

Sunday, September 20, 2026
Creation Time 3

Welcome and Acknowledgements

Welcome to Roxboro United Church.

Before we can begin our worship,

we need to acknowledge that the land we live on is God's land.

Called Turtle Island for thousands of years by the people in this region:

Abenakis, Algonquin, Eeyou, Huron-Wendat, Innu, Kanien'kehá:ka, Mi'kmaq
and others, who were and are faithful stewards to the Creator's land.

We worship together today seeking reconciliation, justice and well being
for all the beings, flora and fauna, who live here.

We also acknowledge that the Church has made itself the gate keeper of the faith,
excluding many for their gender, sexuality and ability.

Roxboro United is an Affirming Ministry of The United Church of Canada
and has made public declaration of the past and ongoing sin of the Church
in denying membership and participation, and openly seeking to dehumanize
those who identify with the 2SLGBTQ+ communities.

At Roxboro you find a place of welcome, sacredness, affirmation and community.
All are welcome here.

Now we can worship God.

Centring Music

*My hands by Carol Lynn Pearson & Lex de Azevedo
performed by The Band*

Call for Awareness

Loosely based on Psalm 105 by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Awake my body, awake my soul!

Today I will remember my connection to the sacred.

I will gain strength from God's presence.

God has done wonders, some even feeling like miracles.

Sing of God's presence from the tiny cells of your body to every moment.

Awake my sacred being.

Song

Your Love Is Amazing **MV26**

Candle Lighting

A Time of Centring

Take this moment to centre yourself deeply in the love of God
and prepare yourself for an encounter with the Holy.

Begin with your breath.

Feel the air pass your nostrils and glide down your throat to fill your lungs.

Drop you diaphragm and let your belly and back expand.

Notice the rhythm of your breathing, and the spaces between you breath.

The air you breathe is sacred for it is the breath of God.

Your body is sacred for it manifests the Holy One in substance and form.

Be aware of your body and how you are sitting.

Let your hands fall open and your feet feel grounded.

Ask of God what you need at this moment and give space for the response.

Take some time to reflect on your relationship with God, the world, your sacred centre.

Honour your connection to God's creation.

Offer something of yourself.

Be open to receiving God's gift to you this day.

Now, return to your body.

Imagine there is a light the softly glows from your heart, through your limbs and head,
and radiates out into the world, connecting with people, animals, fish and birds,
with water, soil and even rock, and give thanks to God for the experience of life.

Song

My Soul Is Thirsting For You **MV109**

Scripture

Matthew 20.1-16 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition.

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“For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and he said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ So they went. 5 When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. 6 And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why are you standing here idle all day?’ 7 They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard.’ 8 When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.’ 9 When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And when they

received it, they grumbled against the landowner, 12 saying, ‘These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.’ 13 But he replied to one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ 16 So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Another Voice

by Robin Wall Kimmerer from The Serviceberry

We have to believe in our neighbors, that our shared interests supersede the impulses of selfishness. There is a tragedy in believing the proffered narrative of our system, which turns us against each other in a zero-sum game.

I was surprised to learn that one of the assumptions of modern economic theory is that we will each behave in conformity to Adam Smith's "Rational Economic Man," characterized as a greedy, isolated individual acting purely in self-interest to maximize return on investment. The system is designed to support this hypothetical caricature and seems therefore to produce them. But each of us knows that exceptions to this behavior far outnumber the predicted stereotype. Can we imagine a system which nurtures a different economic identity and reclaim ourselves as neighbors, with shared investment in mutual well-being? As it happens, abundant empirical evidence attests to the fact that we humans lean as much toward cooperation and generosity as we do toward self-interest under circumstances when we are not coerced by outside forces. Imagine if we created the social and political climate to serve this “Empathetic Mutualist Human.” I mean, why not?

Song

First Born Of Mary **MV110**

Reflection

Flourishing in Fairness

Offering Time

Mission and Service Story

Crossing Class Lines

One of the most meaningful parts of our small group Crossing Class Lines: 12-Week Bridging Team program, which ran from February to April this year in Peterborough, Ontario, was something very simple: we shared a meal together before we did anything else.

