

Worship for November 14, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

Hello everyone and a great big warm welcome to all of you on this cold day. Seems as though winter is arriving... I'm not going to complain as we have had a beautiful fall and I appreciate that the snow held off until the second week of November. This time last year we were still digging ourselves out of one of the biggest snowfalls in my memory.

So today we have a guest joining us for the reflection time.

I'm grateful to welcome Jessica Baird from Ottawa who will be sharing with us. I hope you will be as inspired by her story and her faith as I have been.

One of the good things about this pandemic.... and that feels a bit odd to say.... but, its true... there have been a few good things... and one of those things is the ability to use technology to make connections and be creative in sharing leadership across the country. I'm happy to be able to take advantage of this while we are still pre-recording our worship services.

Because soon... things are going to change.

As you have probably heard we are planning for a return to in person worship on the first Sunday of Advent... November 28th. I am so very excited to be gathering again with others in the sanctuary on Sunday morning... and I am also excited that we now have the technological ability to include all those who are not able or not yet ready to return to in person worship .

You will have received more detailed information about the protocols in today's email so I'm going to just give you the reader's digest version here.

We will be offering two worship times... 9:15 and 11am... and are limiting numbers at each service to 75 people to allow for some physical distancing.

We are putting into place other safety protocols as well...

everyone will be required to pre-register for worship to ensure that we don't go over our limit and you will also be required to show proof of vaccination either at the time of registration or prior to worship on Sunday morning.

You can pre-register in a few different ways... you can register in person by dropping by the office during regular office hours... you can email your intent to attend to the church office (mcclureunitedchurch@shaw.ca) or you can phone the church office Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday between 9am and noon. All registrations... by phone, email or drop in must be received by noon on the Friday prior each week.

To simplify things on Sunday morning, it is our hope that as many of you as possible will provide your proof of vaccination prior to Sunday morning. You can either pop into the office to show your proof... or you can email it. If you are comfortable with emailing your proof of vaccination, it will be deleted immediately after being seen. We will not be keeping copies of your proof of vaccination on file for privacy reasons... a note will just be made that your proof has been seen so you will only need to show your proof the first time you register for worship.

We do not want to exclude those of you who are unable to receive the vaccination so we will also accept a negative covid test result and it must not be dated more than 72 hours prior to worship.... so that's Thursday

at noon. If this is the option you will chose, please be sure to check the detailed email for which covid tests are accepted – there are some limitations.

And finally... for those of you not able to or not quite comfortable yet attending in person worship, we will be livestreaming the 9:15 service. This means you will be able to watch the service in real time from the comfort of your homes. This service will also be recorded, so if you are unable to watch at 9:15 you will be able to watch later in the day.

And that's a lot of detail but don't worry if you didn't catch it all or forget things because it was also sent in the email and will be posted on our website as well.

I'm sure this announcement comes with some mixed emotions... excitement, apprehension.. maybe some worry and possibly concern over some of the safety protocols. Please know that if you have any questions or concerns that you would like to talk about, we are here for you. We are in this together and want to do our best to support and encourage each other as we move forward. So give us a call, send an email or stop by the office.

And, may I also ask that you please be patient with us as we try and test how to move forward. We've never done this before and, while we feel like we have a solid plan.... Well, these past 20 months have taught us that plans are always changing and we need to be flexible in our approach to.. well, life.

There are other announcements as well but I am going to just leave those for you to look at in the email, on the Facebook page or our website. All the details you need can be found in those places.

And, lets move now into worship... as we light our Christ Candle.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Nora J. Oliver, of St. George United Church in St. George, Ont

Writes "As a person who was born with a visible disability, I have come to understand that I am surrounded by God's grace and have been from the very beginning."

Nora gifts us with this poem:

You knit me together in my mother's womb.

But you dropped a stitch.

For what purpose, I know not why.

You replaced that missing stitch with an abundance of grace.

For what purpose, I know why.

Grace is my mantle.

My protection against unkind, disabling,
judgmental words;

against discriminatory and marginalizing actions.

Grace is what keeps me standing tall, moving forward.

Visible.

When shrinking, stopping, and invisibility would be so much easier.

Grace tells me I am your child -uniquely loved.

Fearfully and wonderfully made in your image.

We light our Christ Candle today knowing that the God of Grace and profound love surrounds us giving strength and peace enough for today and everyday.

Call to Worship: Let Us Build a House with Elin Sletmoen

Opening Prayer

God of transforming love; knit into our lives, peace to calm us, strength to embolden us, and love to soften us. Be present to us now as we open our hearts and our minds to your creativity as we worship this day. Amen.

Hymn: Deep in Our Hearts by Wenda Saganski

Scripture: Luke 4:16-23 read by Meghan Drabble

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’ All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’ He said to them, ‘Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “physician, heal yourself!”

Reflection: with Jessica Baird

Note: The reflection this week was an unscripted conversation with Laura and Jessica. There is not a written text.

Hymn: I, The Lord, of Sea and Sky by the Coulthard family

Prayers of the People

God who has taught us to come to you as we would come to a loving parent, who has taught us to pray for the hallowing of your name, help us to honour you not only with our thoughts and words but in our daily living, Coax us towards greater love, greater care and greater compassion.

God who has taught us to pray for the coming of your Kingdom, your dream for the world, we acknowledge how far from your dream the world appears to be at this time:

For the nations of the world, we pray, offering our concern for all people regardless of their race or their tribe, regardless of their religion or their creed. Remind us God of the essential unity of the whole human family; there is no “us and them”, remind us God that your call for us to become people of compassion knows no borders, acknowledges no boundaries. Remind us God that we are part of an intricately designed creation, that your dream, is of a world where all the creatures of the world live in harmony and with respect. We

cannot separate ourselves from this planet. The air is in our lungs, the plants are in our belly, the water quenches our thirst, creatures big and small are our siblings. Teach us to live this truth.

God who has taught us to pray for daily bread, remind us that we live in a hungry world, a world in which the lives of those who have so much are set against the backdrop of the many who have so little. Help us to share and to work for justice. We pray especially this day for refugees caught in the middle of impossible situations. Help us find these wandering ones and enfold them in generous care – that they might have the bread they need for today and everyday. We pray also for those in our own city that have no home, who do not have what they need. Make us generous in our help.

God who has taught us not only to pray for forgiveness but to offer it to others, knowing full well that forgiveness does not come easily to us, knowing full well that we are tempted to withhold it from others, knowing full well that we find it difficult to believe that we ourselves are truly forgiven. We pray to be equipped for lives marked by a willingness to receive and offer healing, including the priceless healing that comes when we forgive, and when we acknowledge our need to be forgiven. Help us tend to our relationships, to not take them for granted but to hold them as precious beyond measure.

God who has taught us to pray for deliverance from evil we confess that we do not always understand the nature of the world in which we live. We acknowledge our complicity in so much that is wrong with our world. We come seeking the wisdom that you alone can provide, we come seeking guidance and grace not only for ourselves but for all who bear your image and for the whole of the good creation that is yours.

God of Glory, hear now our very personal prayers of celebration and concern in a time of silence.

Touch our hearts, strengthen our spirits and empower our loving, we pray as the disciples of Jesus, who have been taught to pray.

Benediction

Friends may we go from this time of worship:
confident in the knowledge of God's abundant love for each one of us,
comforted by the healing strength of Jesus love,
and inspired by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit within us.

Go from here as a blessing, to be a blessing.

Amen.

Sung Blessing: May the God of Hope Go With You by Jim Gillis