

**Sunday, March 16, 2025**  
**PIE DAY**

## **Prelude**

### **Welcome and Territorial Acknowledgement**

Welcome to our Affirm United, PIE Day service day. Each Sunday closest to March 14 (3.14 pi) we recommit to Public, Intentional & Explicit acts of being a welcoming community to all.

Whomever you are, however you identify, whomever you love, wherever you may be on your faith journey – you are not only safe here but holy/wholly and fully welcomed just as you are.

No judgement.

No condemnation.

Truly, fully welcome as God's beloved. You are welcome in this place.

When we come together we gather in a time and place. This place is Sylix traditional

This land has been a source of life and wisdom for this community long before settler's arrived here. With an intention of truthfulness, we also acknowledge the ways settlers have erased the unique gender identities and sexualities of Indigenous nations on Turtle Island. As we seek to decolonize our life and worship we acknowledge that white-settler culture has done significant harm to both Indigenous and white-settler communities, by imposing rigid ideas gender norms and sexual identities on all people.

### **Speaker: Kai**

Celebrating PIE Day fits into our journey to becoming an Affirming Community of Faith.

Before COVID, before searching for a new minister (Yeah, Anne), before our arduous journey in support of Affordable Housing in Summerland, a small team, under direction of Council, began the work toward Summerland United Church becoming an official affirming congregation. To this end, it is essential that we engage the community of faith in deep meaningful learning.

Our wish is to keep that work alive – keep showing publicly that we are an inclusive congregation.

We acknowledge that God's love is wider and more inclusive than anything we can imagine – we want to stand together to be openly welcoming and supportive to all – ALL.

We want to proudly fly our flag and display our official Affirm United logo.

This year, PIE is celebrating with a focus on SONG – “Sing Out Proud!”

My song selection for this morning: Spirit of the Living God

**We Sing: VU 376 Spirit of the Living God (VU 376)**

**Threshold and Christ Candle**

Today we will read the passage in scripture we know as the beatitudes. A piece of teaching by Jesus that lists those who are blessed by God. And it's not who one would normally consider blessed. But this is what Jesus so often does in his teachings – turn the world over on its head, turn it upside down. Well, perhaps he's actually turning it rightside up and showing us the way God intended the world to be.

When so many voices and lawmakers are pushing back against 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion, let us challenge ourselves to wonder how we might speak up and put words in action by being public, intentional & explicit in our belief that diversity is a part of god's beloved creation and indeed, a gift to be cherished & celebrated.

We light this candle in remembrance of the one who brings us all together. In Christ we all are drawn to the light. In Christ we set the world back on it's right side, where we all belong and are beloved.

### **Opening Prayer: Krista**

God calls us to love. Let us love generously, love boldly, love unconditionally. We need to simply love someone for who they are. Let's embrace our differences: Accept, support and celebrate the full rainbow spectrum of human diversity. Create within our congregation a place where all 2SLGBTQIA+ people will not only feel safe but will be safe, supported and know that with us they are surrounded by love, our unconditional love always.

Have a great day! My song selection for this morning: My Love Colors Between the Lines

**We Sing:** MV 138 My Love Colors Between the Lines (MU 138)

### **We Gather Together**

The Pride flag we use at church has lots of colours in it.

We have **black and brown** for siblings who are Black, Indigenous and People of Colour. We have **white, pink and blue** for our transgender siblings too.

**Red** is for Life – we believe life is given by God, and that God gives it in abundance

**Orange** is for Healing – many LGBTQ+ folks have been hurt, by family who don't understand their sexuality or gender, by a world that often rejects folks who are different, and by the church who has a history of rejecting these children of God – BUT we also believe that God offers healing.

**Yellow** is for Sunlight – we believe that God intended for all of her children to live out in the open, to not need to hide away who they are.

**Green** is for Nature – we believe God does not make mistakes, that she formed each of us with care, that she shaped our different sexualities and genders and loves us as she made us.

