

Sunday, October 18, 2026
Pentecost 21

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

Call for Awareness

Loosely based on Psalm 96 by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Awake my body, awake my soul!

The Holy One is a lover of justice and equity.

The Holy One is surrounded by angels of light

Praise our connection to Holy One;

from our ancestral past to our sacred present.

Awake my sacred being.

Song

O, God Beyond All Praising **VU256**

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 your diaphragm and let your belly and back expand.

Notice the rhythm of your breathing, and the spaces between your 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 that 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

Take My Life And Let It Be **VU506**

Scripture

Matthew 22.15-22 New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition.

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15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. 16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one, for you do not regard people with partiality. 17 Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 Then he said to them, "Whose head is this and whose title?" 21 They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar

the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard this, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

Another Voice

by John Muir (1838-1914)

The world, we are told, was made especially for man - a presumption not supported by all the facts....

... Why should man value himself as more than a small part of the one great unit of creation? And what creature of all that the Lord has taken the pains to make is not essential to the completeness of that unit - the cosmos? The universe would be incomplete without man; but it would also be incomplete without the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells beyond our conceitful eyes and knowledge.

From the dust of the earth, from the common elementary fund, the Creator has made *Homo sapiens*. From the same material [God] has made every other creature, however noxious and insignificant to us. They are earth-born companions and our fellow mortals.

Song

When We Are Living **VU581**

Reflection

Flourishing In The Way

Offering Time

Mission and Service Story

A Circle Of Twelve

There's a particular feeling that comes with visiting longtime companions in ministry, a sense of stepping into a story that began long before you arrived and will continue long after you leave. I felt it immediately on my first trip to Tanzania. Since 1979, The United Church of Canada has been accompanying the work of the Morogoro Women's Training Centre (MWTC), a unit of the Christian Council of Tanzania, in Tanzania, supporting their locally-led efforts that empower women.

One of those efforts, run in 2023 with the support of Mission and Service, included a holistic training for mothers of children with disabilities. The program wove together self-esteem and confidence building, small business and entrepreneurship skills, financial literacy, emotional support, and practical knowledge about caring for children. It was a space where women learned, but also where they were seen, heard, and held by one another.

Many of the women spoke of the "before." Of years marked by isolation, stigma, and the heaviness of carrying their child's needs alone. Some described shame that kept them hidden, or fear of being misunderstood by neighbors, their church community, and even family. Their love for their children was unwavering, but the

loneliness was real.

What's grown after their time at MWTC is something far more powerful than what any single training session could offer: they found one another.

They found language for their experiences. They found community where shame once lived, and possibility where isolation once closed in. The relationships they built became an ongoing source of strength.

There were twelve women in the training that week—twelve stories and twelve journeys being strengthened in community. I couldn't help but notice the echo of another circle of twelve. God has always used small groups of ordinary people to carry hope into the world. These women, too, are bearers of that hope.

Among the twelve, three shared that their husbands had left after their child was born with a disability. It was a quiet grief woven into their stories, shaped by the stigma that still surrounds disability in many communities. In the absence of that support, the women leaned even more on one another, finding in community what had been withdrawn at home.

Agness carries a vibrant, steady strength. She is a widowed mother of four, and for sixteen years she has been raising her youngest child, who lives with a disability, largely on her own. When her husband died, that baby was just over a month old. The grief, the responsibility, the uncertainty of how she would provide for her family all arrived at once.

Before she connected with MWTC, life pressed in from every direction. Her income-generating activities brought in very little. Markets were limited. Opportunities were scarce. And like so many mothers of children with disabilities in Tanzania, she carried the weight of it alone.

The training she received didn't erase the hardship, but it opened a door. With startup capital and new skills, Agness began selling charcoal, at first in small amounts. She added local chickens and started selling eggs. Then she opened a small grocery shop and started baking cakes. Each step was modest, but each one widened the circle of possibility.

What struck me most was not the list of businesses she now runs, but the way she spoke about herself. The training gave her tools, but it also strengthened her confidence. She talked about learning to save, to plan, to trust her own decisions. She talked about raising her child with renewed courage.

Her efforts have allowed her to support her children's education, meet daily needs, and even renovate her home. She is still navigating challenges. Her child's medical needs are high, and health insurance remains out of reach, but she is no longer standing on unstable ground. Her story is one of resilience unfolding in real time.

These stories are reminders of what accompaniment makes possible. Not quick fixes. Not tidy narratives. But the slow, steady work of walking together. The kind of work that honors dignity, nurtures resilience, and allows women to discover strength in one another.”

—Amy Zavitz is Global Partnership Program Coordinator, Africa Partnerships, with The United Church of Canada General Council Office

Offering Song

We Give You But Your Own **VU542**

Prayers of The People

by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Sacred bond of friend and stranger,
we are connected through your love and meaning;
in the faces we see, the hands we hold,
the voices we hear, the moments we experience.
Some moments bring laughter and smiles and some bring grief and tears.
Some people are happy in the crowd and others are lonely and lost.
We search our hearts, Holy One, and offer ourselves as we are today.

Silence

We search our minds, Sacred Creator, and think of the needs of our planet;
the waters, the soil, the air we all breathe,
the sun and its rays, the moon and its pull.

Silence

We search our soul, O Ground of all Being,
and reflect on the needs of all living things:
the plants and animals, bird, fish and insects,
all our siblings who share in the abundance of the planet.

Silence

We search our lives, Sacred Companion,
and send our best thoughts to those we know and those we do not know
who need a bit of our care and concern.

Prayer Circle

Free prayers for those who need our prayers

Alan, Angela, April, Barbara, Dan, David, Deb, Dot, Elisabeta, 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 search us, God, and dwell with us throughout the week to come.

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

Called By Earth And Sky **MV135**

Blessing

by Rev. Darryl Macdonald

Find blessing in the gift of life

unfolded by those who come before us.

Find blessing in the gift of life

unfolding through those who are around us.

Find blessing in the gift of life

unfolding through what is yet unknown to us.

God's sacred presence is abundant within our soul;

gracing us with new beginnings,

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