

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [June 7 Worship Service Video](#)

An audio file of this week's reflection is on the church website:

<https://charleswoodunited.org/media/sermons/>

## **Prelude**

Carla and Brendan share a favorite of theirs and ours: [This is the Day](#)

Dear Friends

It is the time of the year when much of our attention is focused on being outside. It is the season of planting, and growing, and mowing. Perhaps because we live in a part of the world where winter is long and challenging, we have a deep and abiding appreciation for long and warm days spent in the sun. If we were able to gather together it would be time for our annual church picnic and BBQ, an opportunity to live out our love of creation as a community.

The first story in the book of Genesis sets the stage for our affection for nature. It tells us that we are in relationship with all matter under heaven. Not only every living thing but with the water, the land, and the sky. We relate to all of nature because all of nature was created by the same loving hand.

Maybe it is easier to connect our love of nature and love of God when we are children. Children are so easily drawn to playing outdoors and discovering the wonder of nature. When I invited the congregation to submit their favorite hymn I received an email from Jennifer Dumore requesting "All Things Bright and Beautiful". She said that it reminds her of a time when she was a child and singing it while standing between her mother and father in the Anglican Church in which she grew up. I also learned this hymn as a child and so have been singing it all my life. But whether it is familiar to you or brand new, I think anyone can appreciate how well it expresses the ease with which we find God in the world Good made.

## **Opening Hymn**

Join the opening hymn by clicking here: [All Things Bright and Beautiful](#)

## **Bible Reading**

The Scripture Lesson for June 7 can be read it by clicking here: [Genesis 1:1-2:3](#)

## **Trio**

The gift of music in the song "Wonderful, Merciful Savior" found by clicking here:

<https://mixcord.co/acapella/p/pMexWar31hZM8FmhbmPTpw/>

It is almost hard to recall now for everything that has happened but last October all of our attention was directed towards a near perfect storm. A warm and lingering autumn meant that leaves were still on the trees when a fierce storm of heavy, wet snow and ice fell on the city. The consequence to the trees was devastating as they struggled under the immense weight. Trees normally tall and strong and proud were bent and broken and strained. Some had branches from the top of the tree touching the ground. Throughout the city the impact was evident in branches fallen to the ground, blocking roads, and damaging what was on the ground below.

There is a path near my house that I walk almost every morning with my dog. On the morning after the storm we were out on that path and beheld the laboring trees such as I have never seen in my life. One great and old tree a few blocks away was crippled by the burden. Some branches had broken off, some barely hung in place, while others bent to the ground. When the clean-up was done in the weeks that followed, this particular tree had been cut down to nothing more than a four foot stump.

But the other day I was walking that same path, with that same dog, and I saw something that was beautiful if not miraculous. That left-over stump had broken out into colour and life. Dozens of new branches sprouted out from it and reflected the morning sun. It was as if nature itself wants to remind us that there is an inherent healing power in creation. Something that cannot be destroyed but always returns and renews.

There is a refrain that returns again and again in the story of creation on Genesis 1. "It was good." The storytellers of ancient Israel want to remind us that there is an inherent goodness in creation. Of the waters and the land and the sky, it was good. Of the animals, and the fish of the seas, and the birds of the air, it was good. Of the plants that would feed and the trees that would provide shelter, it was good. Of the human being, male and female, it was good.

It took me 40 or 50 years before I realized that in that children's grace we all learn, God is great, God is good, we are saying two different things about God. The first is that God is indeed great, awesome, wondrous, beyond our imagination. But we also say that God is inherently good, inherently moral. So it is that a creation made in the image of God, in a people made in the image of God, there is an inherent good. We are made moral.

As we gather this week we are aware that it is a difficult time in many parts of the world. The pandemic still rages and lives are affected and routines are upended. But our attention has shifted to our neighbours to the south. In the United States, in the aftermath of the brutal police killing of an African American man in Minneapolis named George Floyd, thousands, and hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets to peaceful protest to say something has to change, something has to be re-born, that there must be healing in the race relations of that country. The same can be said of our own.

We are reminded by something as simple as a tree we pass by while walking the dog, that we are made for healing. We are made for renewal. God looks upon us and knows that we are made inherently good. And because we are made in the image of a loving God, we are inherently capable of loving one another in ways we have not discovered yet. The trees say that it is so. Amen.

## Hymn

View and enjoy the Voices United hymn “Jesus You Have Come to the Lakeshore” by clicking here: [Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore](#)

## Prayers

With praise and thanksgiving, O God, we gather here to recall that from the day we were created in your image you have made it possible to find your grace in one another. From the day the Word became flesh and chose to dwell among us you have made it possible to show your love to one another. We thank you for your many blessings.

We thank you for ancestors who have been as generous to our generation as you are and who have made possible so many things we take for granted. We praise you for elders who share the wisdom that can only come from a lifetime of walking with you and discerning your ways.

We thank you for the beauty we find in creation and in the tapestry that is the human family, for the colours and languages and customs that together reveal a portion of your glory.

Most of all, Healing One, we thank for the gift of one another, that we might cherish human relationship as the greatest opportunity we have to display your goodness and presence in our lives.

The brokenness of human community leads us to prayer and there is much that we need to lay before you. We pray for the family and friends of George Floyd. Attention had been brought to them that they did not seek. And it has arrived when their hearts are in pieces. Bless and comfort them.

We pray for people of colour who daily experience the injustice of racism, whose whole lives are affected by our inability to live in holy community. We pray for the people who have peacefully taken to the streets in the United States and around the world, calling for a new day to arise where we are known by the conduct of our character rather than the colour of our skin.

Accept our prayers, God of Heaven and Earth. Accept our prayers that they may encourage us to seek out the lost and lonely and claim them as our own. Accept our prayers as we seek to be the church you need in the name of the one who leads us to pray together when we say...OUR FATHER...

Be well, be safe, be hopeful.

Michael

## Postlude

Click here: [Stay With Us](#)