

## SERVICE FOR JULY 25<sup>th</sup>

### CARLISLE and KILBRIDE UNITED CHURCHES

Rev. Dora Sadler

**Announcements:** The worship service for Sunday August 1 will be a parking lot service at 10:00 am at Carlisle United Church. The services for the remainder of August will be parking lot services at 10:00 am at Kilbride United Church.

#### **Call to Worship:**

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

#### **Acknowledgement:**

We continue to keep in our hearts and prayers the Indigenous peoples of our land. While we cannot change the past, we pray for healing and reconciliation in the present and a future that recognizes the well-being and gift of ALL peoples.

#### **Opening Prayer:**

Living God,

In this time of sacred quiet, make us wise to believe that you, who created the universe, can create in us new hearts, so that we can govern our daily lives as you would wish us to live.

Receive all of our worship this day, for we offer it in spirit and in truth through Christ our Lord, Amen

#### **Opening Hymn: VU 315 "Holy, Holy, Holy"**

Thanks to Dora for finding this arrangement that combines soloists and full choir accompanied by piano and other instruments. I encourage you to sing out these beloved lyrics, written by a Shropshire vicar and published in 1826.

[Holy, Holy, Holy - Christian Choir Hymn with Lyrics - YouTube](#)

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God almighty!  
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;  
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, Holy, Holy! All the saints adore thee,  
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;  
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,  
which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Though the darkness hide thee,  
though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,  
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,  
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God almighty!  
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;  
Holy, Holy, Holy, merciful and mighty,  
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

#### **Confession and Assurance of Pardon:**

Eternal God,

In you we live and move and have our being.

Yet sometimes we cannot feel your presence and we forget your love.

Forgive, O God, our tendency to be elsewhere, to live in the past with pleasant memories or in the future with golden dreams.

Give us grace to live each day aware and alert for the rich possibilities each moment holds.

Know that God hears our prayers, listens to our hearts, fills us with forgiveness, and walks with us in these moments and in all the ones to come. Amen

#### **Scripture:**

As a Christian community, our church services usually offer wisdom from the scriptures. But wisdom can be found all around us, and this morning I would like to share the wisdom of one inmate at a Federal Institution - these words from him, to me, after an Olympiad event at Collins Bay Institute.

Keep in mind these are the words of a so-called hardened criminal.

Reading, then, **Philip's letter, from his prison cell, to the people of the United Church in Carlisle and Kilbride - the parable of the disabled and the criminals.**

"...at first sight of the Olympiad athletes, hobbling and tittering through the entrance, a roar of cheers and applause caressed and soothed their long neglected hearts. For some it was their first smile in a long time.

The visitors and inmates, as one, some even dabbing at their eyes in sheer joy, rushed to the athletes and, with words of comfort, led them around the track in tune to the beat and clash of a drumming band.

Later I, Philip, watched in wonder as a Godbrother escorted his 'Care' through clusters of many-coloured flowers. Every so often he would indicate a particular blossom, in which his giggling friend would gasp in pleasure.

With cheering and coaxes galore, we helped lead the stampeding athletes to their goal successfully; the finishing line. How happy we were to see every one of them set a fine example for us by straining to reach their goal. What was their reward? A smothering of rapid-fire hugs and kisses.

...such an occasion helps to activate the tendency of both law-breakers and civilians alike to the doing of good. This act of giving instead of taking, incredibly empowers ALL our questionable deeds.

As hard as I tried, I, Philip, could not find any dividing line of disunity between athletes, visitors and inmates. There was such a blending of completeness and overflowing compassion.

May this Olympiad and the many to come, continue to be a display of hope meshed with sharing. May it be a witness to the world what man can accomplish in his efforts to give charity and love to those who need it most.

(signed) Philip C. (Collins Bay Institute)"

## **LIMITATIONS - WHO DECIDES?**

**Text: *There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance. 1Cor.13:7***

You know, it's hard to think and come up with material to share with you. Meaningful stuff I mean, and what is meaningful for me may not be meaningful for you. But with all that has been happening around Covid restrictions, I just could not get out of my mind the idea of limitations. So many, for so long, and so difficult to follow, at times.

I am quite sure that many of us have felt, both in recent times, and throughout our life, the feeling that we are at the limit of our endurance, or our strength, or out

patience, even out faith. And there are undoubtedly some limits that we can't go beyond - we can only run so fast, or swim so far, or stay awake so long. Life is, after all, living within limits. To be human is to be limited.

So, we know there are limits we can't do anything about. Even the best trained athlete has limits. Some limitations can't be overcome. I can't help but think of the A.A. prayer which, with a few modifications, could read "Help me to accept the limitations that I cannot change, the courage to go beyond the ones I can, and the wisdom to know the difference".