Each week began around the table with a hearty, home-cooked meal prepared by one of our co-facilitators. Our facilitation team included four facilitators—three

with lived experience of poverty and one middle-class staff member—and the meals reflected the care and hospitality they brought to the program. We planned menus that accommodated dietary needs so everyone could feel welcome. Some weeks we shared homemade beef stew with fresh buns; other weeks it was baked macaroni and cheese with vegetarian lentil soup. A few participants also chose to bring food to share, offering what they could as a way of contributing to the community we were building together.

The meal did far more than fill empty stomachs. It created a level playing field. Before conversations about poverty, privilege, and social class began, everyone gathered around the same table, eating the same food. It reminded us that we all have basic human needs, and that sharing food has a remarkable way of breaking down barriers and helping strangers become neighbours. The meal was never about serving one group and helping another. It wasn't an act of charity – it was mutual hospitality. It was about creating a space where everyone could both give and receive, and where relationships could grow across economic differences with dignity and mutual respect.

More than half of the participants in this program were living in poverty. Many spoke openly about the rising cost of groceries and how difficult it had become to afford healthy food. One participant, who rents a room in a shared house, quietly shared that our weekly meal was the most vegetables she ate all week. She looked forward to coming each Wednesday, not only for the learning and relationships, but because she knew she would receive a nourishing, home-cooked meal prepared with care.

Once we had eaten together, we spent the afternoon learning from one another about the realities of poverty and privilege – the importance of stable housing, access to education, meaningful relationships, and mental health support. The conversations were richer because trust had already begun to grow around the table.

At the end of each week, participants living on low incomes received a \$50 grocery gift card in recognition of the invaluable expertise they brought through their lived experience. Their stories and insights were not simply welcomed—they were essential to the learning of the entire group.

In a time when many people feel increasingly isolated and divided, we have witnessed how something as ordinary as sharing a meal can become an extraordinary act of community building. Around a table, people from very different economic backgrounds discover one another's humanity. They listen more deeply, build relationships across differences, and begin imagining what a more connected and compassionate community could look like, together.

Prayers of The People

Holy One,

your presence reaches into the vastness of the universe and beyond.

Your life dances in the cells of every form of matter, known and unknown.

Your love encompasses more than any can comprehend.

And, yet, you know each life intimately; inside and out.

You make your home with us

and invite us to live with you as good neighbours.

So we pray for our neighbours.

We pray for our good neighbours, the soils of the ground;

abundant in nutrients, the rich dark loam of our foundation.

We pray for our good neighbours, the plants;

diverse and beautiful, giving us air to breathe, shelter from the sun,

softness beneath our feet, colour and smells and food for our delight,

helping us to flourish.

We pray for our good neighbours, the birds;

graceful travellers who help our neighbourhood flourish

and sing the sacred melodies of creation.

We pray for our good neighbours, the fish;

keeping our waters clean and alive, helping the earth to flourish.

We pray for our good neighbours, the insects;

dancing among the plants to help them multiply and flourish.

We pray for our good neighbours, the animals;

helping us to maintain natural biodiversity,

spreading plant life and vital nutrients,

being good companions on our life's journey and helping us to flourish.

We pray for our good neighbours; the people: family, friends and strangers

who connect us to each other and help us to see beyond ourselves:

a rich variety of age, size, culture, gender, language, and faith,

the people whom we meet each day.

Prayer Circle

Free prayers for those who need our prayers

Alan, Angela, April, Barbara, Dan, David, Deb, Dot, Ericka, George, Johanna, Karen, Levi, Linda, Lisa, Loidi, Maria, Marg, Mark, Michelle, Monique, Nancy, Paul, Rona, Ronda, Rudy, Russell, Sandy, Sarah, Shannon, Shawn, Valerie & Zachary.

And in all this, God, we meet you and you meet us, and we flourish.

The Lord's Prayer (A Paraphrase) VU916

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be.

Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your commonwealth of peace and freedom

sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In time of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

Song

Spirit, Open My Heart **MV79**

Blessing

Flourish in the blessing of the gift of life

unfolded by those who come before us.

Flourish in the blessing of the gift of life

unfolding through those who are around us.

Flourish in the blessing of the gift of life

unfolding through what is yet unknown to us.

God is planted within our very soul,

gracing us with new beginnings;

inviting us to flourish in every moment and encounter of life.

Music to Send Us On Our Way

*Hands by Jewel Kilcher
performed by The Band*