**Blue** is Serenity – we believe that peace can be found in God, in knowing that we are children of God, in knowing God made us and loves us just as we are.

**Purple** is for Spirit – a spirit that connects all of us, a spirit that helps us survive and thrive, a spirit that binds the human family together in love We give thanks for this

beautiful rainbow, We give for God's love and care in creating each of us. We give thanks that humanity is as diverse as there are colours in this world.

### **Prayers of Confession and Assurance**

I call upon the Light, God's Light. The Light shall shine upon us and within us.

**The Light is God and it is great.**

It shall encourage us, strengthen us, guide us, protect us, shield us, love us, empower me, ground me, give me wisdom and actions of God's Holy Spirit.

**The light is calm. The Light is never rushed. The Light knows no time. The Light is the Holy Spirit.**

We sense the Light; we know feel and smell the Light. It is like pure Joy. Jesus was created by the light, truly God's Light.

**It shall never leave us.**

Forgive Us loving God, with all you have given and taught us. Allow us to accept the wellness and creation of the life we each lead.

**We Love you God. We Love you Holy Spirit. We Love you Jesus.**

With Peace and Forgiveness, in Jesus name, Amen.

### **Speaker: Kathleen**

Why PIE? *PIE = Public. Intentional. Explicit.* Those are the standards we hold ourselves and our welcome to when we seek to live into being fully Affirming, Welcoming, and Inclusive people and communities.

This year's theme, "*Sing Out Proud*," represents our sharing of values and joy in celebrating difference and diversity throughout our beloved 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. The P.I.E. song by Rev. Donalee Williams "

It's straight from the Affirm website. I will lead the learning and singing of The PIE Song.

**We Sing:** The PIE Day song.

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 5: 1-12

**Reflection:** The beatitudes is a powerful message about the inclusive and expansive Kingdom of God. It turns Empire, the powers that be, completely upside down. Or, perhaps right side up. The beatitudes tell us at all the people who live on the edges of society, the marginalized, the disenfranchised, the alienated are not only welcome in this Kingdom, but are front and center. If we don't make space for them to come in and if we don't welcome their voice – we're not living up to Jesus' call for us.

When churches begin the Affirming process, one of the common push backs is 'we're already welcoming, can't people see that?' Yes, of course they can – those who've come in the doors and experienced it. But not those who have entered an "All are welcome" church only to discover they're welcome to a point. They're welcome if they conform to their way of doing things, welcome if they agree to a "don't ask, don't tell" attitude. And their welcome if they don't come with new ideas that might change something.

When I hear that's comment "We're already welcoming" I tend to respond with, "Yes, and what if we could be even more welcoming?!" and honestly if a church doesn't want to work on that – why are they even calling themselves a house of God?

And so the intention of the Affirming process, PIE day and being public, intentional and explicit in our welcome is to practice making our welcome in church as inclusive and expansive as possible.

But why the focus on the Queer Community? Some ask – what about this group, that group, those of us already here? Well, a flippant answer, is why not? But really, what happens when a community focus on a marginalized community and works to understand how they can welcome them better – all marginalized communities' benefit. The doors open wider and wider as we begin to notice the other people missing from the space and who's voices we're not hearing. An access ramp added to a building for use by those with mobility issues benefits moms with strollers, delivery trollies, people with bikes.

A friend of mine has a t-shirt that says Human Right for more people doesn't mean less for others – it's not pie.

Except of course, here it is PIE – but the good kind with enough for everyone.

The beatitudes remind us that when Jesus began his ministry he didn't, as Tyler Sit says in his book, "enlist the savviest masterminds for his movement, he went to the most oppressed people in society: the sick, the sex workers, the day labourer. He didn't have a ten-point plan. He just sat with them, talked to them, listened to them and blessed them – blessed them as the people and situations where God shows up.

