

Worship with McClure United Church

~Thanksgiving Sunday~

October 11, 2020

Welcome

Happy Thanksgiving!!! And welcome to the worship of God with McClure United Church this morning. I hope you all have had or are going to have your fill of all your favourite thanksgiving food and have been able to find a way to connect with loved ones. I also hope that you have found some time in your weekend to give thanks for the many blessings in our lives and in the world. If not... don't worry... you will have an opportunity later in the service to do just that. This is a service of grateful thanksgiving. Thank you to everyone who answered my plea for video clips. It filled my own heart with gratitude to see your faces and hear your reflections. We are a blessed community.

And as we gather now for worship we express also our gratitude as we acknowledge that we are worshipping on treaty 6 territory and homeland of the metis people... I invite us all to take a moment to pay our respect to the First Nations and Metis ancestors and keepers of this land.

I am also grateful that McClure United is an affirming ministry of the United Church of Canada. I am grateful that we are committed to being a congregation that is public, intentional and explicit in our welcoming of all people.

Announcements

The Outreach Committee is offering us all another opportunity to "be the church".

You are invited to participate in a bottle drive! Get rid of all those bottles you've been collecting during the pandemic.

Here's what you do: bring your donation of cans and bottles in a bag which is securely tied at the top. Kindly deliver these items to the McClure United Church parking lot on:

Thursday, October 22, from 6-8 pm OR Friday, October 23, from 10-12noon.

The Cosmo Industries truck will graciously be there to collect your donation.

Cosmo is a non-profit organization in Saskatoon that exists to provide opportunities for adults with intellectual disabilities. They offer a community based approach which includes quality of life, satellite and supported work programs with the intent that each individual they serve can live a more meaningful productive life. To date, they receive funding from the government for participants and staff, but they rely fully on fundraisers for all their quality programming. Here's our chance to make a difference. For further information you can check them out at www.cosmoindustries.com

Cash donations are also welcome and will be sent to Cosmo Industries. They can be dropped off at the event on Thursday evening or Friday morning. Another option is to donate by cheque or e-transfer to McClure United Church as a specific donation to "Being the Church".

Opening Prayer

Light Christ Candle

As we light this candle we are aware that we in desperate need of God's light in our lives, our communities and in our world.

This light lives in us and others.

Let us shine brightly – God's gifts of – love, healing and justice.

Prayer

God our Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer: We enter into this time of worship with grateful hearts and with words of Thanksgiving on our lips.

May our worship be honest and authentic; may our hearts and minds be receptive to your Word; may our McClure community be responsive to your

call to love. We come as your thankful people; be with us as our gracious God we pray. Amen.

Scripture

Psalm 126: A Harvest of Joy

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
'The LORD has done great things for them.'
The LORD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.
May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.
Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

Reflection

There's a wonderful children's book called "How Full is Your Bucket?" In it, the authors say that everybody is carrying around an invisible bucket and in the bucket is water, and the fuller our bucket is, the better we feel... the emptier our bucket is, the worse we feel.

Imagine that you have a bucket... how full is your bucket?
Are you feeling filled up and happy, secure, content... or are you feeling depleted, empty, anxious, angry?

In the book, the author's talk about some of the things that cause our buckets to become emptier... things like harsh words that others say to us or things that embarrass us and cause us to feel shame or guilt or just

inadequate. When hard, scary things happen to us, they can really throw us off kilter and spill some of the water out of our bucket. When people are mean to us, it's like they've dipped into our buckets and pulled some of the water out.

I know that one of the things that empties my bucket is when I act like a jerk towards others. This often happens when I'm already feeling like my bucket is pretty low, so I'm not at my best... I'm cranky... angry... short-tempered... so I'm much more likely to snap at somebody or to be insensitive towards them. When that happens, I usually feel pretty bad about it afterwards, and that causes me to feel even lower.

When our buckets are low on water it has a very negative impact on our emotional well-being and it can have a negative impact on our physical well-being... we might feel depressed, sad, anxious, angry, grouchy, or just like we want to pull the covers over our heads and tell everyone to go away.

I think for many of us, this Global pandemic has been a real bucket emptier... it's added a level of stress to our lives and to the lives of those we care about, and that stress can colour everything we do in a day... it can impact our interactions, making us crankier with one another. When that happens, usually at least two buckets lose a bit of water – the person's who was snippy and the person's they snipped at.

How full is your bucket right now, as you contend with the daily realities of living in a time of pandemic?

The good news about our buckets is that water doesn't just come out of them... water can also go into them. Our buckets can be filled up. There are so many things that can fill our bucket... they don't have to be big things – a smile from a stranger on the street... a kind word from someone... praise for a job well done... a sense of accomplishment when we check something off our to-do list.

