

CHEMAINUS UNITED CHURCH
February 20, 2022
Epiphany 7: Black History Month

We gather on the traditional unceded territory of the Penelakut peoples

Prelude

Welcome & Lighting the Christ Candle:

Opening Hymn: VU 708 My Lord, What a Morning

Opening Prayer: *(Rev. Dr. Paul Walfall, united-church.ca website: "All Are Made in the Image of God: 2020 Black History Month service)*

Hear us Holy One

You created all human beings in your image and likeness.

You have stamped each human person with a unique specialness, and all persons bear your image.

Through that image you call on us to reflect your goodness, justice, and love to all the world.

Remind us that when we speak out for justice, mercy, and compassion we are displaying the attributes we find in you.

As we come to offer to you what we believe you are worth,

show us how to display you in everything we do.

Show us how to respect your image in all human beings.

Help us to defend your image that is found in all human beings.

Amen.

Prayer of Approach: *(Charmaine Bailey "On Eagles' Wings" 2-18 from united-church.ca worship resources)*

Creator God, you who have called forth each star by name, we are in your presence this hour.

We come before you acknowledging and celebrating the journeys of our Black siblings and cousins

far and wide. We come knowing that these journeys have been met with much strife and pain, and although there have been triumphs along the way, the pain and brokenness of oppression lingers yet.

But we come celebrating a people whom you have infused with a boundless faith, and whose hope in you has manifested into renewable strength and fortitude. And so we come, Creator God. Guide our

worship this hour. May we not grow weary but soar on eagle's wings as one people, bound together in your love. Amen.

Prayer of Confession: *(Charmaine Bailey "On Eagles' Wings" BHM 2018 from united-church.ca worship resources)*

Holy God, we know how easy it is for us to forget who you are.

It is easy for us to claim ignorance of your power and your love.

It is so easy for us point fingers at others and forget our own roles in contributing to an unfair and unjust world.

It is easy for us to block the images of oppression on television and on social media. Forgive our disregard, O God.

Open all the closed corners of our minds that they may be opened to the reality of injustice all around us.

Re-sensitize us unto our human selves so that we can be appropriately appalled and pained at violence and oppression.

Reconcile us to each other as one. Amen.

Words of Assurance: *sung Lord's Prayer: VU 959*

Reflection for the Young at Heart: (by Amelia Brohman, BHM service 2022, *from united-church.ca worship resources*)



A Historical Beginning in Nova Scotia: Africville, Nova Scotia

An important Black experience and history had a strong impact on Black Canadians located on the east coast of Canada in Halifax. Africville was and is a community just north of Halifax. The village was founded in the mid-19th century by roughly 400 people of African descent, many of whom may have been formerly enslaved Americans and Jamaicans.

From the beginning of its identity as a Black neighbourhood, the structures around Africville were markedly racist. For instance, although the City of Halifax taxed the inhabitants of Africville, the people in the neighbourhood did not receive basic services such as paved roads, running water, or sewers.

Furthermore, in what can certainly be considered environmental racism, a railway was built through the centre of the village, a dump was created at the edge of the neighbourhood, and a prison was also located on the boundaries of Africville. By the first half of the 20th century, Africville had toxic water supplies and no community policing, recreation facilities, or garbage collection.

In the 1960s, the City of Halifax began a more overt campaign to destroy Africville. Without consent or consideration, Africville residents were threatened, evicted, and removed as their homes and stores were razed to the ground.

Seaview African United Baptist Church was built in 1894 and was a community hub. It held weddings, funerals, events, and baptisms and was considered the beating heart of Africville. Seaview United Baptist Church was destroyed in the middle of the night in the spring of 1967. The Black Haligonians found themselves displaced and disconnected. Although they were promised \$500 and a new home if they left Africville, no one received a dime.

Now, looking back on the oppression and systemic racism visited on this community, we can recognize anti-Black racism at its worst. The church, however, has been rebuilt and is a museum, a chance to learn what we can do when we marginalize those who are different from us. All the events are part of a larger history of Eurocentric colonialism and its racist agenda.

Sounding the Singing Bowl with Silent Reflection

Hymn MV 88 Over My Head

Our Wisdom Texts:

Responsive Psalm 37 VU 763

Gospel: Luke 6:27-38

Reflection:

Hymn: VU 577 I've Got Peace Like a River

Pastoral Prayer

Life & Work of the Church:

Invitation to the Offering:

Dedication Chorus: What Can I Do? *More Voices 191*

What can I do? What can I bring?

What can I say? What can I sing?

I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.

I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

Prayer of Dedication: *(in unison)* (Rev. Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes: "One Voice Service" for BHM 2021 from *united-church.ca* worship resources)

Loving God, accept these gifts.

Bless them and use them

to bring peace to places of unrest,

love to places of hate,

joy to places of fear,

hope to places of loss, and

equal rights and justice for all.

In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen

Final Hymn: VU 575 I'm Gonna Live So

Commissioning: (Rev. Dr. Paul Walfall, *united-church.ca* website: "All Are Made in the Image of God: 2020 Black History Month service")

In a world where we have, in the past, enslaved and dehumanized others,

we go to treat each person with dignity and respect.

In a world where profit is valued more than human life,

we go to proclaim the priceless worth of each person.

In a world where the ugliness of racism and White supremacy is found,
we go to show that love conquers all social ills.

Go forth into the world in peace;

be of good courage;

hold fast that which is good;

render to no one evil for evil;

strengthen the fainthearted;

support the weak;

help the afflicted;

honour everyone;

love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;

and the triune blessing of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit,

be amongst you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Benediction: VU 964 Go Now in Peace (*sung through twice*)

Postlude: