



Camrose United Church
& Pioneer Pastoral Charge
Sunday June 13, 2021
UCC Pride Sunday: Enfleshed

Candle Lighting

We light the Christ Candle, aware of God around, among, & within us. In a moment of silence, we prepare ourselves to celebrate God's presence in our community.

Recognition of the Territory

“Camrose United Church is located on land encompassed by Treaty 6, that was a traditional meeting ground, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Assiniboine, Ojibwa/Saulteaux (So-toe)/Anishinaabe, Inuit, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene (De-nay) and Nakota Sioux (Sue).

We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries and, as Treaty people, we affirm our commitment to the principles and actions of reconciliation.”

Call to Gather

All you who delight in the Sacred
come and worship the Creator.

**Thanks be to God who blesses and rejoices in the
uniqueness of every body and being.**

The Holy takes on flesh in
every gender and sexual orientation,
every race and ability,
every body size and body type.

**Each embodied difference
is a unique glimpse of Holy Wonder.**

Blessed are those who
search for God among the lives of
the oppressed, the betrayed,
the turned-away, and the condemned.
**Blessed are those who receive with joy
the gifts of God enfleshed among us.**

And we pray...
God,
when you called each of us into being,
you delighted in your works.
You gifted us with differences that illuminate
the breadth of beauty, wisdom,
and practices of love in your creation.
In whatever ways we still struggle
to accept and celebrate our own unique offerings,
free us from narrow thinking that
confines, constrains, or condemns your good work in us.
Amen.

♪Hymn: *Sing a New World Into Being.*

Mary Louise Bringle. Music: NewSong by Jane M. Marshall

Prayer of Illumination

Holy Wisdom, come.
We long for your truth that sets the captives free.
Bring us your Word that liberates.
Quiet all that turns us against ourselves,
one another, or any of your creatures and creations.
Lead us in love that mends and restores. Amen.

Scripture

Mark 9:38-41 *New International Version*

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us

38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

John 1:1-14 *New International Version*

The Word Became Flesh

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from God, full of grace and truth.

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.

Reflection:

There is a lot in life that needs to be seen, heard and recognized. There are times when the clamouring for our attention is overwhelming.

Throughout May, St. Thomas United Church in Calgary found something to be recognized every day. As examples: May 14 was the Anniversary of the first Small pox Vaccination being administered in 1796; May 17 reminded folk of International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia; May 21st was International Tea Day; May 23rd Turtle Day; May 26th Senior Health and Fitness Day; May 28th was Hamburger Day and May 31st was Macaroon Day.

Some of these recognitions were just fun, but some are very serious and bring things to our attention that we need to see, hear and recognize as important.

This week, as I listened for God's voice to guide my reflection I thought stories, memories and experiences that need recognition. I thought about June 6th – the Anniversary of D-day; I thought about our June 10th United Church of Canada Birthdate; I thought about the fact that June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month- a time to celebrate people of all sexual and gender identities, accepting people for who they are; a time to remember the history of LGBTQ+ activism and people, along with ways to defend and enhance their rights and access to resources; it is also National Indigenous

History Month to recognize the history, heritage and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada.

I thought about the children whose bodies were found at the Kamloops Residential School and all their relations.

I thought about the family in London, Ontario who were deliberately killed on June 7th simply because of their Muslim faith.

I thought about the history of our country, of our church, of our communities and how, even though we've grown we still have much to learn.

If we don't listen to the stories of mistakes made in the past, how can we learn not to make the same mistakes again? If we don't acknowledge when some have been put at risk or even killed to increase the privilege of others how will we ensure that doesn't happen again?

We can look back on our history and see how racism and discrimination have impacted the lives of Canadians.

We can see how those with privilege have targeted others to further their own goals.

We can see how this still is happening – and we can take responsibility for ensuring it stops.

In our reading from Mark today, we see the disciples claiming privilege. They wanted to keep their 'group' together and not give others the privileges and opportunities that they had. The disciples had a particular picture in mind about how God's work would be done in the world. They let that take precedence over the health and welfare of someone else.

Jesus quickly corrected them.

Jesus said whoever can do God's work belongs to us.

Whoever offers hospitality and care is welcome as part of us.

In our reading from the Gospel of John, the image of how God appears to people is a disruption of all the assumptions

of what God would look like, how God would act, and how true and good power works. God revealed something new through the body of Jesus about who God had always been.

God continues to come to us, enfleshed, in bodily form, through people that the world decides, as the disciples did, are not worthy of God and should be condemned, or are otherwise “illegitimate.” God corrects us.

When the world did not recognize who God was, God changed, God transitioned to bring us new images, new understandings of love.

Today, we are recognizing Gay Pride month and if we look with fresh eyes to find God in those around us, we can see that courageous LGBTQ+ people are an example of God’s constant transitioning and authentic self-revealing. These people highlight that we need to be aware of how and where God enters, loves and challenges the world.

In John we hear: “to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”

It is our faith, and how we live it that make us God’s children. It is not our colour, or our origin, or our gender.

Our actions identify us as people who care, love and live justice for all.

Listen, Learn, See and Action must be our watchwords.

Listen to how similarly Jesus and LGBTQ+ people are treated in the world. Criminalized. Attacked. Executed. Shunned. How can we learn from these stories of the past to understand how our decisions impact others from generation to generation? See how there are people who perpetuate patterns of violence against those they perceive to be different – how can we make it known that violence and discrimination are not acceptable?

Faith stories from our ancestors tell us that we are made in God's image – capable of caring for all of God's people. Stories from history show us where decisions have been made that pandered to power instead of to equality and love.

