Sarai,” she answered.

⁹ Then the angel of the LORD told her, “Go back to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel added, “I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count.”

¹¹ The angel of the LORD also said to her:

“You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael,
for the LORD has heard of your misery.

¹² He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone’s hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward all his brothers.”

¹³ She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: “You are the God who sees me,” for she said, “I have now seen the One who sees me.” ¹⁴ That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne.

¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

**May we find wisdom in the ancient stories of our faith.
Amen.**

Ministry of Music: George Young

"Put Your Hand In The Hand"
(Lyrics/arr Gene MacLellan)

Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea
Take a look at yourself and you can look at others differently
By putting your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee

Every time I look into the holy book I wanna tremble
When I read about the part where the carpenter cleared the temple
For the buyers and the sellers were no different fellers than what I profess to be
And it causes me shame to know I'm not the man that I should be

Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea
Take a look at yourself and you can look at others differently
By putting your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee

Momma taught me how to pray before I reached the age of seven
When I'm down on my knees, that's when I'm close to heaven
Daddy lived his life with two kids and a wife; you do what you must do
But he showed me enough of what it takes to get you through

Put your hand in the hand of the man who stilled the water
Put your hand in the hand of the man who calmed the sea
Take a look at yourself and you can look at others differently
By putting your hand in the hand of the man from Galilee

Sermon: Rev. Lorrie Lowes

Hymn: In Star and Crescent MV159

Words: Mary Louise Bringle, 2001. Music: Jane Best ,2006

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1. In star and crescent, wheel and flame
 In rugged cross and empty tomb,
 We image forth one matchless name,
 One holy matrix, font and womb.
 Though Different cultures, tribes, and lands
 Use lenses ground to differing sight,
 Each colour of the prism's hands
 Refracts from one all dazzling light.
2. In burning incense, tithing gifts,
 In breaking bread and pouring wine,
 Each act of ardent worship lifts

Our human hearts to Love Divine.
In Buddhist chant and Muslim prayer,
In shofar, drum, and sacred song,
The music thankful spirits share
Give praise in voices millions strong.

3. With varied hopes and dreams and creeds,
All tiles in one mosaic whole,
We serve our God in faithful deeds
On pathways to one common goal.
No Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free,
No male and female set apart,
But all are one, as family
Held close within our Maker's heart.

Prayers of the People: Rev. Lorrie

Holy One,

As we hear the ancient stories through our modern lens, we are struck by the roles that people in the background played in the history of our quest to know you and follow your path to building your kin-dom on earth. Be with us this month as we uncover the stories of women who heard your call and took the risk to answer at a time when women's voices were suppressed.

We pray today for all who are considered outsiders in our world because of their different faith, language, or background. Help us see the wealth of experience, knowledge, and wisdom they have to offer us. Remind us of your call to love our neighbours and open our eyes to the richness they bring to the world.

We pray for all who have been displaced from their homes through wars or politics, or economic situations, all those who have fled for safety and the promise of a better life. Let us welcome them into this rich land we call home, that it may become home to them as well.

We pray for our hurting world, for rising temperatures, and the destruction this causes in the form of storms, wildfires and floods and drought. Help us find solutions before more damage is done to the ecosystems that sustain this wondrous creation. Give our leaders wisdom to heed the advice of the scientists and environmentalists who have the knowledge to find those solutions. Let us put the health of the planet before the concerns about politics and economics.

We pray for all those we know and love who are suffering in any way. We pray for those who are travelling, and for those who are staying close to home. Let us spread joy. Let us give support and encouragement where needed. Let us practise love each day. Let us bless each other as you have blessed us.

All these things we express aloud and all the concerns we hold in our hearts, we bring to you, O God. Amen.

Musical Offering: George Young
(O Siem lyrics/arr Susan Aglukark and Chad Irschick/Tony Bovy)

“O Siem”

Chorus

O Siem, we are all family
O Siem, we're all the same
O Siem, the fires of freedom
Dance in the burning flame

Siem o siyeya, all people rich and poor
Siem o siyeya, those who do and do not know
Siem o siyeya, take the hand of one close by
Siem o siyeya, of those who know because they try
And watch the walls come tumbling down

Chorus

Siem o siyeya, all people of the world
Siem o siyeya, it's time to make the turn
Siem o siyeya, a chance to share your heart
Siem o siyeya, to make a brand new start
And watch the walls come tumbling down

Chorus

[*bridge*]

Fires burn in silence
Hearts in anger bleed
Wheel of change is turning
For the ones who truly need
To see the walls come tumbling down

Chorus x2

Invitation to Offer:

As people of the Way, we are called to spread God's love to all those who share in the life of this world. We do this in the way we live and in sharing our many blessings. We are invited to offer our gifts of time, talent, and treasure as symbols of our acceptance of God's call.

You will find the offering plates on the narthex table. There are many additional ways you can financially support the work of the church – through PAR, by dropping into the office or by e-transfer. Thank you for your continued love and support of Bells Corners United Church.

***Offertory Hymn: Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow – VU #541**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise God all creatures, high and low;
Give thanks to God in love made known: Creator, Word, and Spirit, One.

***Offertory Prayer: (Unison)**

Gary Simpson, Gathering Pentecost 2 2023. Used with permission.)

**Gracious God,
Bless our gifts of hearts and lives.
Bless our offerings.
Multiply what our gifts can do.
Use our gifts to end inequity and oppression. Amen.**

***Hymn: Deep in Our Hearts MV154**

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Deep in our hearts, there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts, there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts, there is a common story;
Telling Creation that we are one.

Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;
deep in our hearts there is a common goal;
deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,
justice and peace in harmony.

Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;
deep in our hearts there is a common theme;
deep in our hearts there is a common current,
flowing to freedom like a stream.
Deep in our hearts, there is a common vision;
Deep in our hearts, there is a common song;
Deep in our hearts, there is a common story;
Telling Creation that we are one.

***Sending Forth:**

(Susan Ivany, Gathering Pentecost 1 2023. Used with permission)

Friends, go from here knowing you are loved.
Go from here knowing that amidst all of life's uncertainties,
God's love for you is constant and unchanging. Amen.

Sung Blessing: Like A Rock - More Voices #92

Like a rock, like a rock, God is under our feet.

Like the starry night sky, God is over our head.

Like the sun on the horizon, God is ever before.

Like the river runs to ocean, our home is in God evermore.

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Departing Music: