



Pioneer Pastoral Charge
Sunday May 10, 2020
Mother's Day

Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

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

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.**

Call to Worship*

By the power of God's Spirit
we rise and welcome this day.

We come so that our eyes
will be opened to new possibilities.

We come to experience God's
Spirit speaking in our heart.

We come to worship:

The one who makes us whole,

The one in whose name we serve

The one who gives our work meaning.

Praise be to God.

Hymn: ♪ VU#280 Mother and God

Mothering Sunday...

What are the gifts of Mothering...

What are the challenges of Mothering

Prayer for Grace:

Holy One,

Mothering, Caring and Nurturing are gifts that you have given to the world.

You wrap those gifts in many different packages...

some in the people who surround us...

some in the leaders who guide us...

some in the places we call home...

some in the land and creatures that

we share our food, our breath, your world with.

We don't always appreciate the gifts around us.

Like children who don't like being told no,

we miss the love that protects us.

In our selfishness we use words

that are careless

We let opportunities go by that could be used

to appreciate, to support, or to love.

We forget to say Thank You.

Forgive us God.

Open our hearts a little bit wider.

Help us to see your love surrounding us.

Help us to be your love surrounding others.

May we offer all that we are

in appreciation for all that you are.

Amen.

Words of Assurance

Through our faith stories,
we hear of God offering opportunities
to experience the joy of nurturing and care
both given and received.

God invites us to become aware
of the great love that surrounds us,
We are reminded that our God of compassion
turns ordinary things into life-giving acts:

Hands extended in friendship,
Medicines new and ancient,
Healthy meals prepared and served,
Warm blankets over fevered bodies,
Prayers spoken by heart and minds.

Know that God is around us, among us, within us.
Know that God loves us all ways and always.

Thanks be to God.

Acts 9:36-43 Contemporary English Version (CEV) Peter Brings Dorcas Back to Life

³⁶ In Joppa there was a follower named Tabitha. Her Greek name was Dorcas, which means “deer.” She was always doing good things for people and had given much to the poor. ³⁷ But she got sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Joppa wasn’t far from Lydda, and the followers heard that Peter was there. They sent two men to say to him, “Please come with us as quickly as you can!” ³⁹ Right away, Peter went with them.

The men took Peter upstairs into the room. Many widows were there crying. They showed him the

coats and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was still alive.

⁴⁰ After Peter had sent everyone out of the room, he knelt down and prayed. Then he turned to the body of Dorcas and said, “Tabitha, get up!” The woman opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet.

Peter called in the widows and the other followers and showed them that Dorcas had been raised from death.

Message/Reflections

What do you remember of Tabitha’s story? What is it that you think we should be getting out of this for Mothering Sunday? Surely, you may think, there must have been other texts to choose?

Well, there are other texts that might offer us a more easily accessible ‘Mothering’ reflection. We could have gone with Mary being asked by the Angel to be the Mother of God’s son – and her saying ‘yes’ without knowing what she was getting into. We could have looked at Elizabeth and Mary worrying about surprise babies in their lives. We could have looked at Moses’s Mom who gave away her baby so that he could live. We could have looked at the story of the 12 year old Jesus who got lost doing his own thing, forgot to let his parents know what he was up to and then was indignant when he got into trouble for it. We could have looked at the two women who fought over one baby and a strong

Mother's love was the only way to identify the truth of giving up everything for your child.

But, for some reason, it is Tabitha/Dorcas that has risen for us today. In this little vignette we catch a glimpse of a woman of great compassion and caring whose story is almost eclipsed by the need to raise someone else's faith and actions.

Because, often, what we remember is that Peter raised her from the dead. What we remember is that she was one of the miracles that occurred after Jesus's death to prove that faith and God still had presence and power in the world.

The Book of Acts is a companion volume to the Gospel of Luke and, rather than tell the story of Jesus, it tells of the growing life and work and faith of the church as it was nurtured into being. In this growing time, when the church was trying to identify its role in society that was ever shifting and where the political powers could change on a dime, many stories were told of people giving their best, trying to live their faith in trying circumstances. As we find ourselves trying to do now. The church needed nurturers, teachers and heroes to lead the way. As we do now.