Whenever we receive positive feedback or kindness from others it fills our buckets. Whenever we do something for ourselves that eases our stress and reminds us of our own goodness and of all the good things in our lives, it fills our bucket. And interestingly, one of the things that can fill our buckets is helping to fill someone else's bucket. When we do something kind for someone – hold the door open for them, offer a word of

encouragement, reach out when they're in need – it helps to fill their bucket, but it also makes us feel good and helps to fill our bucket.

What are some things that you know fill your bucket?

I know that when I take time in the morning to quietly sit, preparing for my day intentionally immersed in the presence of God... I feel better... it fills my bucket and I go into the day with more joy, a sense of peace, and with more love in my heart. I also know that getting outside and moving my body helps fill my bucket... that's why having a dog is such a blessing for me – at least once or twice a day I get to be out in nature with a crazy, hairy beast who is so full of joy I can't help but feel my bucket filling up. Kind words from others, a friendly smile even a simple nod of acknowledgment all fill my bucket – and I try to remember to do the same to others, knowing that they could probably use a bucket top up too.

What fills your bucket?

Can you think of something right now that you or someone else has done in the last day or so that helped to fill your bucket?

Take a look inside that bucket of yours... how full is it right now?

Our faith tradition also has much to offer as we live through this bucket-emptying pandemic. The psalm Kabrienne read for us is a reminder of God's faithfulness in past times of trouble. It remind us that we've faced hardship and overwhelming circumstances before, and come out the other side better and stronger. It reminds us that we are a community... that the struggles we are facing, we face together... we are not alone – we have each other, and God is with us. It reminds us of the importance of naming our concerns and asking for help. Perhaps most importantly, the psalmist gives thanks to God.

Gratitude is one of the most bucket filling strategies we can employ. When we approach life with gratitude, when we pay attention to and give thanks for our blessings, it completely changes what we see and how we feel. Gratitude tunes us in to the goodness that is in our lives. When we are grateful, we find so many things to be grateful for.... just as when we are bitter, we find so many reasons for bitterness.

Giving thanks can help to fill our buckets and the buckets of everyone around us. Several of you sent me your thanksgiving videos, expressing your gratitude. I'm going to share those now and I invite everyone to listen... to be filled... and to think of your own blessings.... what are you grateful for?

(play video)

How full is your bucket now?

One last question for us to consider...

How full are the buckets of those around you?

Think about family members, friends, people you live and work with... how are they doing? Do they seem like they're carrying around a full bucket or do they seem like their buckets are running dry?

What can you do to add to their buckets?

Remember, when we help to fill up someone else's bucket it also helps to fill up our own bucket.

Last week I received a text from one of our youth asking if we, the youth group, could do a service project together – she is feeling inspired to reach out.... to help. She wants us to be work together to fill some buckets – I suspect she needs her own bucket filled. And that's how buckets work.... She filled my bucket with this amazing suggestions, I filled her bucket when I met it with excitement, we will work together to come up with some creative – physical distanced way to fill the buckets of others and that will help us to fill our own buckets even further.

Friends, this is Thanksgiving... the season of gratitude. Whether we are feeling like our buckets are full to overflowing or nearly empty, may we choose to look at ourselves, our world and others through the lens of gratitude... may we give thanks for all our blessings... and may we express our thanks to others and make a point trying to help fill the buckets of those around us.

And may you take time each day to notice how full *your* bucket is, and when it's getting low, do something that will help fill your bucket... remembering that to do so almost inevitably helps fill other's buckets as well.

Now, let us pray:

God of overflowing abundant love, we give you thanks for all the blessings you shower upon us. When we are feeling empty, depleted and overwhelmed, fill us up with gratitude... fill us up with hope... fill us up with a sense of your presence... that love, gratefulness, and peace might flow out of us to others. May all who are thirsty, all who are empty be filled with joy, strength, and every blessing. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Let us pray:

For every breath we take, for every beat of our hearts, for every sensation of our bodies: We give you thanks, O God

For the ear that listens, for the hand that caresses, for the arms that reach out in love: We give you thanks, O God

For relief from pain, for the tears of shared sorrow, for the laughter of shared joy: We give you thanks, O God.

For the freedom to choose, for the ability to love, for the power of hope: We give you thanks, O God

For your constant companionship along life's road, for the courage you offer us, for the rest you assure us; We give you thanks, O God.

For your call to love and serve others; to seek justice and resist evil, to care for the earth and its creatures; We give you thanks, O God.

As followers of Jesus we pray now as he taught. Saying 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 and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

In the spirit of Thanksgiving, go into the world, this week,
determined to share God's lavish love with all whom you encounter.
And may you be blessed with an unwavering trust in God;
may you walk with joy in the way of Jesus;
and may the Spirit of God inspire and guide you all your days. Amen.