



Camrose United Church

July 25, 2021

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

More Than Enough

***Forgive Us God – Hand on Heart
Amen – Hands in prayer
Thanks be to God – Hands in Air***

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.

Land Acknowledgment

In the spirit of the living God, who reminds us to love all of God's people... we remember that... many of us have arrived at this place from other places, from distant shores. For some of us our families came here years ago, some of us arrived more recently. When settlers came, they were met by others who were already here, already knew these lands, already lived rich and full lives based on ancient and proud cultures.

This is the land we share:

“Camrose United Church is located on land encompassed by Treaty 6, that was a traditional meeting grounds, 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 Worship and prayer:

As we gather for worship today,
I invite us to look around and pay
attention to where we are.

Some of us are, once again,
may be sharing this worship time in solitude with God,
in our homes, on our decks, in campgrounds...

What an amazing thing.

Some of us may be gathered on
God's grassy carpet outside Camrose United Church.
What an amazing thing.

Take a moment.

Acknowledge those who are with you with a smile,
with a wave of your hand,

We know, don't we,
that God is with us when we worship
in ones and twos, in groups and crowds
In our homes, in God's amazing creation

Let us pause, to open our hearts to
the spirit of the One who brings us together
and joins us in love
wherever we are.

♪ Hymn: MV#14 Where two or three are gathered

Where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there, I am there
Where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there, I am there.

Prayer of awareness, for God's Grace

Holy God,

You are large enough to fill everything
(no matter how high, or broad, or long, or deep)

You can ease into small spaces
and find us when we need you

Holy One,

Our living is confused, filled with choices:
to do or not to do; to take or not to take;
to go or to stay.

In these moments of decision,
we forget to talk to you
we forget to listen for you

Forgive us, God. (*Hands on heart*)

There are times when we feel
that if we don't hold onto what we have,
what we are used to, we will lose it.
So, we hold on tight,
so that others can't change it, or have it either.
Sometimes our decisions make life harder for others.
We don't recognize that who we are,
that what we are is enough.

Forgive us, God. (*Hands on heart*)

Lean into us again, Holy One,
Remind us that we have wisdom,
that we can trust your guidance and love
in these days of decisions.

God of all people, once again we ask for
your love, your guidance, your grace.

Amen. (*Hands in prayer*)

Words of Assurance

Remember the stories of faith that ground us.

Remember the grace that God has shown
the generations through the ages.

Remember that God has faith in us.

May we remember to have faith in God
with us in all ways and always.

Thanks be to God (*Hands in the air*)

Scripture

Ephesians 3:14–21 Common English Bible/Inclusive Bible
Paul's prayer for the Ephesians

14 This is why I kneel before God. 15 Every ethnic group in heaven or on earth is recognized by God. 16 I pray that God, out of the riches of divine glory, will strengthen you inwardly with power through the working of the Spirit. 17 May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, so that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 will be able to grasp fully the breadth, length, height and dept of Christ's love, and with all God's holy ones, 19 experience this love that surpasses all understanding, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 To God, whose power now at work in us can do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine -- 21 to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations, world without end! Amen.

John 6:1–15 Common English Bible

Feeding of the five thousand

6 After this Jesus went across the Galilee Sea (that is, the Tiberias Sea). 2 A large crowd followed him, because they had seen the miraculous signs he had done among the sick. 3 Jesus went up a mountain and sat there with his disciples.

4 It was nearly time for Passover, the Jewish festival.

5 Jesus looked up and saw the large crowd coming toward him. He asked Philip, "Where will we buy food to feed these people?" 6 Jesus said this to test him, for he already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip replied, "More than a half year's salary worth of food wouldn't be enough for each person to have even a little bit."

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said, 9 "A youth here has five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that for a crowd like this?"

10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass there. They sat down, about five thousand of them. 11 Then Jesus took the bread. When he had given thanks, he distributed it to those who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, each getting as much as they wanted. 12 When they had plenty to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the leftover pieces, so that nothing will be wasted."

13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves that had been left over by those who had eaten.

14 When the people saw that he had done a miraculous sign, they said, "This is truly the prophet who is coming into the world."

15 Jesus understood that they were about to come and force him to be their king, so he took refuge again, alone on a mountain.

Scripture is our song for the journey,
passed down from generation to generation,
to guide and inspire.

**God asks us to be doers of the word
and not hearers only.**

Reflection: More than enough

This story of the feeding of the five thousand is one of the most well-known of the miracle stories. It is one of the few stories that appears in all four gospels and all four gospels think that it's important that we know how many loaves and how many fishes. In fact this story is so similar in all the gospels – more so than any others – that perhaps it is an indication of its importance and impact on the people who heard it and needed to share it. It needs our attention.

