

## A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah (32:1-3a, 6-15)

The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. At that time the army of the king of Babylon was besieging Jerusalem, and the prophet Jeremiah was confined in the court of the guard that was in the palace of the king of Judah, where King Zedekiah of Judah had confined him. Zedekiah had said, 'Why do you prophesy and say: Thus says the LORD: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it;

Jeremiah said, The word of the LORD came to me: Hanamel son of your uncle Shallum is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth, for the right of redemption by purchase is yours.' Then my cousin Hanamel came to me in the court of the guard, in accordance with the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, for the right of possession and redemption is yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD.

And I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and weighed out the money to him, seventeen shekels of silver. I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales. Then I took the sealed deed of purchase, containing the terms and conditions, and the open copy; and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel, in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase, and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard. In their presence I charged Baruch, saying, Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Take these deeds, both this sealed deed of purchase and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, in order that they may last for a long time. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. **Thanks be to God.**

### Reflection

*It was an act of defiance during a siege. To purchase land following the traditions of their community was to claim their own authority in spite of what the Babylonians were trying to impose. In essence, Jeremiah was signalling to the community that their traditions continued to have power*

*and meaning even while power was being exerted over the community by foreign occupiers.*

*Traditions hold power and meaning. Consider the act of colouring, a practice typically associated with childhood. In recent years, we have seen adult colouring books appear as a tool to help us slow down and be present in the moment. Indigenous Artist, Marcus Gosse, has recently released such a colouring book in honour of National Truth and Reconciliation Day, also known as Orange Shirt Day. These images are available through his Facebook page.*

*In colouring these images, we can be taken back to our childhoods. What and who did we draw and colour when we were young? What are some of the practices and traditions we experienced with our families and in our communities? What are some of the things we hold dear? Who participated in these traditions with us? How did these practices help shape who we are today? What did we pass on from these traditions to the next generation?*

...

*Childhood traditions are important. They provide a foundation which informs our growth and our connections to the next generation. Can we imagine what our lives might be like if these important traditions had been brutally halted and replaced with utterly foreign and forced practices? Can we imagine being ripped from our homes, forced to use a new language, forced to eat unfamiliar food, forced to learn ways that were not part of our history?*

*This was the reality for the more than 150,000 indigenous children who were forced into residential schools across Canada right up to 1996! This was the reality for Phyllis Webstad whose memory of an orange shirt given to her by her grandmother for the first day of school only to have it stripped from her left her with a lasting memory: "The colour orange has always reminded me of how my feelings didn't matter, how no one cared."*

*Residential schools were a kind of siege where colonisers and settlers exerted power over indigenous peoples. The images from Marcus Gosse's colouring book provide a reminder that, in the midst of this siege, Indigenous traditions still found their expressions. Indigenous artists continue to find their voices in spite of the efforts to erase these practices.*

*Indigenous languages are being taught again to those willing to engage. Indigenous communities are finding ways to nurture the hopes and dreams of the next generation.*

*And the descendants of colonisers and settlers, the ones who brutally tried to erase these traditions, are now being challenged to create spaces for these voices, to recognise the gifts offered, to know that there is wisdom to be shared and learned, to see the beauty that has found its way through the darkness of our shared history.*

*Traditions matter. Whether we are colouring or buying land, what we do, how we honour each other matters. What more can we learn about the First Nations and the gifts they have to offer us? May we continually seek to listen to their stories and honour who they are in our midst.*

*Let us pray...*

Creator God,  
from you every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.  
You have rooted and grounded us in your covenant love,  
and empowered us by your Spirit  
to speak the truth in love,  
and to walk in your way towards justice and wholeness.  
Mercifully grant that your people,  
journeying together in partnership,  
may be strengthened and guided  
to help one another  
to grow into the full stature of Christ,  
who is our light and our life.  
Amen.