

**This worship service is written** by the Rev. Nigel Weaver. Nigel is working on a webpage at [www.nigeljean.wordpress.com](http://www.nigeljean.wordpress.com) It is in an early stage of design but you will see the shape of things to come. Please credit Nigel Weaver with use of his work.

### **When and How You Might Use this Service**

This service will work on a Sunday between the middle of May and the middle of August. Used mid-May through June it functions as a joyful anticipation and easing into summer. Used July through mid-August it functions as a celebratory reflection on present experience.

The words of the liturgies and prayers assume use in those anticipatory weeks. Beside them are suggested adaptations for use July and August.

One way this service can be used is as a blessing of cottages, cottagers, and cottage life. If your congregation has significant numbers at their cottage from late May on why not send them off with a blessing (rather than bemoaning their absence)?

People can be asked to bring something with them that symbolizes, or is from, their cottage and to place it on a table at the front. People without cottages can bring something with them that represents the summer they anticipate – road map, tent peg, gardening trowel, canoe paddle, sunscreen... whatever.

The Blessing can then be said from behind (and over) this table and its objects.

If your congregation closes for a month or two in the summer, this service would function well as a general blessing of one another's summer activities.

If your congregation has a connection to a camp the camp could be named in the Blessing.

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

ONE: When God began to create heaven and earth  
all things were *tohu va bohu* –

ALL: **topsy-turvy –  
no shape, no definition, no meaning,  
purposeless motion.**

ONE: But the Spirit of God moved over the water.

ALL: **God said,  
‘Let there be light’  
and there was light.**

*tohu va bohu* is the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1  
‘without form and void’

For me *topsy-turvy* is a good English equivalent.

Don’t worry about how you pronounce it; no  
one’s going to know. Just enjoy getting your  
mouth around the vowel sounds. If it helps,  
pretend you’re a hooting owl.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Used May - June

ONE: Like the heron – shoreline sentry – poised, posted, and patient,

ALL: **let us wait upon God,  
alert and attentive.**

ONE: Like the osprey who hovers, then plunges, then rises,

ALL: **let us know our deep places,  
and rise in God’s love.**

ONE: Like the hummingbird at the feeder  
energetic and eager

ALL: **let us live out our being,  
dance and dare at God’s urging.**

ONE: With the rest of creation rushing headlong toward summer,

ALL: **let us greet this new morning with longing and praise.**

Used July - August

Change *toward* to *through*

headlong through summer

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING (APPROACH)

Used May - June

ALL: **For all that reminds us, that refreshes our memory,  
that recalls us unbidden,  
that ushers in your presence  
– the drone of the lawn mower, the scent of the cut grass,  
the calf and the foal, nursing and nurtured,  
fruit blossom and lilac, and peony and pansy.  
For words of comfort, encouragement, interest,  
those uttered aloud, those spoken in silence.  
For gesture, and impulse, for the actions of others  
the thoughtful, the heartfelt, the kind, the sincere.**

For these we say ‘thank you’.

Of these we say ‘blessing’.

To these we say ‘Come – rest in us today.’

Used July - August

Replace ‘the calf...’ line with

‘hayfield and pasture,  
woodland and shoreline’

Replace ‘fruit blossom...’ line  
with

‘roadside stands with beans  
and potatoes.’

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**ALL:** Dear God,  
sometimes it is easier to say sorry for the big mistakes of life  
than for the dozens of little ones we make daily –  
time spent worrying rather than finding grace in the moment,  
words of criticism, ill thought and regrettable,  
silence when words could make a difference,  
self-doubt when you hold out unlimited love and acceptance.  
It is in the little things that we are most likely to fail you  
and each other.  
Help us, Blessed One,  
in the day to day moments that mark our lives  
to be open to your spirited longing for our good. Amen.

ALTERNATIVE – CONFESSION WITH SILENCE

**ONE:** Jesus breathed on them and said,  
“Receive the Holy Spirit.  
If you forgive someone’s sins they are gone for good.  
If you don't forgive sins,  
what are you going to do with them?”  
**ALL:** That we may be forgiving and forgiven  
let us be honest about our faults, our failings, our regrets.

*A Moment of Quiet Reflection*

THE PEACE

**ONE:** Jesus stood among them and said,  
**ALL:** “Peace be with you.”  
**ONE:** The Peace of Christ be with you.  
**ALL:** And also with you.

OFFERING DEDICATION

**ALL:** God, whose face is ever turned toward us,  
God, who spins the galaxies through time and space,  
help us to simplify our lives,  
that we might grow in our awareness of your blessing,  
and, secure in that knowledge,  
be willing to risk in our giving.  
As you bless us, so make us a blessing. Amen.

BLESSING

ONE: When God saw all that God had made

**ALL: God called it 'very good.'**

ONE: And God rested and called the rest

**ALL: a holy blessing.**

ONE: May that holy blessing

**ALL: be upon the weekly cycle of work and play.**

ONE: May that holy blessing

**ALL: be upon the yearly cycle of the seasons.**

ONE: May that holy blessing

**ALL: be upon our summer's rest and re-creation  
on gardens sown, watered, and tended,  
on cottages opened, aired out and occupied,  
on highway and hiking trail,  
on children and camp counselors.**

ONE: May that holy blessing rest

**ALL: on wave and on water  
on field and on furrow  
on circle and cycle  
on each and on all.  
Amen and Amen.**

If your congregation is involved with a camp

**on the children, camp counselors,  
and staff of Camp *Name*.**

## *Three Gifts of Summer – Time, Wonder, Space – Reflections on the words of Jesus*

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:26-32

For my money, the time change comes far too early in the year. It wasn't always so, but now we turn our clocks to summer time while the earth has yet to turn to spring. Just like that, the morning light which was bringing me such joy is gone. Today I have to scrape the windshield's ice which yesterday an hour of sun had melted.