But sometimes the most important stories are hidden. There are people who offer everything but don't get recognized. Tabitha's story is powerful and inspiring but easily hidden.

The story teller of Acts shifted the focus and instead of hearing Tabitha's voice, we heard of Peter. Peter is called. Peter offers a miracle. Peter is the hero. Tabitha's story is used to raise up Peter's story.

What is almost missed unless you look for it is that Tabitha answered calls too; Tabitha offered miracles to the poor. Tabitha was a hero too.

She served her community. With her sewing needle as her tool she offered support to the women and families. Through her actions she offered compassion, she looked to see where care was needed and she gave it. "She was devoted to good works and acts of charity". She was a most faithful woman.

Tabitha's story takes us back to the real purpose of Mothering Sunday: celebrating opportunities to serve your community with faithfulness and for the good of others.

Mothering Sunday was a Christian Annual festival in the 16th Century when faithful people would return to the 'Mother Church' for a special service in Lent. They would re-ground themselves in their faith, in reminders of what it meant to be carers of God's people and God's earth, before moving back into daily living... and visit their Mom's too.

Our Mother's Day celebrations often bring us back home to our Mother too... to be reminded of the grounding that we receive as families and to

remember the hidden stories and gifts of caring we have received.

Not all stories are meant to be uncovered and, centuries later, we are very aware that not all women who bear children are good Mothers, and not all Mothers are women. Mothering is a collection of skills of care and compassion that are shared across genders. Your Mothering story may be found in a favourite Uncle, or a welcoming Neighbour or a stranger who inspired you and cared for you. We don't know if Tabitha had a family of her own. What we do know is that when we look at her story we see a woman who looked after her community as if they were her family.

As we move through this unknown world today, finding ourselves pushed to offer the traits of Mothering to the world as we have never been before, I invite us to uncover the hidden stories of those who care for us, clothe us with love, recognize our needs and invite us into their world.

Remember examples of Motherers who showed us how to work hard to feed and nurture others, how to provide a place of safety (going home is the best place to be), how to live lives of honesty (don't you lie to me), how to never take for granted what we have because someone else may have had nothing (eat your peas!)

Don't let the stories of compassion and care be pushed aside to raise the power of others. Recognize the loving struggles of those who want to hold us close even as they encourage us to grow and pursue our own dreams.

Tabitha quietly did what needed to be done to offer love into her corner of the world. Let us appreciate those hidden stories of caring, let us quietly live as she did, with faith, with integrity, with determination to make the world a better place.

Loving our neighbours.... Mother our Neighbours... it is what God asks us to do.

Offering Invitation

Dorcas/Tabitha was a woman of great wisdom and caring. What she offered in her living changed the lives of those who were around her.

In response to the story of Tabitha, to the story of God's love, we offer what we can with generosity and care so that we can lift up the poor and lost as Tabitha did.

☞Hymn: ♪ MV178 Who Is My Mother?

Prayer of God's People for God's People:

Holy God of compassion and love and challenge.
We offer you our gifts, small and large, so that they
may be combined with your love and direction to
support your people and your world.

We weave into these gifts our prayers...

We pray and give thanks for the women of our world
who spend their life caring for family, friends and
neighbours.

We pray and give thanks for all those people who
offer us the gifts of mothering... gifts of compassion,
and love, of hugs, of food for body and soul.

We pray for a world that needs to be reminded
to see the good in life,
to see the need of others,
to remember that we are family together

We pray for those people and places
who are broken

By violence, by loneliness,
By hunger, by homelessness
By illness, by grief.

God, we ask that your love
surround all those in need.

God, we ask that you push us
to where we are to be to offer mothering to your
world as you have offered mothering to us.

Amen.

∞Blessing

Let us go out into God's world
keeping our hearts and eyes open
for ways to hear God's voice moving us forward.
Let us offer God's world mothering :
all the love and care and nurturing
that we can to keep this world healthy and happy.

May the love of God,
the strength of the Christ
and the power of the Spirit
be with us as we go.

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: ♪ VU#427 To Show by Touch and Word

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

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