In Staying Awake Tyler begins the book with Worship – as the place we learn to love God, so we can take that love out into the world to do the work of God in the world. Then return to worship to continue our inward transformation before venturing back into the world for outward transformation.

Another reason Affirm begins with the Queer Community, is because of the recognition of the amount of trauma the church has caused. Like the TRC, Affirm asks us, like Jesus to not only welcome marginalized people, but also repent for participating in a society that did the marginalizing.

The beatitudes remind us that God gives the oppressed, the marginalized the knowledge and repair harm done by oppressors. When we center marginalized voices – listen – really actively and intentional listen – we start to hear what type of action is necessary to have restore our relationships with those seeking a place within the church. It is the voices of the marginalized that teach us about reconciliation.

We know that we are a welcoming community, we know that when we say all are welcome, we mean it, with no if ands or buts. And we know we can be more welcoming

and we can do that by staying awake to what we want our community to be – a counter message to that of Empire that wants to separate us, encourages us v. them, demands that only certain types of people count or even exist at all. We practice staying awake to the knowledge of this and the practice of standing firm and say no – God's love is for everyone. Human rights are for every one. We stand firm in our willingness to give voice to those who are voiceless and listen with humility, grace and mercy.

**We Sing:** MV 99 Stand, O Stand Firm

### **Prayers of the People**

Call: Living and Loving God,

**Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.**

Parent, Teacher and Spirit... We pray for those harmed by bad theology, carelessly spouted from pulpits, pews and dinner tables. We know that these ideas hurt and kill. Protect your children, God, surround them with strength and compassion. Raise up a community around them, our community, who will shield them under our wing.

**Call: Living and Loving God, Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.**

We pray for those turned away from their homes because of who they are, who they love, or the ways they express their authentic selves. Open up new homes and communities for them where they are fully accepted. Draw them to you with the warm glow of your loving hearth.

**Call: Living and Loving God, Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.**

We pray for those searching for their true self and purpose in a confusing world. Allow the person you created them to be to break through the noise and competition, allowing them to live fully into their intended self. Manifest in them your Spirit of confidence and creation.

**Call: Living and Loving God, Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of love.**

Transform us, Creating and Recreating Spirit, in your ever-divine image. An image expressed in the diversity of the created world. Allow us not to be held back by past versions of ourselves, but to find liberation in the unfolding of our lives. Help us to honour our past, present and future selves.

**Call: Living and Loving God, Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.**

Reveal your radical Kin-dom, not just a little more each day, but in great sweeps of justice and mercy. Opening up new paths in front of us, strengthening our weary limbs when we feel rundown. We want to be a part of your Great Working of Love.

**Call: Living and Loving God, Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.**

We also name specific concerns and joys from our community now... Patricia, Deenie, Ozzie, Christine, David, Linnea, Audry, Ron, Barbara, Phillip, ...

**Call: Living and Loving God, Response: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.**

**Prayer of Jesus, from the Message**

"Our God in heaven, reveal who you are.

Set the world right;  
do what's best – as above, so below.  
Keep us alive with three square meals.  
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.  
Keep us safe from ourselves and the devil/the evil one.  
You're in charge! You can do anything you want!

You're ablaze in beauty!  
Yes. Yes. Yes.

**Offering and Offering Prayer**

Holy One, Holy Three, you who created us in their image, we give you thanks for the rainbow expression of gifts embodied in your beloved ones. Bless these gifts that have been given yesterday, today, and will be given tomorrow. Take our time, our talents, our passion, and our resources and use them to create a world where everyone knows love, knows peace, knows mercy.  
Amen.

**Announcements**

**Blessing: Celeste**

As we leave this service, may our hearts be full of mercy for each other. May we truly understand what it means to stand up for those who are persecuted. May we bring provisions not judgement. May we all help create a new humanity that believes in love and respect for all.

My song selection this morning: Will You Come and Follow Me?

**We Sing:** VU 567 Will You Come and Follow Me?

**Postlude**