

# Liturgy – Pride Sunday

## Call to Worship

We believe that horizons of hope are never fixed.  
They always move beyond, in the creativity of God.  
We believe that powers of evil cannot kill God.  
God walks on free and leaps ahead of us in the risen Christ of faith.  
We believe that the Spirit can never be confined.  
She dances forth in the world and is found in surprising places,  
leading us on until the end of time.  
(D McRae-McMahon)

## Prayer

Holy One,  
    known to us in many ways but still unknown to us,  
    we are together and we ask for your blessings as we rejoice as a community.  
Bless our pride together.  
May it also be a humble reflection of gratitude for who it is you have created us to be, each of  
    us and us together.  
Bless our celebration that it be an expression of our joy in love and in health.  
Bless our laughter and let it be something that builds friendships and relationships.  
Bless our tears also and for the same reasons.  
    If we encounter anyone who opposes us, bless them too.  
    We humbly ask that fear and anger don't find a voice today.  
    We humbly ask that love gets the last word and the clearest expression.  
Bless our differences as a source of our strength and a sign of our respect for one another and  
    our love for you.  
Bless those for whom it takes great courage to be here that they may feel the abundance of life  
    in such a way that it's no longer just words on a page.  
    We feel that we are called to speak and to hear your vision of justice and of peace.  
    Help us do that well and do it faithfully.  
Bless each one of us here today with your presence and our presence, one with another.  
    You are faithful to us, we want to be faithful to you, to each other and to the community  
    around us.  
Amen.

## Targum

Corey Herlevsen

1 John 4

*A Targum is somewhere in between a translation and a sermon. It's a spoken paraphrase in updated or fresher language that Rabbis used when people were unable to hear and understand the Hebrew of the text. It can be helpful when bible passages become too familiar and we don't really hear them anymore. So yesterday I wrestled with the text of 1 John 4. I'm not sure who won but here is the Herlevsen Targum of 1 John 4.*

“We’re all in this thing together, walking the line between faith and fear. We are all image bearers of God. We don’t see God directly face to face, not yet, but when we love one another we reflect God to each other and to the world from a place deep within our truest and best selves, a place only the heart may know. Those are the moments and those are the relationships where we see and experience the dignity of our humanity and the transcendence of divinity, of a true spirituality that is mature—richer and truer than any of the stock phrases we’ve picked up in churches or love songs. There’s nothing new in what I’m saying, we’ve heard this before. But we don’t always embrace it, we don’t let it sink in to the places where we are most vulnerable, heart, soul and bone marrow. When we do, though, truth becomes tangible, sensual to reclaim a perfectly good word. We can see it, feel it, and breathe it in. We can form it with our lips and speak it to each other.

Everybody knows the phrase “God is love” but when we really let that sink in, when we embrace it, when we are real and present to each other and to God, the sparks of truth within us can catch on fire. We can become a little freer, then a little freer again. Love can have the run of the place. And we don’t have to sit around wringing our hands or hiding our face because we are afraid of being judged and told that we are not enough. We are enough. We each bear the image of God and we are in this thing together. Relax. Because in Christ we are all in the same room and we don’t need to be afraid.

Mature love tosses fear out. But, if you take a look around, it’s pretty easy to see that the opposite is also true. If we let fear go unchallenged, fear acts like a bouncer who’s been given a bit too much power and won’t let love in the room. With love locked out, the room gets smaller, tighter, cramped, stale, angrier. And, ironically it usually gets louder too because fear loves to shout and it really loves to hear its own voice...Fear is a bully and it’s our fear of the bully that cripples us, we can’t walk around in our freedom. We can’t make choices, we just end up doing what the bully says and start picking at each other. No...we can love maturely in a way that tosses fear out the door. We can say to the darkness “we beg to differ” and choose to love in a way that shines the light of truth and makes the bully scurry. We, our-

selves, no longer need to scurry because in Christ we are being made mature in truth and love. God loves us, we are image bearers of God, we love each other and God is invited into the room. Clearly then there is no longer any room for fear. Then our community becomes a place where people are honored. Where they are safe and where the relationships are unagendaed.

God is pretty clear on this point. Loving God means loving people because we all bear the image—all people even (and maybe especially) the ones we've been told we should be afraid of. Mature love tosses fear out. We are all in this thing together, waging wild and reckless peace, walking together in truth...Each step we take today a step of love, strength, grace, courage, profound human dignity.

Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church (Canada) From *Along the Arc*. ©2017 Brethren Mennonite Council for LGBTQ Interests.

[Creative Commons: Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International \(CC BY-4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)