

Orange Shirt/ Truth and Reconciliation Sunday September 27, 2026

Prelude: We are one in the spirit

arr. Bruce Nasmith

***Proclamation Hymn: Morning has broken**

No. 814

1. 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.

2. Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
like the first dewfall on the first grass;
praise for the sweetness, praise for the morning,
sprung in completeness where his feet pass.

3. Mine is the sunlight; mine is the morning;
born of the one light Eden saw play;
praise with elation; praise every morning
God's recreation of the new day!

Welcome, Announcements, Worship Theme

CALL TO WORSHIP:

We who come to worship are here from different places, not only from this country we call Canada, but from other places of the world too.

We come to live on land that is contested in its history. The First Peoples of this land have taken issue with how the land was taken from them and how they were harmed to make way for us immigrants and settlers.

How may we as people who seek to grow in faith, hope and love as servants of Jesus and children of God, face those we have wronged and seek to heal the brokenness of our relationship with them historically and today going forward?

Inspire us, convict us and empower us, O God, as we worship you this hour!

***Hymn: God in great love for us lent us this planet**

No. 719

1. God in great love for us lent us this planet,
gave it a purpose in time and in space:
small as a spark from the fire of creation,
cradle of life and the home of our race.
2. Thanks be to God for its bounty and beauty,
life that sustains us in body and mind:
plenty for all, if we learn how to share it,
riches undreamed of to fathom and find.
3. Long have our human wars ruined its harvest;
long has earth bowed to the terror of force;
long have we wasted what others have need of,
poisoned the fountain of life at its source.
4. Earth is the Lord's: it is ours to enjoy it,

ours, as God's stewards, to farm and defend.
From its pollution, misuse and destruction,
good Lord, deliver us, world without end!

Prayer of Approach, Confession & The Lord's Prayer
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.**

**Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done
on earth, as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil;
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Peace of Christ be with you all;
And also with you.

Intergenerational Children's Time
(Children are invited to join in programming following Children's Time)

Choir with congregation: What does the Lord require of you

No. 709

1. What does the Lord require of you?
What does the Lord require of you?

2. Justice, kindness,
walk humbly with your God.

3. To seek justice, and love kindness,
and walk humbly with your God.

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 21: 1-16 (p. 328)

Aaron Oh

INTRO: Our scripture reading this morning comes from the First book of Kings, chapter 21, verses 1-16. This is a story of how an innocent man is not only threatened but murdered when he says no to a powerful king and queen. But what is the sin here? Listen:

“There was once a man named Naboth who lived in a part of ancient Israel called Jezreel. Naboth also had a vineyard on his land and it was beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. ² And Ahab said to Naboth, “Give me your vineyard, so that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near my house; I will give you a better vineyard for it, or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its value in money.” ³ But Naboth said to Ahab, “The Lord forbid that I should give you my ancestral inheritance.” ⁴ Ahab went home resentful and sullen because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had said to him, for he had said, “I will not give you my ancestral inheritance.” He lay down on his bed, turned away his face, and would not eat.

⁵ The King’s wife Jezebel came to him and said, “Why are you so depressed that you will not eat?” ⁶ He said to her, “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite and said to him, ‘Give me your vineyard for money, or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard for it,’ but he answered, ‘I will not give you my vineyard.’ ” ⁷ His wife Jezebel said to him, “Do you now govern Israel? Get up, eat some food, and be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.”

⁸ So she wrote letters in Ahab's name and sealed them with his seal; she sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who lived with Naboth in his city. ⁹ She wrote in the letters, "Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth at the head of the assembly; ¹⁰ seat two scoundrels opposite him, and have them bring a charge against him, saying, 'You have cursed God and the king.' Then take him out and stone him to death." "The men of his city, the elders and the nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them. Just as it was written in the letters that she had sent to them, ¹² they proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the assembly. ¹³ The two scoundrels came in and sat opposite him, and the scoundrels brought a charge against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth cursed God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death. ¹⁴ Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned; he is dead."

¹⁵ As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, Jezebel said to Ahab, "Go, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money, for Naboth is not alive but dead." ¹⁶ As soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab set out to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it." Amen.

We are listening, O God.

Speak to us!

Sermon: What's your relationship to the land around you?