We do know that there ARE limits that we can do something about - and that's what I'd like to talk about today, along with the question as to just who decides what the limits are that we place upon ourselves.

As I thought about this, a vivid picture came to mind, a memory from over 20 years ago I'm always amazed that some of my best recollections are from long ago, and not about last week. A sign of my age, I am told.

The memory is of my experience of a remarkable example of limitations, so remarkable that the memory remains clearly with me even today. I also recall sharing this experience with you some time in the past, and I wonder if my recall will be as complete as it was then. But it fits in so well with my talk of limitations so, bear with me as I share it again, to the best of my ability - here goes...

Behind the tall, stone walls of a medium-security Federal prison in Kingston, past the guard towers and the string of chain-link fences topped with barbed wire, I attended, with a fellow clergy person, their 7<sup>th</sup> EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE'S OLYMPIAD.

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The place - Collins Bay Penitentiary.

The exceptional people - mentally disabled residents of institutions such as Smith's Falls, at that time.

The Olympiad - simply what the name suggests, a series of competitive sports events.

For two days I was privileged to be part of an experience that went beyond the walls and barriers and limitations of physical and mental disabilities, and criminal records, and social structures, and ethnic differences, of age, and sex, and religion. Instead, I saw people with one kind of need - reaching out to people with

another kind of need. I saw the unwanted in society (because of what they had done) reaching out to the unwanted in society (because of their disabilities).

Each of the competitors was made the responsibility of an inmate. He or she was assigned a Godbrother, an inmate, who would stick with him, or her, like glue throughout the two-day event - for everything! Surprisingly to me at first, the system worked. A hardened criminal leading a mentally challenged kid by the hand, making sure he or she has their name entered in each event, shaking their hand or hugging them even when he or she came in dead last in a 6-person race, building confidence and building a friendship based on trust.

The athletes, ranging in age from 16-60, were a picture of smiles caught up in their own laughter. They never seemed to notice that they were inside prison walls and if they did, they didn't care, no more than they cared about the colour of the skin of the hand they were holding.

Everything ran like clockwork. All the events were planned for and organized by the inmates, starting a year in advance. The races were timed, the jumps were measured, the meals were prepared and served by them. They provided the music, which was very lively, and to which all those who wished danced during the lunchtime break. And the races were run as I've never seen them run before, with every ounce of strength and determination, cheered on and encouraged by the spectators (mostly inmates), with their Godfathers either waiting at the finish line or running alongside supporting all the way. What struck me most was that they were all winners! And they knew it! They knew it because their Godfathers let them know it. They knew it because they were not only allowed to go beyond what appeared to be their limitations, but they were encouraged to do so.

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And what of the prisoners - many of them repeat offenders serving long-term sentences - the undesirables of society? Where were they in all of this? All that I can say is that for two days they were treated as normal, and acceptable, and human! I saw trust in the eyes of the somewhat misshapen but enthusiastic athlete as he walked around the field with his hand in the hand of the big, burly con. I saw compassion and tenderness and yes, pride, in the eyes of the Godfather, as he escorted his charge to the area where he or she was going to compete, or for an ice cream or to the outdoor toilet.

People doing what they weren't supposed to do - running when they could barely walk - being compassionate when they were supposed to be hard-boiled - going beyond their limitations - leaving with me, both then and now, with lasting impressions- and a new awareness about prisons - whether that be by bars and locked doors or by accident or birth.

What about us here, in Carlisle and Kilbride!

Could it be that too often, the limitations we place on ourselves are self-inflicted, rather than the results of an accident, or an illness? Limitations that often remain concealed, even from ourselves?

It may be that sometimes we hear words, but we do not listen to the silences. To understand requires active listening, between the lines, deep into the human heart, into the solitude that is God. Not to hear the silences is to miss the Word beyond words. Such a deafness can happen when our mouths are so full of words and programs and justifications that our inward ears cannot pick up silent cries for help, or quietly exuberant shouts of celebration, or the voiceless promise of new things being born. "Do you not yet understand?" asked Jesus.

We also limit ourselves in our seeing, we can be blind. We look, and look, but sometimes we cannot see the essential. Vision requires imagination, to see the invisible potential, the hidden goodness, the divine purpose masked behind the obvious. Adult blindness can be the lack of child-like vision. "Having eyes, do you not see and having ears do you not hear?"

Deafness, the kind that Jesus speak about, can also result in a resistance to new ways. It is an inability to dream, to envision and to hope. It is uncomfortable around the unexpected.

