



Sunset United Church

February 20, 2022

Black History Month

It Takes One Voice to Initiate Change



*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 Candle¹

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

Call to Worship

Opening Prayer²

Hymn VU#708 My Lord, What a Morning³

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 Peace⁴

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 Peace⁵
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 Gilead⁶
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 Cry⁷

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#974⁸

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)



¹ 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.

² Prayer written by Charmain Bailey. Used with permission as published on www.united-church.ca.

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⁴ 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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