Dr. Harris

Choir: Sage my soul

Tia Wood

Soloists: Anna Bateman and Gretchen Helbig

Verse 1 Solo: Calling, walking
But too young to be shameless
Speaking, no healing
Just a child gone aimless

Voice gone cold, I'm all choked up
But my mind's still talking
Pack a day to feel your love
'Cause I ain't been calling
Ooh-ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh-ooh
Ooh-ooh-ooh, ooh-ooh-ooh

CHORUS ALL: Empty out the bottles 'cause I'm missing every part of
you
So, sage my soul
Could've took it further, miss my mama and my father
That'll take me home
Sage
Sage
Sage my soul
Burn it to the bottom 'cause I'm missing every part of you
So sage, sage my soul

Verse 2 Solo: Growing, unfolding
Stripping down my layers
Take me as I am
Despite my bad behaviour

Know there's been some damage done
Smoked out, abusing

Packed my stuff to learn to love
You know, I'm only human

CHORUS ALL: "Empty out the bottles...."

BRIDGE ALL: I wanna give more

Oh

I wanna be more

I wanna be the whole of me

The best of me

All that you deserve

I wanna be more

I wanna be more, ooh

Chorus All: "Empty out the bottles..."

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Pastoral Concern

***Hymn: Wordless, ancient earth's foundations**

No. 714

1. Wordless, ancient earth's foundations
cradle fragile in your palm;
speechless, boundless constellations
voice their awe in soundless psalm:
hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah,
you are all creating, one.

2. We, our earth's stored treasures spending,
foul its soil and stain its seas;
we, our human grasp extending,
landscapes bruise, proud towers raise.
Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison, kyrie eleison,

lead us home from wasted ways.

3. Heal us, feed us by your Spirit:
all earth's torment is your own.
Name us, send us each as servant,
working, bearing Christ's shalom.
Maranatha, maranatha, maranatha,
so we pray: Christ Jesus, come.

Benediction

***Threefold Amen**

Postlude: Sarabande in D minor

G. F. Handel

**Remain seated if you are more comfortable*

~

We invite you to join us for refreshments and fellowship in our adjacent hall after the service.

All are welcome!

~

OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH:

To become the hands, feet, voice and heart of Christ for each other and in the world.

For more about who we are and what we do,
visit us at: armourheights.org



Thank you for all the ways you
Heights Community.
Scan here to make a donation



contribute to our Armour
through CanadaHelps:

Minister
Ministers-in Association
Minister Emeritus
Clerk of Session
Administrator & Manager of
Community Engagement
Administrative Assistant
Music Director
Live Stream Tech & Custodian
Children & Youth Coordinator

The Rev. Dr. Harris Athanasiadis, hathan1964@hotmail.com
The Rev. Dr. Carol Loudon, The Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll
The Rev. William Middleton
Michael Nettleton, clerk@armourheights.org
Erin Stone, estone@armourheights.org

Joan Pries adminarmourheightspresbyterian@gmail.com
Bruce C. Nasmith, brucenasmith@gmail.com
Kome Abel
Won Hwang, education@armourheights.org

Coming Events

Sunday, September 27

Orange Shirt / Truth & Reconciliation

Sunday

Special Presentation with lunch, 12 noon

(see poster for details)

Intergenerational Band Rehearsal, 1:15 pm

Monday, September 28

Dance Fitness with Jennifer Hicks, 10:00

am

Tuesday, September 29

Book Club, "Forest Euphoria: The

Abounding Queerness of Nature" by

Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian, 7:30 pm (see poster for details)

Wednesday, September 30

Bible Study: "Who is Jesus? Who are you?", 7:30 pm in person & Online

Sunday, October 4

World Communion Sunday.

Intergenerational Band Rehearsal, 12 noon.

Monday, October 5

Dance Fitness with Jennifer Hicks, 10:00 am

Tuesday October 6

AHPC hosts Presbytery of East Toronto, Worship at 7pm (with refreshments beginning at 6:30pm).

Wednesday, October 7

Bible Study: "Who is Jesus? Who are you?", 7:30 pm In Person & Online

Sunday, October 11

Thanksgiving Sunday / Intergenerational Worship

Monday, October 12

NO DANCE FITNESS

Wednesday, October 14

Bible Study: "Who is Jesus? Who are you?", 7:30 pm In Person & Online

Sunday, October 18

Pentecost 22 Sunday

EHM Walk, 2:15pm (see poster for details)

Monday, October 19

Dance Fitness with Jennifer Hicks, 10:00 am

Tuesday, October 27

Book Club, "The Exvangelicals: Loving, Living, and Leaving the White Evangelical Church" by Sarah McCammon (see poster for details)

Sunday, November 1

75th Anniversary Sunday Worship & Lunch. Special Guest: The Moderator of General Assembly: The Rev. Lara Scholey

WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND AROUND YOU?

