



# Sunset United Church

February 20, 2022

Black History Month

*It Takes One Voice to Initiate Change*

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*Sunset United, located on Treaty 4 Territory,  
is an Affirming community of faith. All are welcome here.*

## WE GATHER

Prelude

Welcome & Announcements

Centering Music

Lighting the Christ Candle<sup>1</sup>

*(Adapted words from the hymn: "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"  
Lyrics by Horatius Bonar)*

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer<sup>2</sup>

Hymn VU#708 My Lord, What a Morning<sup>3</sup>

*Refrain*

**My Lord, what a morning.**

**My Lord, what a morning.**

**My Lord, what a morning when the stars begin to fall.**

You'll hear the trumpet sound to wake the nations  
underground,  
Looking to my God's right hand when the stars begin to fall.

*Refrain*

My Lord, what a morning.

My Lord, what a morning.

My Lord, what a morning when the stars begin to fall.

You'll hear the sinner cry to wake the nations underground,  
Looking to my God's right hand when the stars begin to fall.

*Refrain*

My Lord, what a morning.

My Lord, what a morning.

My Lord, what a morning when the stars begin to fall.

You'll hear the Christian shout to wake the nations  
underground,  
Looking to my God's right hand when the stars begin to fall.

*Refrain*

My Lord, what a morning.

My Lord, what a morning.

My Lord, what a morning when the stars begin to fall.

**Prayer of Confession** Recommitting to Justice,  
Equity and Peace<sup>4</sup>

God of peace,  
Give us the courage, strength,  
and perseverance needed,  
to challenge the systems of racism,  
so that we can clear a path for your justice,  
peace and equity.

We believe racism is present  
In our society and in our church,  
And throughout time has manifested  
Itself in many forms and in varying degrees.

We know racism is alive  
In our language and in our structures,  
And through our systems it actively works  
To deconstruct your glorious design,  
Blocking the path to justice, equity, and peace  
That Jesus brings.

Racism exists,  
And it challenges the gospel message we cry.

We cry abundant life for all,  
Knowing that we are slowly being suffocated  
By the pervasive evil of racism:  
    Some of us are choking;  
    Some of us cannot breathe;  
    Some of us are dead.

We cry peace,  
Knowing that we are the instruments of God's peace  
And that such peace cannot exist  
Without justice, equity, compassion and God's grace.

We cry Emmanuel, God with us,  
Knowing that to God,  
Every life matters – God is with all people –  
Even though as a community  
And as a society  
We have stated through our actions  
That some lives matter more than others.

Compassionate One,  
Help us to understand how racism  
Finds life in our hearts and in our cries.  
In this time of tense anticipation,  
May we commit ourselves to be people of your way  
Crying and creating a path  
For justice, equity and peace  
For all people in this wilderness  
of hatred and racism.  
Amen

Sung Response MV#95 How Deep the Peace<sup>5</sup>  
How deep the peace, the confidence, of those whose wrongs  
are forgiven.  
How deep the peace, the confidence, of those whose hearts  
are healed.

## WE LISTEN

Scripture Psalm 50:1-6  
II Corinthians 4:1-10

Special Music

Reflection Vignettes of Black History in Canada  
Congregational Response It only takes ONE voice  
To initiate change.

Hymn VU#612 There Is a Balm in Gilead<sup>6</sup>  
*Refrain*

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.  
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged, and think my work's in vain,  
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.

*Refrain*

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.  
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,  
you can tell the love of Jesus and say, "He died for all."

*Refrain*

There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole.  
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

### Prayers of the Community

"Kumbaya" translates into English as "come by here".  
It's a word in the Gullah Creole dialect  
From what is not Georgia, Florida and South Carolina.  
The Gullah had ties to enslaved West Africans.  
We use this sone today to lift up our prayers  
Of concern to God.

