



## **“The Realm of God is Like This” Part 7** **A Banyan Tree (MC Canada International Witness)**

Wildwood Mennonite Church // August 2, 2020

Worship Leader: Joe // Music Leader: Brenda // Sermon: Jeanette Hanson (via youtube)

### **Welcome to Wildwood...**

...or rather, thanks for welcoming us into wherever you are in this at-home worship format.

This is not where we thought we'd be this summer! We are grateful for the familiar patterns and relationships that we have been able to resume, yet we are still grieving the loss of those that have changed and we are still feeling our way through the murkiness of whatever it is that is emerging.

As people of faith, we trust that God is present in all of those spaces: in the familiar, in the grieving, in the unknown. And we are grateful that you have joined us in this place, a reminder that we never walk alone.

Welcome to another week of physically-scattered and digitally-gathered worship as Wildwood Mennonite Church!

Our worship this week seeks to expand our horizons, beyond our beautiful Living Skies to consider the all-encompassing global Body of Christ. May God open our eyes to see their face and our ears to hear their voice wherever it may be found.

As our music for meditation selection draws out, the strings of the Spirit connect us all:

**Music For Meditation // [Bach: Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major, Prélude](#) // Yo-Yo Ma**

### **Call to Worship**

Many of the prayers and other words today are adapted from [Along the Arc: Worship and Ritual for Welcoming Communities](#).

Hear the call to worship:

*We are here because we have heard rumours of God's grace,  
**of Divine Love poured out**  
on people of all colours  
**from all places**  
people of all classes  
**all abilities***

*all genders*  
***all sexualities.***

*We have heard stories of this Jesus,*  
***of Divine Inclusion for former outcasts--***  
*people who were confused*  
***and unclean***  
*and broken*  
***and unwanted***  
*and powerless*  
***and searching***  
*and still Loved, all of them.*

***We want to hear more of these stories,***  
*We want to sing and shout and live these stories,*  
***so that we might help spread this scandalous rumor***  
*of Divine Grace,*  
***of Love beyond all boundaries.***

*~ adapted from "Divine Rumors" by Joanna Harader*

### **Peace Candle Prayer**

Friends, siblings, offspring of the Divine,  
You who seek the living God,  
Welcome.

See Jesus' hands,  
See Jesus' feet,  
Not whole,  
but holy.

And so come!

Come aching and weary,  
Longing for signs and wonders,  
fearing the world beyond the door.

Come giddy with the joy of the season,  
When winter is long past and the earth pours forth its bounty of colour.

Come as skeptics or true believers or somewhere in between.  
Come as settlers or natives, as locals or newcomers.  
Come as peace-builders, come as by-standers, come as those complicit in the violence of the



world.

Whatever your complications and inconsistencies and hypocrisies, come.

See Jesus' hands,  
See Jesus' feet,  
Not whole,  
but holy.

Friends, siblings, offspring of the Divine:  
In the words of Jesus,  
"Peace be with you."

~ adapted from "You Who Seek the Living God" by Regina Shands Stolfus

### Offering Prayer

Though we are no longer able to share in the ritual of passing the offering bags these days, we remain grateful for all of the gifts that have been given and the opportunities that are shared to serve God through the shared work of the church community.


***"I Imagine a Spinning God"*** by Regina Shands Stolfus

*I imagine a spinning God  
pulling silken strands of blue from the cosmos and creating the sky  
Flinging it across the expanse and calling it good*

*I imagine a weaving God  
Nimbly pulling strips of gold and green  
Raising up mountains  
putting down valleys  
tucking in silver streams among the meadows  
and gracing the landscape with vegetation  
fruits and nuts and seeds and berries  
grain  
pushed down  
shaken together  
running over  
enough to feel a multitude of multitudes*

*I imagine a painting God  
Delighting in the smoothness and the squishiness of cool, wet pigment  
Rich, thick dollops of color dripping down between God's fingers*





*Burnt sienna  
Ochre  
Umber  
Butter yellow  
Pale almond  
Peach Vanilla  
Midnight black*

*All the colors of the world lavishly displayed on all the people of the world*

*And God is plum delighted*

*Creative God*

*Spinning*

*Weaving*

*Painting God...*

*May we recreate with you the world you dreamed into being.*

*Amen.*

**Song // [The Tree Song](#) // Evie Karlsson // Sing the Story #116**

**Children's Story // [Click here for video storytime with Marg!](#)**

Today's story is [The Great Kapok Tree](#) by Lynne Cherry.