1 Kings 21: 1-16

I came to Canada from Greece when I was 4 years old. My family was sponsored by my uncle, the eldest, who worked hard over a period of some years to help the whole family come to Canada. Why? Times were tough in Greece. Greece was occupied by Italy and then Germany through the 2nd world war, and after liberation there was a civil war. And even though after the 1950s, there was major investment from Western nations in rebuilding the country from the ground up, there was massive unemployment and economic hardship in Greece for decades after that. Coming to Canada was a fresh start and a chance to build a better future for our family.

And Canada has continued to be a place of refuge and new life for many immigrants and refugees who come not only for economic reasons, but also to escape discrimination, oppression and the trauma of violence and war. But what do immigrants and refugees leave behind? They leave behind any meaningful connection to the land they have come from.

Canada is a land of immigrants and refugees. That means we have limited time we've lived on this land. It's only First Nations people who are truly indigenous to this land. What's it like to be indigenous to the land upon which you live? It's about being on the soil, the natural habitat and the environment that not only your parents and grandparents have lived on, but your ancestors going back thousands of years.

This struck me especially personally earlier this year when I travelled to Armenia. My mother is Armenian and her parents were refugees from Turkey where many Armenians lived over 100 years ago. And even though thousands of years ago much of what is now Turkey was once Armenia, a genocidal campaign before and during the 1st world war saw more than half the population of Armenians wiped out while the other half escaped as refugees to other parts of the world like Greece. But Eastern Armenia was able to have it's own small piece of land, a bit like what indigenous people here in Canada have to contend with living on a reserve, which is a smaller, more contained piece of land within the larger whole.

But even this small piece of land called Armenia today is being hemmed in and invaded by neighbouring Azerbaijan, supported by Turkey. While visiting Armenia we met many refugees who told very sad stories of having to escape their homes in the eastern part of the country called: "Arsakh" within the larger territory called: Nagorno Karabakh. The head of the family told us with tears in his eyes how this is the first time in 3000 years there are no Armenians living in the Arsakh region... 3000 years! It's hard to fathom. Imagine living on land that has been in your family and familial lineage going back 3000 years!

And yet, the irony is that even as Canada has been a refuge for so many escaping persecution and economic distress like my family, and some of you here today too, Canada itself is also built on having done the very same thing to those original First Nations inhabitants of this land. The land was taken, and the original inhabitants have been displaced from their land to make room for the rest of us coming in and taking over.

And sadly, this continues to happen not only here in Canada, but around the world. Think about what is happening in Gaza and the West

Bank. While many of us dream of a two-state solution some day for Palestinians and Jews, many hardliners envision an erasure of the Palestinians from land they have lived on and farmed for thousands of years. The same is true in Sudan and Ukraine and many other places besides. Invasion and occupation continue to be a hard reality, and when we hear such threats coming even from our neighbour to the South with talk of Canada as the 51st state and the renaming of a cherished lake Ontario that has been part of indigenous history for thousands of years, it is all very scary.

OK, so how do we move forward? How do we move forward as those seeking a home on land that has been contested, lost and taken in various ways? How do we seek ways to healing and reconciliation with all those affected? The first step is listening to truth. Our scripture reading this morning is all about truth when it comes to land. And to understand what it's fully about, we need to have a little background. In the earlier part of the bible, when the Hebrew people first come to the new land they will call home, they are told very clearly that the land will not belong to them or to anyone else. It belongs to God. This also means that the land gets parcelled out to each family and clan so that everyone gets a share. Whatever happens in the years, decades and centuries to come, every family and clan is tied to their original land. It will become a part of their family and a part of them. Even if it is bought and sold over time, every 50 years it will revert back to the original peoples. That's the plan.

So, this helps us understand how severe it is what happens in our biblical story. Naboth is an ordinary man living in the land of Israel, and living on the land of his ancestors going back many hundreds of years. He has a home and a bit of land he farms and lives on. But next to him is the palace of the king – Ahab is his name. The king has a lot of property in multiple places. He can live wherever he wants. And as the

king continues to expand his land acquisition he bumps up against Naboth's property. He wants it, badly. But Naboth says, no. And why does Naboth say no? It's not about the money. Ahab is willing to give him a lot of money for the land, or give him even better land and a larger plot of land, and Naboth would also inherit the good favour of the king on top of it all. But Naboth has a relationship to his own little piece of land far greater than its material value. The land is linked to Naboth's relationship not only with his present family, but his family and people going back all the way to the beginning of when the original ancestors first came to inhabit the land. The land is sacred, a gift from God. Naboth can't just sell it for some material benefit.