**Sung Response** Kumbaya My Lord  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbaya

How good it is to sing praises of your goodness, God;  
Even when we feel ashamed of our  
Fellow humans who in the past initiated,  
Participated, sustained and perpetuated  
The forcible removal of over 10 million Africans  
From their homes for trade across the Atlantic?

We come with many names:  
Terms of endearment that we cherish  
And labels that we seek to one day destroy.

Sung Response Kumbaya My Lord  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbaya

But you call us by one name, Beloved.  
We remember your healing acts of salvation.  
We remember how you gathered the dislocated  
And dispersed Black peoples in Nova Scotia  
And Ontario to build communities  
And relearn cultures that were torn away.

We remember the Maroons,  
Who with their hands built a mighty fortress on a hill.  
We remember Viola Desmond, Carrie Best, John  
Freeman Walls, Harriet Tubman, Chloe Cooley,  
Fredrick Douglass, Rosa Parks, Leonard Braithwaite,  
Michaëlle Jean, Samuel Sharpe, Marcus Mosiah  
Garvey, Nanny of the Maroons, and many others  
whose actions have brought freedom and equality  
closer to Black people in our society.

We remember how your everlasting love healed  
The self-esteem and rebuilt the self-worth  
Of Black peoples who were stripped of their  
Human rights and dignity.

We remember that you continue  
to heal the brokenhearted  
and bind up the wounds of those

who have been wounded, abused and denied  
because of the shade of their skin, even today.

Sung Response Kumbaya My Lord  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya  
Oh Lord, kumbaya

We offer you all the things that  
We can no longer carry on our own:  
Our burdens, our worries, and our concerns.  
We offer to you all the situations that  
We feel ill-equipped for.  
We offer these prayers to you now....

When we join with Habakkuk and complain:  
“O Lord, how long shall I cry for help,  
And you will not listen?  
Or cry to you,  
“Violence!” and you will not save?  
Why do you make me see wrongdoing  
And look at trouble?  
Destruction and violence are before me;  
Strife and contention arise.  
So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails.  
The wicked surround the righteous –  
Therefore judgement comes forth perverted.”

**Help us to hear the words of the prophet:**  
**“For there is a vision for the appointed time;**  
**It speaks of the end,**  
**And does not lie.**  
**If it seems to tarry, wait for it;**

It will surely come, it will not delay.”  
Strengthen our weary souls,  
And remind us once more  
That you fight with us,  
And you will never leave us  
Nor forsake us in the struggle.  
Give us a double share of your Spirit  
To carry out this calling.

When we see injustice  
And unjust acts in our community,  
Let the love of Christ  
That changed us,  
Through us change the world...  
And remind us that it takes ONE voice  
To initiate change. Amen.

Hymn VU#617 I Love You, God, Who Heard My Cry<sup>7</sup>

I love you, God, who heard my cry and pitied every groan.  
Long as I live and troubles rise, I'll hasten to your throne.

I love you, God, who heard my cry and chased my grief away.  
O let my heart no more despair while I have breath to pray.

Sending Forth and Blessing

Amen VU#974<sup>8</sup>

Amen! Amen! Hallelujah, amen!  
Amen! Amen! Hallelujah, amen!

*Postlude*





**Minister:** Rev. Tricia Gerhard (she/her)

**Children & Youth Minister:** Michelle McConkey (she/her)

**Choir Director:** Corinne Groff (she/her)

**Pianist:** Shirley Hill (she/her)



<sup>1</sup> The majority of the liturgy (except where noted) was written by Rev. Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes. Used with permission as published on [www.united-church.ca/worship-special-days/black-history-month-1](http://www.united-church.ca/worship-special-days/black-history-month-1).

<sup>2</sup> Prayer written by Charmain Bailey. Used with permission as published on [www.united-church.ca](http://www.united-church.ca).

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<sup>4</sup> Prayer written by Alydia Smith for Black History Month, used with permission as published on:

<https://united-church.ca/prayers/recommitting-justice-equity-and-peace>

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