I don't like that extra evening hour in March; but, come the end of June it's a different story. The long and lingering dusks of July and August are things of beauty – doing and playing until you can no longer see to do or play; deck, or patio, or fireside conversation, companionable silence; the calls of children, the sounds across the water.

The Greeks had two words for time: *chronos* and *kairos*. Chronos is measured time, clock time. It's the time of chronicle, chronology, chronometer, and chronic. It's the synchronized time of army and industry, workplace and school bell. It's not 'summer time'.

Surely one of the joys of camping or cottage is taking off of your wrist watch, not glancing at the cell phone, ignoring the clock.

What a gift it is to unfold as the day unfolds, to move with the day not against it, to enter the flow. That's closer to living in the Greek's *kairos* – an indeterminate time span in which an event of significance happens.

Experienced at its deepest, significance isn't determined it's discovered, it's not engineered it emerges. Sometimes, in summer time, we discover the significance at the heart of what we often consider insignificant. That, Jesus said, should tell us something about our own significance.

Those long and lingering summer dusks draw us into *kairos* across the threshold of *chronos* into the immeasurable and the timeless, into Sabbath.

Often *chronos* time is so sectioned and segmented that we experience neither the fullness of time nor the fulfilling nor fulfillment. For the promise of fulfillment, for being in the moment, for the gift of summer time, let us give thanks.

**Suggested hymn:**

*Like a Mighty River Flowing* (Voices United 267)

**Scripture:** Matthew 18:1-5

Many of us live with the reality of family – children and grandchildren, parents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins – who, even if we fly, live hours away from us. Summer often brings with it extended family time. Memories in the making across generations.

*Kairos* is at work here too, time that is unrushed, unhurried, unscheduled. Time in which adults model attitudes, teach skills, tell stories, relate family history, share out of experience, and transmit values – or at least try to.

Time too, in which children open up adults to the world again – the world of wonder, of dragon fly, and caterpillar, of seashell, and tide pool. Time to see castles, and galleons, and landscapes in the flickering embers of a dying campfire watched together. Time to disclose.

It is one thing to show a child something. It's another thing entirely to be shown something by a child – to hear the words, "Look what I found." "Guess what I saw."

How wonderful it is to lie on your back beside a child to watch the cloud formations dissolve and resolve, to drink in the Milky Way, to sing to the stars, to pulse with the northern lights – wonderful and wonder-filled. No need for words.

Wonder not only reduces our need of answers it relegates our need to question. Wonder runs deeper than question and answer. Our Sabbath rest lies in that which is at once both unquestionable and unanswerable.

Wondering with a child, wondering as a child, is where we discover our true sense of place, our station in life. As Jesus told those who wanted to be greatest: Wonder is our place. It's where we belong – our home and our homecoming.

For the gift of wonder and the gift of wonderers let us give thanks.

**Suggested hymn:**

*Teach Me God to Wonder* (Voices United 299)

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:1, 7-9, 16

One generation downsizes and another seeks to de-clutter. De-cluttering is hard staying clutter-free proves harder. Things creep back in. They accumulate unbidden.

Yet, we know that's not true. We let them in. We let them in long before we bring them through the door. We let them enter us, each with its promise of life made fuller, prettier, easier. We both take them in and are taken in – again and again and again.

We buy things that only do one thing, and that not a thing that needs doing often. We buy things because they claim to be multipurpose. I recently bought a barbecue lighter whose packaging pronounced it multipurpose. Well, I thought to myself, it might have many applications; but, I'm pretty sure it only has one purpose. And, sure enough, child-proofing mastered, it did the one same thing, over, and over, and over. Product... promise... purchase... property... predicament.

The things of summer aren't immune. Camping equipment is added to; in part because products improve, but more, because I'm a sucker for gizmos and gadgets and things that are small. Catalogues from Vesey's, Lee Valley, and others – new tools are ordered for garage or garden shed. Every cottage has a drawer; you know the drawer – the drawer that holds everything, everything but the thing you're actually looking for.

That said, the things of summer offer us hope. Cottages are places for the mismatched and repurposed, for simple hospitality. Camping reminds us that we can't take everything, you don't need much – from car, to canoe, to backpack – less, and less, and less. No garden tool does what sunlight and rain and intimate involvement do be your garden a window box or a quarter acre plot. They quietly challenge the rest of our lives – our attitudes and assumptions.

“You don't need everything, so don't take everything,” Jesus said. “In fact take less than you think is the minimum. Don't live by the myth of your own self-sufficiency. Discover instead the peace of vulnerability, of nothing to lose”

For the gift of summer space in which to redefine the normal and the necessary, let us give thanks.

**Suggested hymn:**

*Come and Find the Quiet Centre* (Voices United 374)