We name ourselves as faithful people of God. Where do we see ourselves in our world today? Are we like the disciples trying to keep our own power intact at the cost of others? Are we public and intentional, like Jesus was, in acknowledging that all people are welcomed by God, by the church, in our communities?

I invite us to Listen to the pain of being excluded that many are sharing with us, to Learn about how we can assist in their healing, to See a way forward that will offer welcome to everyone God places on the earth and to put into Action our faith and our love.

Who are we inviting in?
Who are we holding out?
What would Jesus have us do?

♪Hymn: MV#120. My Soul Cries Out

Invitation to share:

God comes to us in many ways,
in many people, in many situations.
God comes to us asking us to be part of
a world that cares for each other,
that looks after each other,
that honours the diversity that
God has placed within us and around us.
Are we doing our part?
The sharing of our time, treasure and action,
the offering of passionate prayer
is vitality important to keep
God's work and love surrounding all of God's people.
Thank you for sharing what you can.

**Holy One,
We offer to you our best.
May what we offer be pleasing in your sight.
May your blessing fill our hearts and our gifts
so that we and they
will lift up all of your people
with comfort, support and love.
Amen.**

♪Hymn: VU#460 All Who Hunger

Communion invitation...

On this day we remember that
we are people of God
working together for God's world.
We come together in spirit
to share a meal with God, through Jesus
with neighbours we know
with neighbours we don't know.
Linked together by our faith and God's spirit
that cannot be held back by walls or doors.
we share this meal hosted by our God
who meets us where we are.

Call to Give Thanks

The Lord be with you **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to our God!
It is good to give God thanks and praise

Bold and Beloved One,
throughout history you have revealed yourself
to us in ways that surprise and disrupt.

You shocked the world
when you came to be with us as
a vulnerable baby born into
a family fleeing political persecution.

Though your embodiment in Jesus
led to crucifixion,
still your Spirit of New Life is birthed anew
among the marginalized.

**You live among us today.
And today we open our eyes
and hearts to truly see you**

In the lives of black trans women
whose experiences of violence
are dismissed and ignored.
Among bisexual people living with HIV/AIDS.
As babies born into the care of lesbian women.

You wander school halls as trans children
and navigate the streets as queer couples
walking hand-in-hand.

You come to us as LGBTQIA+
and Two-Spirit youth with no home.

**You are embodied by Two-Spirit people,
still fighting against the impacts of
colonization, erasure, and stolen land.**

At times, we are offended by your self-expression.
You take on flesh in people, places, and ideas
we have been taught to fear or despise.
And so we struggle. Our words unintentionally wound.
Our hearts are sore. Our hospitality recoils.

But still, your love persists.
Through beauty, compassion, and truth,
you lure us into laying down our need to control.
You move us. Free us. Embrace us.

By your grace, we are invited into boldly living
justice and transformation.
By your grace, we are given the courage to
reject all evil and oppression.

♪ ***Song of Creation: MV #203 (Tune: Kingsfold)***
O Holy, Holy, Holy God, O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears your name always!

At this table we remember that
Jesus invited his friends to God's table
Knowing that life was full of challenge
he reminded them of their commitment
to follow God's teachings so that
the world could grow into God's vision of love

Jesus taught that bread was meant to be shared,
and that all are welcome at God's table.

After feasting with his companions, Jesus took the bread,
blessed it, broke it, gave it to all of them and said:

"Take, eat. Do this in remembrance of me."

Jesus taught that all of life is woven together
and that love is why we're here.

After the supper, he took a cup,
and after giving thanks,
he passed it among them, saying:

"This is the cup of the new covenant.
Drink this. Do this in remembrance of me."

In remembering the life of Jesus,
we remember that he showed us:

The love of God is public.

The love of God is intentional.

The love of God is explicit.

Blessing:

Holy God,
we know that there are no walls that can keep you from us.
As we gather our hearts,
separated in body,
but together in love,
We ask that you pour your spirit
upon the bread and cup that we each have before us.
As we share this moment with you,
may we taste the bread of life
and know the cup of the new covenant
blessed by your love. **Amen.**

♪ Remembering God's promise and gift

MV 204 (Tune Kingsfold)

**Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!
Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen,
Christ will come again!**

The Prayer of Jesus

Let us join our voices together in prayer,
as we gather all people of the world to our hearts, as we sing
together

**♪ Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
lead us not into temptation,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen.**

(Steven R. Janco. Music © 2000, WLP)

Sharing the Bread and Wine

Because of God's gifts we gather.

In this time and place we share:

Bread for the journey. The Cup of Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Nourishing One,

your gifts renew us in body, spirit, and mind.

Through this taste of love,

may the Spirit send us with a faith that is brave.

Let nothing hold us back from being

your people who boldly pursue collective justice

and tend gently to the world's pain. **Amen.**

Sending forth

Let us go from here to proclaim

that we remember our promise

to welcome and love all of God's people.

May our stories, remembered and shared today,

remind us of God's passion for us,

and our passion for God.

God-with-us takes on flesh in the strange and surprising.

Jesus shows us how Love liberates from the margins.

The Spirit imbues us with all we need

to live, love and laugh together.

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.

✠ Sending Hymn: 🎵 For All The Children

Text and Music David Lohman. © Welcome Song Music. With permission.

Acknowledgements

This service was inspired and created from the United Church of Canada's Pride Sunday service.

Announcements



Camrose United Church

Top Sacred News:

Watch for the June 18th edition ... including news of our summer schedule and planned return to worship in our building.

Please contact the office if you would like to offer your skills for Council, as Rental Coordinator or for any of our committees.

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