



Pioneer Pastoral Charge

Sunday July 5, 2020

Being Good Neighbours

Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

Candle Lighting: *The light of Christ... God around us,
among us, within us.*

Coming together

God invites all who are weary to come.

Come now

with the burdens of work, home, and community.

Jesus promises, **I will give you rest.**

God invites all who are weary to come.

Come now with the burdens of illness,
of fear, of hopelessness.

Jesus promises, **I will give you rest.**

God invites all who are weary to come.

Come now with the burdens of anger,
of prejudice, of alienation.

Jesus promises, **I will give you rest.**

God invites all who are weary to come.

God invites all who are weary to lay down their
burdens.

God invites all who are weary to find peace.

With weary minds and hope filled hearts

we come to be with God. Come, let us worship.

αHymn: ♪ MV#27 Creator God you gave us life.

Scripture is our song for the journey, the living word
passed on from generation to generation to guide
and inspire. **God calls us to be doers of the word
and not hearers only.**

Matthew 11:16-19, 25-26 The Message **27-30** The Voice
Hear these words of Jesus... he speaks of judging by appearances... he speaks of the ordinary folk of life knowing what the truth of living faithfully is... he speaks of God's willingness to share the burdens of our living so that we can live love in the world. Jesus said...

16-19 "How can I account for this generation? The people have been like spoiled children whining to their parents, 'We wanted to skip rope, and you were always too tired; we wanted to talk, but you were always too busy.' John came fasting and they called him crazy. I came feasting and they called me a lush, a friend of the riffraff. Opinion polls don't count for much, do they? The proof of the pudding is in the eating."

25-26 Abruptly Jesus broke into prayer: "Thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You've concealed your ways from sophisticates and know-it-alls, but spelled them out clearly to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that's the way you like to work."

27 Jesus resumed talking to the people, but now tenderly. "The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I'm not keeping it to myself; I'm ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen.

28 Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Put My yoke upon your

shoulders—it might appear heavy at first, but it is perfectly fitted to your curves. Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. When you are yoked to Me, your weary souls will find rest. 30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

Scripture opened, God invited

Prayer for Grace

Creator God

Just a few weeks ago we heard
a story of the beginning of creation.
We heard that when you had done all that you could
you rested. We heard that you readied yourself
to begin to journey with us into unknown times and
places, willing to share this world with us,
your voice inviting us in.

Come with me, **Not that way**
Come with me **Not today, that's not my plan**
Come with me **But that's not how I do this**
Come with me
To where? Unknown paths make me scared.

We admit that there are times when you invite us in
and we have forgotten how to follow.
You have offered to share
the weight of changes and challenges
and we have been too blind to see you.
We know that, there are times,
when we have judged by appearances
and have not seen good souls before us

Forgive us God.

We ask for your continued patience

We ask for your continued teaching

We ask for your powerful spirit

to fill us with the courage

to accept the new roads you have us travelling

to humbly change our living and follow you

so that life is shared, lived

and loved with abundance. Amen.

Words of assurance.

Come with me, says God.

I will be with you, says God.

God has promised to help us when life gets tough.

God loves us and knows us

and is with us always.

Thanks be to God!

Today, our Hebrew Scripture reading speaks to us of hospitality and following God into the unknown.

Abraham sent out his servant, Eliezer,

to find a wife for his son Isaac.

Eliezer returns to Mesopotamia, the land of

Abraham's birth, to find a wife.

Genesis 24:42-49 The Message

42-44 "Well, when I came this very day to the spring, I prayed, 'God, God of my master Abraham, make things turn out well in this task I've been given. I'm standing at this well. When a young woman comes here to draw water and I say to her, Please, give me a sip of water from your jug, and she says, Not only will I give you a drink, I'll also

water your camels—let that woman be the wife God has picked out for my master’s son.’

45-48 “I had barely finished offering this prayer, when Rebekah arrived, her jug on her shoulder. She went to the spring and drew water and I said, ‘Please, can I have a drink?’ She didn’t hesitate. She held out her jug and said, ‘Drink; and when you’re finished I’ll also water your camels.’ I drank, and she watered the camels. I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel whose parents were Nahor and Milcah.’ I gave her a ring for her nose, bracelets for her arms, and bowed in worship to God. I praised God, the God of my master Abraham who had led me straight to the door of my master’s family to get a wife for his son.

49 “Now, tell me what you are going to do. If you plan to respond with a generous yes, tell me. But if not, tell me plainly so I can figure out what to do next.”

Following this, Eliezer reaches a marriage bargain with Rebekah’s parents and Rebekah returns to Canaan with him to be Isaac’s wife.

Music: Landslide by Fleetwood Mac. Sung by Shaune Switzer.

Message/Reflection: In this together

I chose two of the readings that are in the common lectionary for today.

One is from the Gospel of Mark giving us the voice of Jesus that reminded us that God speaks to all of us and will share our burdens with us. In this reading, Jesus clearly names that humanity can be very fickle and contrary, judging people without knowing their stories, dismissing those who are different.

In the midst of this naming of the foibles of people Jesus stops and turns to God.

In his prayer he names his frustration, he reminds himself that God works with and through everyone. After connecting with the Holy, we see him calm down and take a different approach.

He reminds the people around him that he is willing to share the power and knowledge of God with them when they are willing to listen. He reminds them that, they too, can share their frustrations with God and in doing so, their burdens will be lifted.

“Come to me,” he says, “Learn from Me” The implication is that when our burdens are shared, they are more manageable. When we are willing to learn of new ways of doing things, when we calm down, a different approach may be what we need to see the richness of life instead of the torn fabric.

