

Worship - December 27, 2020

Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle

Prayer

Hymn - Joy to the World

Scripture - Brian Walton

Reflection with help

1. Reflection - Terry
2. Reflection - Sheila and Jim
3. Reflection - Heather
4. Reflection - Ruth

Reflection conclusion / Prayer

Hymn - Go Tell it on the Mountain

Blessing

Welcome – Announcements

Welcome to worship with McClure United Church.

I hope you had a lovely Christmas, not too lonely and sprinkled with light.

I was thinking that this year with all the Covid restrictions, which were hard to follow and kept us from being with those we love in a traditional way. I was thinking that in some way we were forced to live the way of Jesus – which is to love our neighbour because following the guidelines and sacrificing our “in” person connection was indeed loving our neighbour – by keeping everyone safe.

Just a few announcements this morning.

Pastoral Emergency over Christmas

It has been the tradition to give the Ministry staff the week between Christmas and New Year as a time to rest and renew. This year all staff will be taking time to care for themselves and their families. The phone will

be checked daily and Debra will be responding to all emergencies. Debra can be reached at 306-382-2566.

Last Day for 2020 Contributions

Contributions for 2020 (to appear on 2020 tax receipts) must be in by 5PM on Monday, December 28. Donations may be dropped off in the mailbox outside the church, mailed to the church (they must be RECEIVED by the 28th at 5PM, not postmarked), or e-transferred by the 28th. Donations made via the Canadahelps website may be made right up until midnight on December 31st.

Call to Worship:

Here on the heels of Christmas,
We speak of love. We speak of joy.
We speak of dreams being fulfilled.
We speak of “glorias” and angel choruses.
We speak the words, “Do not be afraid.”
Here on the heels of Christmas,
We are called, to be light bearers in the world.
A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.
Let us worship

Light Christ Candle

Prayer:

Today we pray, give us eyes to see you.
Give us courage to trust you.
And give us lips to speak of you in our midst.
For It was you who spoke over the water and brought forth creation. And then it was you who asked, “Cain, where is your brother?” It was you who spoke to Elijah in a still, small, voice. And it was you, through angels, Who spoke to Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. You have always been speaking— In words, in memories, in songs, and in dreams. So today, as we prepare to hear your word once more. We ask that you would speak to

us once again—as only you can— So that we might speak this same good news to others. We are listening. We are grateful. Amen.

Hymn – Joy to the World

Scripture **Luke 2:25-40** – Rev Dr. Brian Walton

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." ³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Reflection

Prayer: Creative God, Bless the words spoken by myself and others in this time, that they might be a reflection of your wisdom. Amen.

No doubt you've heard the story of the young woman who decides to cook a nice roast for her family and before she puts the roast in the pot, she cuts off a significant part of the end of the roast. Her partner asks why she has done this lopping off of the end and she replies that she cuts off the end of the roast because that is what her mother used to do. Curious about why her mother cut off the end of the roast she calls to find out. Her mother said, she cut off the end of the roast because her mother did such a thing. When the young woman called her grandmother, her grandmother explained that she did such a thing because her mother always cut the end off the roast before putting it in the pot. A call to great grandmother revealed that the reason she cut the end of the roast off was because that was the only way she could get it to fit into the pot.

The story makes us smile but it speaks to a truth - that our elders have been throughout the decades wonderful sources of knowledge. This knowledge has been a gift to proceeding generations. How to(s) and easier fixes, solid advice based on years of experience given so that the younger ones might have an easier life, know stuff, be more efficient, make wise choices. However, times have changed we now have Google for all this. So what is the role of our elders? I think we can turn to today's scripture lesson for some wisdom.

I think we learn, from this beautiful story of Anna and Simeon, elders of the church, that we never become too old to recognize God at work and to tell others of our experience of the Holy one. Anna and Simeon were advanced in age, but they lived with the anticipation that God would be revealed to them. It was in their encounter with Mary, Joseph and the baby Jesus, that they recognized God breaking into their time and place. Anna was the 1st to witness to the birth of the Messiah within the temple and it was Anna and Simeon who recognized the preciousness and the possibilities in this baby. Both of them helped Mary and Joseph understand

who their baby was and they helped others in the temple understand as well.

