

# “Gone Up With a Shout: Clap Your Hands”

Seventh Sunday of Easter

## Welcome/Announcements

*(voice over) We welcome you to this time of worship and as we do so, we acknowledge that McClure United Church stands on treaty 6 territory and homeland of the Metis Nation. We pay our respect to elders both past and present, wherever we find ourselves today. We also acknowledge our commitment as an Affirming Ministry of the United Church of Canada as we strive to be an open-minded, inclusive and welcoming place of worship. It is our hope that no matter your age, race, class, ability, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, you will feel the warmth and blessing of God's love today. And we give thanks to God for this opportunity to gather together for worship, reflection, song and prayer. May you feel the God's blessing upon you today.*

Good morning and welcome to worship with us here today. Today is the 7<sup>th</sup> and last Sunday in this season of Easter. I am grateful to be on this journey with you – as we continue to open ourselves to God's dream... as we seek the courage, strength and resiliency needed as we dare to dance.

And today I am so very grateful to be sharing with you a sermon by an amazing woman who dares to dance the dance of hope, justice and love in so many ways. Adelle Halliday shares her ministry from our National Office as the Anti-Racism and Equity Lead for The United Church. I hope you will feel as blessed by her wisdom as I have felt. I look forward to hearing your comments and questions in the days ahead. In fact I'd really like to encourage you to share anything that arose for you as you listened to Adelle in the comments section of the video. We all benefit from reading each others reflections, concerns, celebrations. There are few ways that we are able to interact with each other right now... but for those watching this video... this is something you can do.

And I do have a couple of announcements for you today. First a reminder of our AGM today at 1pm. If you have not already received your Zoom link, please email [communications@mclureunitedchurch.org](mailto:communications@mclureunitedchurch.org) or call me asap and I'll make sure you get it.

Also a reminder of the Outreach Committee's collection for Interval House on Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup> from 10-noon. Please bring along items to fill bags given to women and their children who are leaving Interval House to live on their own. For a list of items, please visit our website. New items are preferred but gently used items are also acceptable. You are also welcome to donate money if that's better for you. If you do this, please make cheques out to McClure United Church with a little notation that is for Interval House. \$500 in donations have already been collected. This is such a generous congregation. I heard that the Food Bank drive last week raised \$1500 and filled the back of a truck with food items. What a gift to those who are hungry! Thank you

Oh yes.. and today is the deadline for your dance videos. And I have to say... some other congregations may be a little more forthcoming with their videos than you folks are. So please... let's do this! Take some time today to make a short video of yourself dancing. You don't need to be dancing the dance I shared... you don't even need to be dancing to Jerusalema. Just turn on some music and shake it shake it. Once you've done that and filled your heart with the joy that comes from

dancing... you can send your videos to me. If they are small enough you can email or text them. If your file is too large to email or text... send me a message and we'll figure out a way.

A couple of other new initiatives I'd like to make you aware of... I am working with one of our youth, Kate, to create a Kindness Garden, similar to the one I have at home... for the church. We are inviting everyone and anyone to stop by and take a kindness rock... or you can pick up a blank stone and take it home, decorate it and return it to the garden for someone else to enjoy... or you can find your own stone to paint up and add it to the garden. This is a simple way to share our love and kindness with members of our community. Where will it be? Well that's a very good question. I am hoping to place it later today but haven't fully decided where it will sit. But I promise it won't be hard to find.

I've also put some sidewalk chalk outside of the churchdoors and am inviting everyone to come by and write or draw a message of love, hope and encouragement. Lets brighten those dull sidewalks up for the residents of McClure Place and Amy McClure House. We did this last year and I know it was very much appreciated.

That's it for announcements this morning.

Lets breathe deeply now of God's abundant love... as we prepare ourselves for this time of worship.

## **Call to Worship**

Starting something new can be scary. While some of us embrace adventure and new opportunities with great joy and enthusiasm, others of us find it very overwhelming.

No matter which way you look at it, change can be a challenge. It can make us feel uncomfortable, unwanted, uncertain. With new things comes new people, new expectations, new struggles. Then again, change also comes with new friendships, new learnings, and new chances.

If we open ourselves to the possibilities that come with starting something new we also open ourselves to the creative Spirit of God. Entering into the dance of Life with the Holy One as our guide and source of courage we are free to let our dreams take flight as Christ's dream takes root within us..

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,  
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.  
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,  
Dare to dance again!**

This is the call!

Ready yourselves for the Spirit to guide your life in new ways.

**We welcome the Creative Spirit of God into our lives.**

Get ready to be the hands and feet of Jesus in this world.

