

Southside Uniting Worship Online

24 May 2020 Rev David MacGregor

Commitments: respecting differences, incl. theologies



To access the worship service go to
<https://livestream.com/ggservices/ssuc>

Families with children are encouraged to use family faith materials
Ps Richard Moors has made available.

Preparing for worship
Find a comfortable space,
e.g. around a table or living
room ... and light a candle

Gathering with God

As you light a candle, say

This candle is lit to remind us today of the presence of the risen Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. God is present with us and through us, to one another. ***The Light keeps shining in the darkness and the darkness has never put it out.*** (John 1:5)

Opening Prayer

You are invited to pray this prayer aloud.

Gentle God:

We are on many pathways
Through this bewildering season
Yet we're here to worship you
Many pathways, many stories
Yet we share one baptism;
we come to you from different backgrounds
from different traditions of church,
yet share one faith;
we are, each of us, unique and precious to God,
and are members of one Body;
we have different dreams and doubts,
yet our hearts beat with one hope;
we are graced with different gifts,
so we may offer them in service to one Lord.

God in Community, Holy in One,
equip us for the work of ministry,

as we pray together with one voice,
as Jesus has taught us, saying,
Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as 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 forever. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Thom Shuman
<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com>

Song

Praise with Joy the World's Creator

We engage with the Word of God

- ***Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 4:1-6, 15-16***
- ***Reflections from three books***

Song

All are Welcome

Offering

We take a moment to set aside our offering to God's mission and
pray a prayer of blessing over it.



Prayers of Thanksgiving & Intercession

We thank you, gracious God,
that you acknowledge and honour the little people,
the kind people, the people who give all they have
and all they are for the sake of others.
(hold silence. You may then wish to say aloud the names of people God has brought to mind).

We pray, loving God,
for all known to us, all we read or hear about on our daily news,
and all whose plight is unknown
who struggle at this time in body, mind, spirit or relationship.
Loving God we pray for peace, hope, compassion and healing,
(hold silence. You may then wish to say aloud the names of people God has brought to mind).

Draw us into the community of those who love you
more than they love the plaudits of the world,
and show us how to encourage one another
in the faith that turned the world upside down then,
and would do the same now.
We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who gave all for love of all.
Amen.

Affirmation / Blessing – Love Has Not Been Cancelled

Say this aloud. If with another person or more, share the sentences around.

Love has not been cancelled.
Mercy has not been cancelled.
Prayer has not been cancelled.
Attentiveness has not been cancelled.
Goodness has not been cancelled.
Thanksgiving has not been cancelled.
Loving relationships have not been cancelled.
Kindness has not been cancelled.
Music has not been cancelled.
Conversations have not been cancelled.
Learning has not been cancelled.
Poetry and storytelling have not been cancelled.

Courage has not been cancelled.
Meditation and contemplation have not been cancelled.
Families have not been cancelled.
Faith has not been cancelled.
Hope has not been cancelled.
And ... God's presence with us, has not been cancelled.

David Haas

The light of God
to lead us.
The power of God
to hold us.
The joy of God
to heal us.
The grace of God
to touch us.

Iona Abbey Worship Book

Sending

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen.



LOVE
IS NOT
CANCELLED.

Sermon notes: respecting differences, incl. theologies

The past four Sundays we have engaged these commitments

1. Being Christ centred
2. Developing healthy relationships
3. Pursuing God's mission
4. Being open to change

Today: Respecting differences ... including theologies

Today, we tap into three books, three very different books to address that commitment...

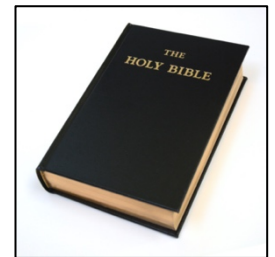
Respecting differences ... including theologies

The first book: *The Day the Crayons Quit*



The second book – the Holy Bible. Paul, in Ephesians 4:1-6; 15-16 speaks into our commitment focus for today

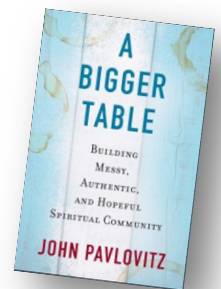
As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all ... Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. + From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work



The third book: *A Bigger table (Building messy, authentic and hopeful spiritual community)*. In this profound book, John Pavlovitz offers a different image:

the image ... the call to make ... to form a bigger table. Pavlovitz, a pastor, writer and speaker recalls how special meals at holiday time were in his home growing up in the States. People everywhere, they outgrew the kitchen table and graduated to the dining room table where in his words, new faces would appear, new connections made.

As we consider our theme of respecting differences, we need constant reminding and indeed encouragement from Jesus' who looked at relationships through the lens of welcome, whose table ministry was profound as he used the act of sharing a meal, the act for breaking bread, to let people know they were seen and heard and known and respected. Isn't that we aspire to at SSUC ... that everyone feels they are seen and heard and known and respected?



Says Pavlovitz:

Jesus models a better way. He fully engages all sides and teaches them about one another in the process. For him the table is a tool of connection. It transcends difference. It bridges disagreement. It declares the other welcomed and worthy of hearing ... This is the very heart of the bigger table... It's not about winning theological discussions or defending world-views ... It is about tangibly living in a way that responds to what we believe about our own belovedness and about the belovedness of those we live alongside. It is about knowing and being known and trying to incarnate Jesus in our midst in the process and trusting God with whatever happens in the wake of that ... There is simply ... a real time, relational, intentional communing with others in redemptive community.

Pavlovitz reminds us that as we respect difference, we are able to see Christ in the other; including the other who is different in their outlook and their theology. For all of us, it's when we begin to see our discipleship as sitting with people and listening to their stories, respecting difference; being open to all will enrich, that we will build community in Christ together. Says Pavlovitz:

And once we view a person in the illuminating light of actual relationship, we can't help but see the God in them; we feel the presence of the divine; we welcome Jesus into our midst as we meet with them.