

# **Worship with McClure United Church**

~ 54th Anniversary Service ~

October 25, 2020

## **Welcome**

Welcome everyone and happy anniversary McClure United Church!

Today we are celebrating 54 years and we have some special guests this morning who have offered some lovely greetings.

(play video of Kent, Ron, Joan and Dale)

Thank you to Dale, Joan, Ron and Kent for your words of congratulations and encouragement. You all have played a very important role in the formation and ministry of this congregation. We are all so grateful you have joined us in this special anniversary celebration. May this service remind us of where we have come from... of our ongoing mission... and of the vibrancy and life that continues to move us forward.

May this also be an invitation to all of us to reflect on how we can be the church – together – while we are apart.

## **Opening Prayer**

It is so difficult to be away from our McClure Church building especially on this Anniversary Sunday.

It is where many of us know welcome, know connection, know God's grace and compassion.

It is a place that we experience the light of God breaking into the world. Today we remember the light that shines when we gather and continues to shine while we are apart.

May this light fill all the spaces of our living with warmth, hope and love.

Let us Pray:

God as your church in the world we each bear the name of Jesus. As a

part of McClure United Church, we have borne the name of Doctor Robert McClure medical missionary and first lay Moderator of the United Church of Canada. Keep us faithful to the gospel of Jesus and to the faithful witness of Dr. Bob and all who have gone before us. Lead us, by your Spirit toward a future, yet unknown, where in our worship work and witness we continue to live the love we have known in you. Amen.

### **Scripture**

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said,

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are Yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy God, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

### **Reflection**

54 years! 54 years of being a community of faith. 54 years of following Jesus, of serving the community, of living our faith... 54 years of being the church.

During that time we have had so many faithful leaders... so many people who have committed themselves to this congregation with their time, talents and treasure. And we are incredibly grateful to ever single one of you... we would not... could not... be the church without you.

I invited several of our past board chairs to share with us what McClure has meant to them. So I'm going to share with you now their reflections about this church.

(share the video)

Thank you so much to everyone who shared with us... thank you for helping to make this anniversary so special.

Over the years there have been many changes in this community... location changes, building changes, staff changes, culture and community changes. But one of the things that has not changed is our commitment to worship, to study, to care and to outreach.

This past year has been one of the more challenging years as we experience some pretty significant changes. Certainly there has been much grief, frustration, concern as we live in this pandemic.

But one thing that has not changed is our commitment to be the church. I've often heard it said that the church is much more than Sunday morning. Sunday morning worship is certainly a time for us to come together in community to worship God, celebrate, make connections and hopefully be inspired, refreshed by our experience of worship through the music, the prayers, the scripture and maybe even the sermon.

But that is not where church ends... in fact, it's only really a beginning. As the children's song from my youth says "the church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting place... the church is a people. I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together."

So we have been trying to use our creative brains to figure out how we can continue to be a vibrant church while maintaining social distance and respecting the pandemic guidelines and restrictions. We've had to learn a lot of new technology so we could continue offering worship on Sunday morning, opportunities for study, connection and outreach. We've offered online social times, discussions and studies... committees have had to shift to an online format for meetings... families have received faith at home kits, Rainbow Village, the youth and young adult groups have all been gathering online. We've continued our commitment to outreach... this summer offering opportunities to support The Lighthouse, The Friendship Inn and The Food Bank... and just this week offering a bottle drive to support Cosmo Industries. And we have definitely been lighting up the phone lines as we do our best to connect with every member of this community... especially those who do not have the use of technology.

And it looks like we are going to need to continue being creative in how we are the church as we move into the colder season. Unfortunately, Debra and I have a limited capacity for creativity... and this is why the "we are the church together" part of that song is so so soooo important.

There are already a number of folks tapping into their creativity to keep this congregation alive... but we sure could use the help of the entire community so that we can live out our commitment to "be the church" in all our capacity.

No one... not one of you... are too old, too young, too tired, too depressed, too busy, too anything... to be the church. Being the church does not need

to just be doing the big things... being the church can be as simple as making a call, writing a note or just sitting quietly in prayer.

Wherever you are... whatever your ability... there is a role for you. So please.. connect with us – tell us what you are doing – or what you would like to be doing. If there is a program, a ministry, a job, a study, a discussion... anything... that you would like to do – or would like to see being done – let us know. Please... share your ideas, your desires, your needs. Help us be the church our community needs during this pandemic time.

As we move into our 55th year as a congregation let's all consider how we can continue to bring McClure United Church to life... living and loving in the way of Jesus.

I have one more video I'd like to share with you. This was created last Sunday by the youth group... it is a great reminder of who we are... and who we are called to be.

(show The New Creed video by youth)

### **Prayers of the People**

God of joy we give you thanks this day for McClure United Church, our spiritual home. We give thanks for all those who shared a vision of what McClure could be and then rolled up their sleeves and got to work. God the work is not complete, and it is with humility and excitement that we ask that you inspire us to continue to trust you and each other as we live your love in the world. Help us each of us to discern who best to serve you and our Neighbor.

Remind us God, through the movement of the Holy Spirit that we are not alone you are with us always.

God of Unity we pray for our brothers and sisters of Holy Spirit Roman Catholic parish with whom we share a sacred covenant. We ask that You might bless their many ministries and strengthen each of us as we seek to be the one body of Jesus Christ.

Remind us God, through the movement of the Holy Spirit that we are not alone that you are with us always.

God of peace, for too many in this world peace is a distant hope. Too many live-in fear, too many hunger for simple food and clean water, too many children cannot go to school or play in their yard. We pray for our World.

Remind us God, through the movement of the Holy Spirit that we are not alone you are with us always.

God of healing we take a moment now to open our hearts to you and offer our deepest prayers. We pray for those who are ill those who are struggling with dementia and other mental illness. We pray for those who are grieving, those who are lonely, for those who struggle daily to survive, we open our hearts in a time of silent prayer...

Remind us God, through the movement of the Holy Spirit that we are not alone you are with us always.

God of hope, as the days shorten and the night grows long, as Covid cases rise and hospitals and care facilities begin to step back and lock down. As we consider the struggles that come from being cut off from each other again. Anxiety, worry and dread fill our thoughts. We pray for patience; we pray for strength to continue to be vigilant in our care of others, to wear our mask and wash our hands and stay home if we are sick. We pray for health care workers and teachers and for all those who are vulnerable to this illness. Help us through this time and

Remind us God, through the movement of the Holy Spirit that we are not alone you are with us always.

God we pray these things in the name of Jesus who taught us to love and who taught us to pray together saying.

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**

We go from this time of worship with thanksgiving...

thanksgiving for the many saints who have worked, worked and served here,

thanksgiving for the joyful and questioning congregation of which we have been a part,

Thanksgiving for each new adventure of faith into which this congregation has been called.

And may the grace of Christ

the love of God

and the communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all.