**Joining Christ's dream we turn to the world with compassion.**

Energized by new opportunities in this ministry we share we rejoice.

**For we are Easter People!**

Let us Pray:

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation –

*[www.worshipdesignstudio.com/easterdance](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/easterdance)*

Help us to put on our dancing shoes  
so that we can be the hands and feet of Jesus.  
Come and dance with us, engage with us, as we seek you –  
so that we can be risen with Christ and in Christ.  
Be with us now, we pray. Amen.

## Song

**Scripture** *(read by Jim Bugg)*

### **Genesis 16:1-16**

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children. She had an Egyptian slave-girl whose name was Hagar, and Sarai said to Abram, 'You see that the LORD has prevented me from bearing children; go in to my slave-girl; it may be that I shall obtain children by her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So, after Abram had lived for ten years in the land of Canaan, Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar the Egyptian, her slave-girl, and gave her to her husband Abram as a wife. He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked with contempt on her mistress. Then Sarai said to Abram, 'May the wrong done to me be on you! I gave my slave-girl to your embrace, and when she saw that she had conceived, she looked on me with contempt. May the LORD judge between you and me!' But Abram said to Sarai, 'Your slave-girl is in your power; do to her as you please.' Then Sarai dealt harshly with her, and she ran away from her.

The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur. And he said, 'Hagar, slave-girl of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going?' She said, 'I am running away from my mistress Sarai.' The angel of the LORD said to her, 'Return to your mistress, and submit to her.' The angel of the LORD also said to her, 'I will so greatly multiply your offspring that they cannot be counted for multitude.' And the angel of the LORD said to her, 'Now you have conceived and shall bear a son;

you shall call him Ishmael,  
for the LORD has given heed to your affliction.

He shall be a wild ass of a man,  
with his hand against everyone,  
and everyone's hand against him;  
and he shall live at odds with all his kin.'

So she named the LORD who spoke to her, 'You are El-roi'; for she said, 'Have I really seen God and remained alive after seeing him?' Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

### **Genesis 21:9-20**

But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.' The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba.

When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him.' Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink.

God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow.

## **Sermon**

## **Music**

### **Prayers of the People** (Jordan/Lindsay)

*Adapted from a prayer written by Rev. MiYeon Kim in a United Church Service titled "A Step Nearer to Harmony"*

O Living God, we lift our prayers to you from many different places today – both physically and in our hearts. Some of us are exhausted and busy with too much to do.... Others are exhausted from the endless days with nothing to keep us busy or give us purpose. Some carry gratitude for the gifts of the past week, and others pray for a better week ahead. Wherever we are, God, we know that you meet us here.

We pray for your world and your many children, particularly India as the people there struggle with rapidly spreading covid-19, and the people of East Jerusalem whose homes are being threatened, and all who are caught up in the spiral of violence there.

We give you thanks as we celebrate this month as Asian Heritage Month, to remember the contribution of Asian people to the mosaic of your world. We think of our own heritage, and the ways it has shaped us in becoming the people we are today. We give thanks that all of us may offer that part of ourselves to one another, and to see one another as God does, as one human family.

We give thanks for Asian Canadians and their rich contributions to Canadian society. We pray for those who have come to our country from Asia as immigrants, seeking new opportunities for a better life. We give thanks for the entrepreneurial spirit many Asians bring with them to Canada. We pray for those who serve in ministry in the United Church who are Asian. May they breathe new vitality into the United Church from their various experiences and cultures.

O God, we pray for those who have come to Canada as Temporary Foreign Workers. We pray also for those who are migrant workers in Asia who face even more brutal exploitation. We pray for women and children in Asia and around the world, who work in oppressive conditions to produce the goods we enjoy in Canada.

We pray, O God, for those we know who are sick, those who are in need of the healing touch of your Holy Spirit. We remember those battling depression or addictions.

God, knowing that you hear the prayers we carry silently on our hearts we offer them to you now – prayers of gratitude, of concern for others, of worry for ourselves..... (count slowly to 20).

O God, hear our prayers, receive our hearts and from your deep love may we find the healing and hope we need... today and every day.  
And may the dance of your Spirit call us to be in partnership with you, moving together as we seek to dance your hope, justice and love in all that we do.  
Our Mother and our Father...

## **Benediction**

The poet Rumi invites us with these words...

“Dance, when you’re broken open.  
Dance, if you’ve torn the bandage off.  
Dance in the middle of the fighting.  
Dance in your blood.  
Dance, when you’re perfectly free.”

May it be so as we go in peace.

And may the Loving God,  
Risen Christ,  
and Dancing Spirit  
fill you with all you need  
for the days ahead.