Jesus didn't have to intervene. Didn't have to do anything. If he hadn't the crowd would have surely gone to find their own food. But he used this situation to teach, to uncover some truths, to invite people into God's work.

The disciples didn't think they were good enough to take care of this problem. Despite all of his teachings of God's love, and listening and doing, they still didn't think that they had what it took to be God's love in the world. They saw barriers. He saw opportunity.

He invited them into the story – start with the basics – look for possibilities.

A young child offered up all that he had. Five loaves and two fish. Jesus didn't reject the small offering. He gave thanks for it.

This unexpected source of generosity was small but it was enough. It was enough to begin the sharing with many more.

We don't know how that small gesture opened up the possibility of so much more. Maybe Jesus did multiply the offering. We are told that he shared it with the people sitting there. Maybe he just shared with those sitting at the front – and they began to share what they had with each other and those around them.

Maybe that small beginning grew as others realized that they, too, had something small to share that would help feed others. In fact, by the time they were finished there were 12 baskets of left overs. Imagine that!

Then the people began to wonder. They couldn't understand how this had happened and they began to focus on Jesus for all the wrong reasons. They began conversations to make him a King, because being who and what he was didn't seem to be enough.

Why is it so hard for us to recognize that enough doesn't have to be large? Why is it so easy to want more? Why can't we begin with thanks and gratitude for what is offered?

This miracle story of sharing tells us that we can begin with small stuff. It tells us that sometimes our effective caring is enough when we combine it with others small stuff.

It tells us that when we are offered something, anything, we begin by giving thanks – not by thinking “this won't do the trick”.

The scripture reading from Ephesians is an enthusiastic thanksgiving. The community is reminded that all people are God's people and that, together with the Spirit, with God's love inspiring us we can do more than we can imagine. We can be more than enough.

God invites us into the story. Nudges us to know that we can do something, even something small that will make a difference. What we have is enough.

I was thinking about the child offering something that changed circumstances and attitudes for a whole crowd of people. I thought about the Indigenous Children whose stories, as small and short as some are, have changed circumstances and attitudes for a whole crowd of people. God invites us into this story too, nudges us to know we can make a difference.

Where are we following people without sharing who we are or what we have? When do we hold back thinking that our little bit won't make a difference, it's not enough?
Are we making people feel that what they are is not enough?

God's presence is with us always. Inviting us in. Inviting us to be together. Through God's grace there is more than enough in the world for all of us... food, faith, grace, healing, vaccines... enough that if we share together there will be left overs and everyone will be fed... body and soul.

Do you know that who you are is enough?

God knows you are.

Do you know that what God has given you is enough?

God knows it is.

What story do you hear God inviting you into?

♪ **Hymn: Bread To Share** (*Marty Haugen*)

Invitation to offering

Like the child who shared their lunch with Jesus
and helped to feed a crowd,
we are asked to give all that we have in our hands to others
so that they may be fed, nourished, comforted.
Together, let us offer what we can to God's church
so that there is enough for all who need it.

Prayer of Dedication

**Sharing God,
again and again you give to us.
You guide us, you hold us,
you teach us and you love us.
In gratitude for all that you offer us,
we bring these gifts.
Bless them, we pray,
so that our caring will be felt around the earth.
Amen** (*hands in prayer*)

♪ **Hymn VU468: Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ**

Pastoral Prayers from God's People for God's People.

Holy God,
Your world is full of enough for all:
enough food, enough air,
enough shelter, enough love.
You provide us with all that we need
to make this world a place of
safety and love for all.

Holy One,

We offer you our prayers today

for all those who have not felt that they were enough

for those who are looking for enough for healing

for those who are searching for more than they need

for those who make enough out of almost nothing.

We offer you our prayers

For the sick and the weary

For the scared and the hurt

For the homeless and the hungry

For the lost and the found

For the grieving.

In the silence of our hearts,

we offer you the names of

our family, friends and neighbours

who we know need open hearts

to feel your love and support surround them.

We pray for ourselves,

that we will know the power of your spirit

to transform the smallest things in life

into the most amazing gifts of love.

May we open our ears

to hear your voice telling us

that we are more than enough for you

that we can share with others all that we have

all that you give and we will all have enough

together.

Amen. (*hands in prayer*)

♪ **Hymn MV#99 Stand, O Stand Firm**

Blessing/Sending Forth

As we move into God's world from wherever we are today, let us look around and pay attention to where we are and who we are sharing this place with.

Share a moment of gratitude with those who have worshipped with you – a smile or a waving, welcoming hand. Remember that God continues to be with us- in our ones and twos and more.

Wherever we are, God is with us.

Thanks be to God. (*Hands in the Air*)

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 Song: *Bread For The Journey*** (*Hesla*)

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