The second reading comes to us from the Hebrew Scriptures. These are scriptures that would have

been part of Jesus faith upbringing. These are the stories that he would have grown in his faith knowing and exploring.

This Genesis reading introduces us to Rebekah. As with many of our biblical characters, if we were to hear more we would find out that Rebekah carried burdens and made mistakes. But in the snapshot that we explore today, we see goodness and faith that would move her forward in her life journey in unexpected ways.

She meets a stranger at the well. The stranger asks her for water, for hospitality, she offers much more than is needed. She meets, greets and exceeds the minimum needed in that moment. Because of her generous hospitality, she finds herself on a journey that would take her away from her family, her homeland and all that is dear to her. She follows these calls to journey in unfamiliar ways with courage and faith.

God guides Eliezer to find her. Her parents invite her voice into a decision about her future – a most unusual thing by most accounts. God is with her on the journey.

There are many times when we find ourselves being challenged to hear God's voice. We resist. We don't like being told we've made mistakes. We don't like being told that we need to go in a totally different direction than we have been travelling. We tend to

experience those reactions individually. We have forgotten that sharing and working together is what invites us into new ways of being and loving God's world. It makes the whole world a better place.

We forget that it is entirely possible that God is standing before us asking us for a small piece of hospitality and hoping that we have learned to offer more than is needed for the Love of God.

The opportunities to be hospitable, to care come to us in many ways, times and places. The challenge to be the best that we are is only sustainable if we will work together as God's Loving People and with our Loving God.

Last week, Shaune Switzer, in his weekly music gift to us, sang the song "Landslide" by Fleetwood Mac. This song is about changes in life, it is about life struggles and relationships. It speaks of the challenges of changing directions. It speaks of the need to do things differently for the good and success of others.

In the lyrics we might recognize the challenge that Jesus gives the people to re-think how they perceive others, how they share their burdens and live their faith.

I wonder if, in the introductory story of Rebekah, Jesus might have recognized the value of responding with abundance? In Rebekah's story might Jesus have seen the value of calling on God

to offer solutions, of consulting with others to create the best outcome.

We continue to live in a world that seems to be spinning out of control. We are still being asked to be on a controlled road of separation for the sake of others. We are now also being asked to examine the way we live to see if it is tilted toward favouring portions of God's people above others.

In today's readings and in the Landslide song, I hear reminders to us to offer abundant hospitality, to be part of a world that offers more than is asked for (not less), to truly listen to people's stories and to be unafraid to speak and hear the truth even when it makes us uncomfortable.

I hear that questions are important, that naming our frustrations and wonderings about what happens next are normal and good. I hear that we do better when we share and work together for the good of the world and that God knows our struggles to be the best we can be and has promised to walk with us in and to the unknown.

In this time of unrest, I invite us to take some time and talk to God about our frustrations and our wonderings about how we can live well through this. I invite us to stop and see God in the faces and voices of the people who need our care and compassion in abundance. I invite us to ask ourselves how abundantly we are offering

hospitality to God's world? Are we trying to do this alone or are we sharing and teaming up together?

Come to me, says God. Learn from me, says Jesus. How are we responding to God's invitation?

Offering Invitation

Almighty God,

You come to the well asking for our hospitality, asking for us to offer you welcome. You remind us that burdens shared become opportunities of caring. As we hear your words today, may we respond with graciousness, compassion and humility as we offer our best to welcome you here. **Amen.**

Hymn: ♪ VU# 626 I heard the Voice of Jesus

Prayers from God's people, for God's people

Holy God, with stories of faith today, we were reminded that you guide us to where we are to be, that family is found when we follow you, that you hold us up when the world is weary. We give you thanks for your goodness and your ever present love.

Your world remains in turmoil
with people separated from each other
and on roads of caring that are unfamiliar to us.

**We pray for your world, that the earth will
remind us of the possibilities of peace and new
life as we take Sabbath time
to prepare for the road ahead.**

We pray for your people, our friends and neighbours close to us and far away.

We pray for open hearts to hear your friendship offered in unusual times and places.

May we appreciate all of the diversity that we are part of.

May each person know that they are loved, and respected, and cared for.

We pray for those who are leaders in the world.

May they remember that they are the ones who have accepted the responsibility of creating balance in an unbalanced world.

May they remember that they have taken on the task of caring for many and few.

We pray for those who give more time and talent than we can imagine.

They offer us hospitality

They offer us caring

They offer us a sharing of burdens

They offer us an example of showing the best that we are for the care and compassion of others.

We pray for

those who are angry and scared;

those who are hurting; those who are sick

those who are treated as less; those who sorrow

We pray for ourselves
**May we remember, as Rebekah did,
to offer hospitality to strangers
to be willing to go on unfamiliar roads with you.
May we remember, as Jesus taught us,
that, as ordinary people, you have given us
courage, care and compassion
to be shared with the world.
That you love us and walk with us
until we reach where you need us to be. Amen.**

∞Blessing

Let us go out into God's world knowing that God is meeting us in the stranger who needs hospitality, at the beginning of unfamiliar and unknown roads in our hearts, giving us the strength to know and be love in the world.

May the grace of Jesus the Christ, and the love of God, and the strength of the Holy Spirit be with all of us, today and always. **Amen.**

Changing the Christ Candle:

The light of Christ, shining into all the corners of the earth, showing us where we are and where we are meant to be. The Spirit of God. Breathe it in...and know that God is with us wherever we go.

Hymn: ♪ MV#216 Wherever you may go.

Minister: Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister
Office:403-664-3987 e-mail: Pioneerpastoralcharge@gmail.com

Acknowledgements

Seasons of the Spirit™ SeasonsFusion Pentecost 1 2020