

# Quispamsis United Church

September 17, 2023 - 16th Sunday After Pentecost

*Liturgical Colour: Green*

*Presider: Rev Ian Manson*

*Director of Music: Stephen Alexander*

*Reader: Bob Crowley*

**Centering Reflection:** *"Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning."*

- Desmond Tutu

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## GATHERING TOGETHER

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

**Opening Music:** This Is God's Wondrous World - arr. Cindy Berry

**Welcome & Lighting of Affirm Candle**

**Acknowledgment of Territories**

**Celebrations & Announcements**

**Introit:** The Church is Wherever God's People are Praising VU 579  
**The church is wherever God's people are praising,**  
**Singing God's goodness for joy on this day.**  
**The church is wherever disciples of Jesus**  
**remember his story and walk in his way.**

**Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

**Call to Worship (Responsive):**

We come before God with thanks and praise.

**We will praise God for God's unfailing love and faithfulness.**

We bow before God in worship, and acknowledge our challenges and fallibilities.

**We turn to God for healing and grace,**

**confident of God's great love and mercy. Let us worship God.**

**Prayer of Approach (Unison)**

**Wondrous God, you touch our lives with forgiveness and mercy,  
and seek to free us from the resentments and fears we carry.  
Encircle us with your love, surround us with your care,  
and fill our hearts with your Spirit,  
that we may be nourished and renewed by your Presence,  
and liberated from the chains that bind us. Amen.**

**Opening Hymn:**

Morning Has Broken

VU 409

**Morning has broken like the first morning,  
blackbird has spoken like the first bird.  
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!  
Praise for them, springing fresh from the Word!**

**Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,  
like the first dewfall on the first grass.  
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,  
sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.**

**Ours is the sunlight! Ours is the morning  
born of the one light Eden saw play!  
Praise with elation, praise every morning,  
God's recreation of the new day!**

**Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

**O God,  
our lives do not always reflect your transforming power.  
You are gracious, but we can cling to judgment.  
You are kind, but we can be cruel.  
You are forgiving, but we can nurse grudges and old wounds.  
Forgive us, O God.  
Fill us with your Holy Spirit,  
and make us new through the way of Christ.**

*(Silent Contemplation)*

**Words of Assurance**

## Time for All Ages

### Prayer of Illumination (Unison)

**God of wisdom, prepare our hearts and minds to receive your Word. Where it challenges us, lead us by your Spirit to respond in faithfulness for the sake of Christ who gives us both courage and compassion. Amen.**

### Reading: Matthew 18: 21-35

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.'

'For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### Message

"The Challenging Business of Forgiveness"

## RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

**Hymn:**

**There's a Wideness in God's Mercy  
There's a wideness in God's mercy  
like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in God's justice  
which is more than liberty.**

**VU 271 (Vs 1,2,5)**

**There is no place where earth's sorrows  
are more felt than up in heaven;  
there is no place where earth's failings  
have such gracious judgement given.**

**For the love of God is broader  
than the measures of the mind,  
and the heart of the Eternal  
is most wonderfully kind.**

**Mission and Service Stories:** The Other Side of the River

**Offering Our Gifts**

**Offertory Dedication Hymn:**

**For All Your Goodness, God  
For all your goodness God,  
we give you thanks,  
Thanks for the food we eat  
and for the friends we meet,  
And each new day we greet,  
we give you thanks.**

**VU 549**

**Prayer of Dedication (Unison):**

**Ever-present God, with this offering we present also ourselves:**

**all that we have been, all that we are, and our resolve to walk in your way. Accept us and our offering, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer**

## SENDING FORTH

**Closing Hymn:**

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

VU 288

**Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator;  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;  
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.**

### *Refrain*

**Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!  
Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -  
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!**

**Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. R**

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow -  
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide. R**

**Commissioning (Responsive):**

Jesus set the challenging goal before us:

**to forgive someone not just seven times, but seventy times seven.**

So let us take up the challenge as we go,

**and allow forgiveness to change our lives, our community, and our world.**

**Benediction**

**Choral Closing:**

The Church is Wherever

VU 579 (Vs 2)

**The church is wherever God's people are helping,  
caring for neighbours in sickness and need.**

**The church is wherever God's people are sharing  
the words of the Bible in gift and in deed.**

**Closing Music**

Credo - Franz Joseph Haydn