



25 Main Street, P.O. Box 61, Grand Bend, Ontario N0M 1T0 * (519) 238-2402
huronshoresunitedchurch@gmail.com * www.huronshoresunitedchurch.com

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Today's message has been prepared by David Kai. David and spouse, Marly Bown are our Voluntary Associate Ministers (VAMs).

God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth."

Genesis 9: 11-13 (NRSV)

We Are a Rainbow

With the unrest in the USA and our renewed awareness of racism within our country and our institutions, we might wonder what our church's contributions are in this area.

As we celebrate Pride Month in June and celebrated our Pride Sunday two days ago, remember that we are an Affirming Congregation. Our Vision Statement begins:

We seek to make this community a reflection of God's plan, to be a safe haven for ALL who seek peace, justice, freedom; a place where differences are celebrated and accepted as gifts; where new ideas and new ways are not feared but rather embraced as we learn to expand our hearts so that ALL are welcome.

We affirm that this includes persons of ALL sexual orientations, gender identities, races, abilities, ages, economic circumstances and talents.

Jesus knew no boundaries. He reached out to all people, honoring ALL in their diversity. We celebrate the richness this brings to our church...

As an Affirming Congregation we have already begun the work of being an inclusive, justice-seeking place of welcome, not only for the LGBTQ2S+ community, but to people of all races, abilities, ages, economic circumstances and talents.

I wrote the song "We Are a Rainbow" for Affirming Congregations like ours to put those thoughts into music and ground them in scripture. The chorus of the song states that:

*We are a rainbow, sign of covenant and peace,
For the flood of tears will finally cease to be,
Come shine your rainbow, splash your hues across the sky,
Paint the world in colours proud and bold and free.*

You can hear the song at this link: <https://youtu.be/9gOrQkODcqY>

In case you are not able to access the video, I am printing the words here.

We're the light of all the world, we are a city on a hill,
We're a candle on a stand proclaiming light,
We will not hide our lamp beneath a bushel any more,
We will shine a ray of hope that's burning bright. Chorus:

We're a coat of many colours, sewn from many different threads,
Covering all in warmth, in welcome and in grace,
God said "Let there be light", created every varied shade,
In the rainbow each of us can find a place. Chorus:

We are hope to still believe in tomorrow's better day,
We are peace in a world that's torn apart,
We are joy that will last in all the struggles that we face,
We are love that blooms and grows in every heart. Chorus:

When we face the storms of life, we will never be alone,
For our God will be with us on the way,
Hand in hand, side by side, we won't be frightened any more,
As the mourning night of tears breaks into day. Chorus:

HSUC has taken a brave and bold step in declaring itself to be an Affirming Congregation.
As our Vision Statement concludes:

We are called to be a part of a ministry that welcomes and includes ALL, honors the gifts of each, and recognizes that ALL receive God's abundant grace.

At our best, we truly are God's rainbow.

Thanks be to God.

David
davidwkai@gmail.com

*"Our relationship with God and each other strengthens us, and helps make the world a better place.
We welcome and include **everyone** into congregational life."*

