

Immanuel United Church
Seventh Sunday of Easter
May 29th, 2022

Welcome

Call to Worship:

Great is the love all around us.

Eager is the Spirit that joins us with Christ.

Tender is the One who was raised to transform us.

With the piano, voices, and souls, we give praise.

With singing, silence, and motion, we give thanks.

May the world receive our singing and our silence,
as we receive the world's singing and its silence,

that Easter joy may spread to every waiting heart.

Come, let us worship in the name of the Risen One!

Prayer:

**God of all love, thank you for calling us
into relationship with one another and with you.**

**Thank you for the joys and the responsibilities
that grow out of who we are.**

**When we get confused, impatient, or frustrated,
help us to experience your voice, guiding us to places of life.**

In the name of Living Word, we ask it. Amen.

Hymn: VU 603 *In Loving Partnership We Come*

Scripture: John 17:20-26 Jesus prays that they all may be one.

'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

Reflection: We Are One

If I were to choose one word from today's Gospel that is personally very special to me, what do you think it would be?

(Guess...)

The answer is in the question!

(Guess...)

Yes! It is "one".

(V 22 - 23) "so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one,"

You may wonder, "Ok. That's a very meaningful word in Jesus' teaching in today's Gospel. But how is it so special to you?"

My name, Ha Na, made and given to me by my Dad, means "one" in Korean. Literally it means in one in number. It could also mean more symbolically or poetically "becoming one" or "in unity." I didn't know that my name meant something so profound in life and spirituality, when I was growing up, because every year, when I got to the new class at school, the new teacher would find a way to tease me by calling, "Ha Na (One)!" Then, I would say, "Yes!" Then the teacher would smile and say, "Two!" "Three!", pretending they didn't call me. Or say "Where are Two and Three?" This pun (?) was possible because a Korean child having an originally Korean name (not one that was made of Chinese characters) was uncommon when I was growing up. For example, my maternal grandfather wanted me to have the traditional Chinese character-based name which has the same meaning as Ha Na. That's Il Hyun which I use in my email signature these days, and it means "shine brightly as one." I love this too.

This memory led me to read Embers, written by Richard Wagamese again. I love one "blessing" in the book so much — and it is to me a beautiful commandment: "Shine most brightly in community." The whole quote is as follows:

*You can't test your courage timidly. You have to run through the **fire**, arms waving, legs pumping, and **heart** beating wildly, with the effort of reclaiming something **vital**, lost, laid aside, or just plain forgotten. When you do that, we discover that*

*we shine most **brightly** in community, ...*

bound together forever, by a shared courage,

*by a family forged in the **heat** of earnest struggle.*

I read Embers on Kindle, and the device can show all the places in the book in which the very special word "one" is used. And the result was pretty interesting to me.

Can you think of any word that has "one" in it but does not have to be related to the meaning of one?

From Embers, I could find these words:

"Honest"

"Nonetheless"

"Alone"

"Someone"

"Oneness"

"Stone"

"Everyone"

"Abalone"

"Dishonest"

"Done"

"Gone"

"Lonely"

"Aloneness"

What words do you use more repeatedly than others in your life (not only from the list above) that have "one" in them?

After this quick word search, I got even more curious and read each article in Embers. And let's see what worlds these words, especially "one", can show us in the eyes of Wagamese:

"I am a traveller on a sacred journey through this one shining day."

Me: "What does it mean to believe?"

Old Woman: "It means to trust with your whole heart, to have faith. It means to have courage to act out of your belief."

Me: "How do I do that?"

Old Woman: "You have to be honest." ...

... "Okay, Creator, you and me, one more time" ...

Some other quotes from the book containing "one" are:

"I want to listen deeply enough that I hear everything and nothing at the same time and am made more by the enduring quality of my silence. I want to question deeply enough that I am made more not by the answers so much as my desire to continue asking questions. I want to speak deeply enough that I am made more by the articulation of my truth shifting into the day's shape. In this way, listening, pondering and sharing become my connection to the oneness of life, and there is no longer any part of me in exile."

"Sitting here on a morning grey as stone, in a city on an island tucked against a mountain, you come to realize how dynamic living on a planet can be when you remember that we're on one. This great island tucked against the bowl of space is home. It is majestic and at the same time a humble being — allowing us all to grow and evolve. Aki - Earth."

"No one is truly ever 'just passing through'. Every encounter has within it the power of enchantment, if we're willing to look for it."

"You. Me. Everyone. My choice is to be aware of our similarities: our yearning for truth, peace, love, belonging, welcome, grace, mercy..." ...

"Creator is everywhere and divine light shines through everything and everyone all the time. My work is to look for that light." ...

"... this one heartbeat, this one drum, this one immaculate love that put us here together..." ...

"I am reminded of how I have chosen to live — and in that is the power of greeting each day with reverence, calm and prayer. That is how I learn to direct my humanity toward peace, equality and harmony: one day, one person, one circumstance at a time."

“... There are a thousand ways to say ‘no,’ ‘but,’ ‘I can’t,’ ‘it’s impossible,’ ‘it’s too late,’ but there’s only one way to say ‘yes.’ With your whole being. When you do that, when you choose that word, it becomes the most spiritual word in the universe... And your world can change.”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus prays with the disciples “that they may all be one” three different times (V 21, 22, 23). Jesus wants us to know that oneness or unity is a sign of God’s presence in the world and in our lives, the evidence of God’s love.

These are wonderful reflections on the word “one.”

If somebody important to you asks you to share a story about “one”, what would you like to write about?

Hymn: VU 402 *We Are One*

Offering

Prayer:

**Loving God, Creator, and Sustainer,
may these gifts, given gratefully,
be brought to life through the power of your creative spirit.
Multiply and use them to bring the word
and the touch of Jesus to your people
in this place and throughout the world. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

Hymn: VU 586 *We Shall Go Out With Hope of Resurrection*

Commissioning and Benediction:

Feel Christ’s wounds,
and understand how Christ loves anyway.
Discover Christ’s tomb empty
and how Christ lives anyway.
Receive Christ’s call to embrace, rejoice,
and travel in Christ’s holy way.
Go forth to live as followers of the risen Christ.

Amen