Each of us has to learn what to do with our own situations. Do we let it govern us or do we let our mind go beyond the limitations? Like those inmates, in prison, but not imprisoned, at least for the time of the Olympiad.

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So I would ask are we, in the Church, are we imprisoned by the walls of our building (that is, when we allowed to return there) or are we set free by them? Do we limit ourselves in some way or other? If so, what can we do? Is there anything to learn from my story of these long years ago?

The disabled athletes ran with all they had. As far as they were concerned, they were running the Olympics. But they unquestionably had limitations!

Godbrothers and inmates - reaching out with compassion and tenderness. As far as they were concerned, they were just human beings. But they unquestionably had limitations!

Limitations.....you decide.....who says that we are limited?

You.....me.....the Church?.....Who decides/

Scripture:

THERE IS NOTHING LOVE CANNOT FACE

THERE IS NO LIMIT TO ITS FAITH

ITS HOPE

AND ITS ENDURANCE.

Prayer:

Dear God, help us to accept the limitations that we cannot change, the courage to go beon the ones we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Amen

**Hymn: VU 260 "God Who Gives to Life Its Goodness"**

St John the Evangelist Anglican Church in Ottawa shares their performance of "God Who Gives to Life Its Goodness," a hymn whose lyrics were penned by Saskatchewanian Walter Farquharson. Farquharson has 13 hymns published in *Voices United*, including "Walls That Divide," a collaboration with Ron Klusmeier.

[God Who Gives to Life Its Goodness - YouTube](#)

God who gives to life its goodness, God creator of all joy,  
God who gives to us our freedom, God who blesses tool and toy;  
teach us now to laugh and praise you, deep within your praises sing,  
till the whole creation dances for the goodness of its King.

God who fills the earth with beauty, God who binds each friend to friend,  
God who names us co-creators, God who wills that chaos end:  
grant us now creative spirits, minds responsive to your mind,  
hearts and wills your rule extending, all our acts by love refined.

## Prayers of the People:

**God of mysteries revealed and of journeys yet to be experienced**, you alert us to the gifts we have to share, you point us to the ways in which we can serve others, you guide us when we feel sad or discouraged.

**God of all good things**, we have received from you so many gifts: food and friends, talents and skills, community and calling. May we become more thankful for your many blessings and more eager to share your gifts.

**God of compassion**, we pray for your healing and strength to those in need, through illness or loss, whether that be loss of a loved one, loss of a job, loss of a relationship, loss of self-esteem, and most of all, loss of trust in you. In times of uncertainty and the devaluation of human life, it can be hard not to question our faith.

**God of all people**, we know that you do not make distinctions between race, colour, belief, disabilities of body or mind - help us to understand and reach out to those who appear to be different to us, to remember always that everyone is equal in your sight. We are all created in your image, but your image is multi-faceted and not limited to one perceived image. When we limit our perception, we limit you. Throughout the centuries there have been, and it continues in this age, an unconscionable negative judgement of those differences. We pray for an end to this thinking, for acceptance and reconciliation, and ultimate peace.

**God of all our days**, we see you standing astride our future, beckoning us on to follow your leading into new ways, and new attitudes, and new frames of reference, so that we never become stagnant or rigid, locked into attitudes and opinions that have become too small for those who bear your name. Thank you for the assurance that you will be with us to guide and direct us through all the uncertainties the future may hold.

These things, and more, we pray in the strong name of Jesus, your son, who taught us our family prayer.....Our Father...

**Hymn: VU 374 "Come and Find the Quiet Centre"**

North Yarmouth Congregational Church in Maine shares their version of this lovely hymn, here performed by David Myers Jr. (voice) and Linda Lambrides (organ). I invite you to sing along. (Their little white church reminds me a bit of Kilbride!)

[NYCC Sings! Hymn: "Come and Find the Quiet Center" - YouTube](#)

Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, face to face,  
making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!

**Benediction:**

Go from here, this time of worship together, in the knowledge that there is  
nothing love cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, its hope and its endurance,  
and now,

let us

Go in His love

Go as renewed people of God

Go with His blessing!

Amen

**Postlude:** Carillon

**Online Postlude:** "How Can I Keep From Singing?"

Twins Adam and Matt Podd are musicians, composers, and arrangers living and working in New York with some of the industry's top artists and organizations. In response to the pandemic, they decided to contribute to the ever-growing body of virtual works by crafting a contemporary arrangement of an over-150-year-old hymn. The Podd Brothers perform it here with a choir over 100 voices strong and an orchestra of 35 members. If you've already seen this YouTube post before... well, I promise it is worth a second and a third listen! Enjoy.

[How Can I Keep from Singing - NYC Virtual Choir and Orchestra - YouTube](#)