

*Common Worship in Separate Places  
For the people of Elmwood Avenue Presbyterian Church  
London, Ontario  
and their friends*

*Trinity Sunday  
10:30 a.m.  
7 June 2020*

*To cross the threshold into worship, light a candle and keep a moment of silence.*

*Opening Words*

L: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.

**P: Heaven and earth are full of God's glory.**

L: Let us worship God.

*Prayers of Adoration and Confession*

We bind unto ourselves this day the strong name of the Trinity; by invocation of the same, the Three-in-One and One-in-Three; of whom all nature has creation, eternal Father, Spirit, Word. Praise to the Lord of our salvation; salvation as of Christ the Lord. Glory be to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God forever.

God of mercy, help us to face all that is not right with us, with your Church, and with your world. Have we failed again to love you, to be merciful to each other, to be just in all our dealings with your creation? If there is anything false within us, correct it by your truth. If we are indifferent to the suffering of those who are different, kindle the flame of your love. If we are blind to our own injustice, mend us with your strong righteousness and peace.

L: Lord, have mercy upon us;

**P: Christ, have mercy upon us;**

L: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Holy One, your name is veiled in mystery, yet we dare to call you Father; your Son was begotten before all ages, yet is born among us in time; your Holy Spirit fills the whole creation, yet is poured forth now into our hearts. Draw us more deeply into your divine life, that we may glorify you, through your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever. *Amen*

*An Assurance of Pardon*

L: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son." May God grant us pardon, true repentance, and bring us to eternal life.

**P: May the peace of Christ be with us all.**

### *Prayer for Illumination*

Holy One, open our minds to the movement of your Spirit, speaking in your Word; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

### *The Psalm for the Day*

**Psalm 8** (*A celebration of Divine Majesty and Human Dignity*)

O Lord, our Sovereign,  
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
 You have set your glory above the heavens.  
 Out of the mouths of babes and infants  
 you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,  
 to silence the enemy and the avenger.  
 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
 the moon and the stars that you have established;  
 what are human beings that you are mindful of them,  
 mortals that you care for them?  
 Yet you have made them a little lower than God,  
 and crowned them with glory and honour.  
 You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
 you have put all things under their feet,  
 all sheep and oxen,  
 and also the beasts of the field,  
 the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
 whatever passes along the paths of the seas.  
 O Lord, our Sovereign,  
 how majestic is your name in all the earth!

*(Said together)* **Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
 as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen***

### *The Reading for the Day*

**Genesis 1:1 – 2:3** (*God's Six Days of Creative Work, and a Sabbath Day of Rest*)

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.'

And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

**P: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

### *Some thoughts on the Reading.*

**Genesis 2:3** *"God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."*

This is the first Sabbath. God rests on the seventh day. Why?

God is not exhausted. God doesn't need a nap after six days of hard labour, having toiled to get things just right. Yet God has spared a day, built into the very structure of creation, to be still and behold what he has made, to contemplate the sheer goodness of his beautiful creation, and then to delight in it. Such delight is the *point*, the 'end game' of God's creating work.

The world was made to be delighted in. So were we. That's why the last Day of Creation was the first Sabbath Day.

We know what this delight feels like. As a boy, I'd make a village with houses made from Lego. I'd populate it with Matchbox cars, Hot Wheels, contraptions made from my Meccano Set, and an electric train purloined from my brother.

This was all play, sheer play; yet it was serious work too. There was the labour of assembling it and setting it up just so. Then there was the 'fun work' of playing with it for hours, getting lost in the world I'd made, pretending it was all real.

Summoned to bed, I'd stand up, but stall. I wasn't yet finished my play (are we ever?). My parents didn't understand this, but I couldn't say good night to the little world I'd made without first gazing upon it, and to take my time doing it. I drank it all in with a feeling of supreme happiness, as if from a God's eye view.

Our neglect of Sabbath rest has hurt us deeply and damaged our society. This neglect severs us from our source. It induces amnesia. We forget the whole point of being a human being. We forget how to *rest* in the divine source at the root of our being, who made us for joy, both his and ours. We lose the ability to revel in the image of God within us, to be creative, playful, loving, and free.

Ignoring the Sabbath, we lose touch with our very reason for being. We become supremely unhappy and we don't know why.

The only reason we can imagine for a break from work is to rest up for more work. What other point to life could there be but work, work, and more work? But even donkeys need sleep so they can work the next day.

The only other reason for ceasing from work would be to flee its prison-house altogether, temporarily; to escape into its opposite, distraction and hedonism; to vacate the workplace by taking a vacation.

But no. A sabbatical is not a vacation. The instinct for Sabbath rest, says Genesis, is built right into our reason for being. Our 'chief end' will never be satisfied by higher productivity on the assembly line or a higher score on a video game.

We need Sabbath rest to keep in touch with the point and purpose of life itself. We need it to rejoice in life's goodness and beauty. We need it to contemplate the dignity and freedom of being human. We need it to experience ourselves and each other as people with value because we bear God's image. We need it to remind ourselves we're not machines for production or units of consumption.

Beethoven is supposed to have wept with joy the first time he heard his music played by someone else. It wasn't enough just to compose those astonishing works. It wasn't enough to play them aloud for himself. He had to hear someone else playing his work for the enjoyment of others. Only then was *his* joy complete.

And in completion there is rest, Sabbath rest.

Michelangelo's 'Creation' on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel shows God reaching for Adam, and Adam reaching for God. They seem to stare at each other. Their fingers all but touch, but there's still a small gap.

The story of creation – the story of our lives – is the long, long journey to close that gap. But whose journey is it, God's or ours? Both, of course. God's face is the face of Jesus gazing upon us with delight. But his face is also *our* face gazing back to God with an equal delight. In him, the hand of Adam and the hand of God finally clasp.

He closes the gap in true communion. He completes our life's journey in the joy of our homecoming, our Sabbath rest.

### ***Prayers of Intercession***

Holy Lord, from the empty void of nothing, you called forth your Creation. You hold us now in being with a willing love. You reveal yourself in a human life, in the person of your Word made flesh. You pour forth your Spirit into all of life, and guide us

with Holy Wisdom. You invite us, your troubled people, to gather the world's needs into our hearts and bring them before you. Hear the Church's prayer.

L: Lord in your mercy

**P: Hear our prayer**

Living Lord, in you all life begins and ends. We pray for your whole Church. Since we cannot gather to see each other, help us to see ourselves as rays from the one sun, branches of a single tree, and streams flowing to one ocean. Keep us united to you, and therefore to each other. Strengthen our place within the whole body of Christ, and make us ever joyful to know you and love you.

L: Lord in your mercy

**P: Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who have had enough, those who are sick of being sick, and those who despair of ever being happy again. Help them to be once more in love with life, to wrestle with its chaos and pain, and not to give up, but to accept and live with incurable illness and unanswerable questions. Let your Holy Spirit heal them, if that may be; but above all be near them. Create within in them a new delight in their own vitality in fellowship with you.

L: Lord in your mercy

**P: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for artists and authors, for musicians and actors, for scientists and thinkers, for builders and designers, teachers and pupils, helpers and healers, and for all who commit their minds, bodies, and spirits to make good, creative use of this life. Help us to dare our own purpose true, and dare to make it known, for the common good and for your glory.

L: Lord in your mercy

**P: Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the earth. Creator of Life, all things exist through your Word and live in the energy of your Spirit. Show us how to love not only our pets and gardens, but all animals and birds, all fish and insects and reptiles, all green and growing things. You made the soil, the sea, and the sky. Do not let us vandalise the earth you commissioned us to care for.

L: Lord in your mercy

**P: Hear our prayer.**

We remember before you those who have died. We give thanks for every good memory of those who lived by faith in the Word made flesh. Help us, like them, to trust in your grace, to live justly in this world, and rejoice in the world to come, where, with all the saints, we shall find rest in your love and reason for praise...*(keep a time of silence in God's presence)*....

L: Lord in your mercy

**P: Hear our prayer.**

God the Holy Trinity, you invite us into your joyful being. Help us know you in each beginning we make, in all sustenance, and in every redemption. Then complete the work of your love, that all who have communion in Christ may come to share fully the undying life he lives with you, and holy rest, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. *Amen***

***Benediction***

*(Said together)* **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever. *Amen***