**Scripture // Ephesians 2:17-22 // *The Inclusive Bible* translation**

*Christ came and "announced the Good News of peace to you who were far away, and to those who were near"; for through Christ, we all have access in one Spirit to our God.*

*This means that you are strangers and aliens no longer. No, you are included in God's holy people and are members of the household of God, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus as the capstone. In Christ the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in our God; in Christ you are being built into this temple, to become a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

**Sermon // The Kingdom of God is Like a Banyan Tree // Jeanette Hanson (via youtube)**

Our sermon this week is a pre-recorded sermon from Mennonite Church Canada International Witness Director Jeannette Hanson. "The Kingdom of God is like a banyan tree," originally for Morden Mennonite Church, looks at Ephesians 2:17-22 and shares how each expression of

church enlivens the whole, using examples from International Witness ministries around the world.

([Click here for the full video sermon](#) on youtube)

*Unfortunately we do not have a written transcript of the sermon this week.*

**Song of Response // [Somos el Cuerpo de Cristo](#) // Sing the Story #64**

**Sharing Time // ["Hey Wildwood..." online sharing](#)**

Not hearing from one another in person through the Sharing Time is a significant loss for many of us. It's not the same, but one way to express your grief, anxiety, prayer requests and gratitude is through the "Hey Wildwood" link above. If you're able, join us for our Sunday Morning Zoom gatherings, or check your email for the sharing items from last Sunday. Or maybe now would be a good time to pause your reading to call someone from church or elsewhere that you haven't heard from this week.

**Congregational Prayer**

Creator God,  
You are a great God and we stand in awe before you.  
Touch us,  
that we may become more aware  
of all that is around us,  
growing in a sense of wonder and awe,  
and in appreciation for all that we see and hear  
and touch and taste and smell.

As we move into August,  
we are grateful for the beauty of yards, the bounty of gardens,  
the blossoms of canola and flax  
and heading out of other grains we see in the fields;  
for clouds and sunsets, for lakes and rivers,  
for the varieties of bushes and trees,  
of animals and birds, and all of your marvelous creation.  
We have much for which to be grateful...

Compassionate God,  
We ask that your nearness may be felt by those who are ill,  
Who live with cancer, heart disease, the coronavirus, or with other illness.  
Calm and protect those who live with stress and with danger,



Console those who mourn the loss of what once felt like a normal life,  
Comfort those who mourn the death of loved ones.

Loving God,  
We ask that you open us up  
to your Spirit living within us,  
that we may live fully each day of our lives.  
Guide us to live in such a way  
that we help to bring about your reign on earth.  
May we truly be a banyan tree example of your presence in the world,  
Giving and receiving strength, encouragement,  
and nourishment from the many sources around us.  
May we live in such a way  
that we never take anything for granted,  
but always be appreciative  
and express our thanks to You,  
and to those who are part of our lives.  
Amen.

~ Incorporating a prayer from <http://www.prayingeachday.org/reflectaugust.html>

Song // [Praise God From Whom](#) // Hymnal Worship Book #118

### **Benediction**

*We believe that horizons of hope are never fixed  
**They always move beyond, in the creativity of God.**  
We believe that powers of evil cannot kill God.  
**God walks on free and leaps ahead of us in the risen Christ of faith.**  
We believe that the Spirit can never be confined.  
**She dances forth in the world and is found in surprising places,  
leading us on until the end of time.***

~ D McRae-McMahon