Friends, we are never too old to recognize God's movement in the world and to share that news with others.

I imagine Anna and Simeon as the grandparents of the church peeking beneath each baby blanket looking for the precious face of God preparing to sing, celebrate, and make welcome.

We are very blessed at McClure to have many grandparents who do as Anna and Simeon did – we have those who look beneath the blanket for the precious face of God in their little ones and who sing and celebrate and welcome the beauty of that child. I've asked a few of these precious grandparents to share their experience of becoming a grandparent, of holding their grandchild for the very first time and to reflect on their role as a grandparent in that child's life.

I invite you to listen to the wisdom of these grandparents and then I invite you to take some time - regardless of your age - to reflect on wisdom shared.

Take a moment to ask how can I be the one who sings, celebrates and makes welcome the little ones in my life and in my church, in my community. How can I live as one who anticipates God's presence in the face of others, who celebrates that presence and lives profound love into the world.

Videos

1. Reflection – Terry Clark
2. Reflection - Sheila and Jim Krueger
3. Reflection – Heather Muirhead
4. Reflection – Ruth Mireau

We are each called like Anna and Simeon, regardless of our age to peek beneath each baby blanket looking for the precious face of God, and then to sing, celebrate and make welcome.

May we have the courage, even now – whatever our age and ability to see the face of God in the other, to sing, celebrate and welcome. Can you imagine, if each child was to be celebrated, each child was to be welcomed. What a world this would be.

Prayers of the People

God of hope:

when the world is confusing and bleak, you pierced the darkness with light, with hope and with renewed vision. We give you thanks for lessons learned, for changes of heart, for new discoveries made and hope restored. We pray this day for those in need of generous portions of hope those who are ill and for those who are grieving and who feel alone. God give us hope like Anna and Simeon to see your promise for new life,

God of peace:

in this world that constantly tells us we are not enough, that we need more and more to be OK, calm us and teach us to breathe. Within ourselves, our relationships, our communities and our world there is often conflict and antagonism, we pray for all places where cruelty appears to win the day. We pray for those who are brave of heart and who work for peace with justice. God give us peace like Anna and Simeon to see your promise fulfilled.

God of joy:

we give you thanks for moments of joy and celebration in our lives, for pleasure given and received, for quiet evenings spent in reflection, for awkward and yet so necessary connections we make by phone or through zoom that bring smiles and giggles. In these days of cold and darkness we remember those who feel left out or who feel bitter while others rejoice. We pray for those who are difficult to love and those who walk in dark valleys; be their light be their warmth and melt our hearts so that we might love more deeply. God give us joy, like Anna and Simeon to sing and celebrate your breaking into the darkness with fresh possibilities.

God of love:

you call us to live in communion with you and one another and you have formed us into families and circles of friendship, we remember before you our families whether close or far apart, we remember before you our friends whether they be near or far away and we ask your blessing on our families and our friends. We pray especially for all children and for our elders who feel the threat and the restrictions of Covid so deeply. We ask your blessing on our church family as we move into the new year together while apart. Continue to enable us to be Your Church, serving our neighbours. Help us not keep our gratitude and our concern for others bottled up but let us express our love and concern in words and actions as best we are able in these challenging times. God give us strength to love and the grace to be loved. Like Anna and Simeon grant us wisdom and the energy to continue to be your people of radical love in the world.

God of the Bethlehem baby, hold us now as we pray the words taught to us by the one who brings light to every heart..

Our Father/Mother...

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

Hymn - Go Tell It on the Mountain

Blessing

Now may the blessings of the Bethlehem baby wrap you in love.
May you feel the gentle guidance of the Holy Spirit
And may you be light bearers and witnesses to the strong love of God.

And may the love of God
the Grace of Jesus Christ and the
Companionship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and every day.
Amen.