Wow, Ahab can't understand such a thing. He can't understand such valuing. Isn't everything up for sale if the price is right? Can't those with power and means get what they want? And doesn't everyone live by fear and threat and whatever they can get for themselves and their own? Evidently not!

So, Ahab doesn't know what to do about this. It's as if Naboth has confronted Ahab with another understanding of values and ethics he doesn't know how to fight. And so, what does the king do? He goes to bed, depressed, refuses to eat and pities himself like a child who can't get what they want.

But then there's his partner, the great queen Jezebel. Unfortunately, in a patriarchal culture Jezebel the woman gets a super bad rap. But it's not her fault someone has to wear the "pants" in the house so to speak. Anyhow, Jezebel understands the way of power and the way fear can rule. She confronts the king's pathetic childishness. Aren't you the king of Israel?! Shouldn't you be able to get whatever you want? Should any so-called value, ethic or ancient ancestral law stand in your way? Everything can be bought, sold or simply taken. I'll show you! And

so, through bribery, deceit, corruption and violence, Jezebel gets local nobles to falsely accuse Naboth of being a threat to God, the king and the nation. Such an accusation with testimony by those ready to claim they heard Naboth threaten the king even if it's a lie easily succeeds when people are governed by fear, self-interest and a conscience sold-out. Naboth is stoned to death and the king gets his piece of land, and for free!

But what happens next? If we keep reading the story we find out that the prophet Elijah comes forward and he alone has the courage to risk it all by telling the king he has done wrong and will be punished against divine law which cannot be revoked without consequence. OK, fair enough, and in time Ahab and Jezebel do suffer a terrible end, and this is interpreted as a consequence of all their crimes against their own people which is also a crime against God. But we still need to understand what exactly is wrong in what has been done against Naboth.

For many of us reading this story today, we would zero in on the crime of lying, cheating, greed, and murder. But if we look at the biblical story from its origins building up to this point, we must understand that it's about the relationship of human beings with the land. People over time build relationships to the land. In our book club discussion this coming Tuesday based on the book: *Forest Euphoria*, we read about how the very DNA of land, trees, forest and soil, as well as the DNA of animals and humans, all form interactively over time. Severing that connection is profoundly harmful. No wonder the bible puts God into the middle of it. The land and the people connected to the land have a sacred bond. You cannot just treat land like a piece of inanimate property or resource for the use and abuse of whoever. The land is alive and like you and me is treated like a person with rights. Abusing the land and severing the relationship of the land with the creatures

who are part of it including humans over hundreds and thousands of years is existentially criminal. Removing people or taking land from others has consequences for our very well being not only spiritually and morally, but mentally and physically too. We may grow to adapt to new land, but it takes many generations for our DNA to evolve and be shaped by the DNA of the land we interact with on a daily basis. Isn't this fascinating?!

OK, so how may we, immigrants and settlers on this land we call Canada, who have limited history with the land we're on and can easily treat it as some "natural resource" we can simply buy, sell and exploit for profit less mindful of its personhood and rights... how may we change our way of thinking and living on this land as part of our listening to truth and seeking reconciliation with its First Peoples?

Let me end by quoting from one of the books I read over the summer entitled: "Reading the Bible on Turtle Island".

"No matter where you live today, there is a body of water that is sustaining you and those you love - what is your responsibility to that water source? Depending on where you live, you are either shaped by the grandeur of the mountains, by the roar and salt of ocean, or by the open expanse of flat landscapes and their winding rivers and creeks. What is your responsibility to see these places continue to flourish and to heal from the mistreatment they have suffered due to human greed?

Recognition must be followed by habits, rituals and practices that reinforce what we believe. What customs, habits and ceremonies on Christian life today recognize the importance of place and work for shalom with more-than-human creation? We would dare say this is almost entirely absent from most Christian spirituality and almost

entirely absent from the communal Sunday morning gathering of the average church. Believers today, in the individual and collective, need to be radically re-placed and then re-membered into the community of creation in which they find themselves. If we do not do this hard work of rooting ourselves to place and seeing ourselves and our well-being as being intimately bound to our community of creation, our dismembered status will leave us impotent to the work of shalom with our more-than-human kin and create a vacuous existence that is instead filled with excessive materialism and media consumption." (pp.79-80)

Does this speak to you? Does this call to you? It certainly calls to me as someone who knows very little what it means to be rooted on land in a way where it is as real and alive to me as I myself am alive and all of you here are alive. How may each of us further root ourselves in the land around us and beneath us, as a way of learning from the first peoples of the land how to be human on this earth as a sacred gift of our creator. Amen.