

June 25, 2021 Worship Service
McClure United Church

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Prayer

As we prepare our hearts now for worship, I invite you to take a moment to open yourselves to the light and love of Jesus. A light that shines in and through you into the world... a light that shines even into the darkest of places

And now, let us pray...

Gracious and loving God, we give you thanks. Thanks for gathering us together in this way. We ask your help in opening our hearts and our minds to your love and your wisdom as it may be revealed to us during this time and throughout our lives. Help us to be present in this time of worship, to hear your word for us in whatever way it is spoken or sung or offered... maybe in the silence. So be with us now God and bless our time together so that we may be a blessing to your world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Hymn: I Heard the Voice of Jesus - Jim Gillis

Scripture: John 6:1-15 – Terry Clark

6After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. 2A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. 3Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. 4Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. 5When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" 6He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. 7Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." 8One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 9"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" 10Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. 11Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so

also the fish, as much as they wanted. 12When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." 13So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. 14When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."15When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Sermon – Rev. Debra Berg

What gets you out of the house these days?

When I was a little girl - I would go flying out of the house when I heard the bells of the ice cream truck. I would fly out of the house and get to the edge of the lawn and then realize I needed to have asked if I could have a treat and then I would need to ask for money to buy the treat.

Nine times out of ten by the time got back to the house found Mom or Grandma to ask permission and then they managed to pull together the change for the treat - the truck would be gone. It took me awhile, but eventually, on very hot days I would negotiate in advance for a treat and would get the coins ready by the door— just in case. The odds of actually eating ice cream went way up once I got myself better prepared. ///

I wonder what got the people in Jesus' day, out of their houses and out on that grassy hill side that we heard about in our scripture lesson today? Jesus was not offering Ice cream or any other candy treats. So what made them leave their homes and places of work and find a spot on the grass? //

My hunch is, that they would have heard about Jesus being in town from their neighbours – and the word would have been whispered – for Jesus was not a popular guy with local government or religious types. So word of his arrival in town was probably hushed. But then again maybe some, perhaps those who had

heard Jesus speak before - went to the markets and other places where many people were gathered and they shouted the news from the soap boxes and street corners. Loudly inviting one and all to come and see.///

What made them go?

Did they gather out of **curiosity**, had they heard Jesus was a miracle worker and they wanted to see a good show. After all the days were long and hot and filled with heavy labour - a good show would have been nice.

Or did they gather out of **longing**, longing for something different, some new news that would transform their current circumstance. Life was hard under Roman rule, and they longed to be liberated from that cruelty. They longed for a someone who could bring them out of the mess and to a new freedom.

Did they go because everybody else was going and they didn't want to miss anything. I think the younger folk call it **FOMO** – or fear of missing out.

Did they go because, the news that Jesus was coming to town, awakened a hope within them. A hope for more for themselves and their children. Perhaps this Jesus might know a way to better.

Who knows what made them go – maybe it was a smattering of all these things.

But what they saw and what they heard when they got there caught them, for it seems they followed him farther and longer than they had planned or expected.

We know they saw Jesus healing that day and we can imagine they heard him teaching. Teaching about healing and about a new way of being in the world.

A new way of justice for all, not just for some.

A new way of economics where people get what they need not just what they pay for.

A new way of community where the first are last and the last first and there are no throwaway people.

A new way where love is the touch stone, the measure for all things.

What ever got them out of their homes that day brought them to a place where they were fed. Fed, heart and soul. ////

Our world is hungry in heart and soul. Wars rage and injustice seems to be more the norm then the exception. Rich countries still haven't figured out how to share and people are dying because they do not have access to vaccine and fragile health systems are overwhelmed.

Our country is hungry in heart and soul. We hunger for a way of healing. Indigenous communities are deeply grieving, and colonizers are lost in lament – sitting with what has been done and has been perpetuated through the ages. All of us knowing healing will take work, tender, intentional, hard work.

Each one of us is hungry in heart and soul. Many hunger for healing of mind, healing of addiction, healing of trauma. Some of us hunger for healing of relationships and for mistakes made. Loneliness eats away at some and boredom sits like a weight upon the chest. Fear has insulated us and some of us have built walls. Grief overwhelms and pulls at our ability to love and live. ///

Many of us have left our homes to follow Jesus and we have left for a variety of reasons - some have just started to follow and some have stayed long and have learned much and are still following, and learning, and listening and living and messing up and then trying again and again. We have invited others to come and see and listen and to come along. We have our good days and our bad.

What does Jesus say to us all - his followers. ///

Sit down, rest a bit, let me feed you, the journey is long and sometimes hard and I'm here for you – I will feed you – heart – soul and even body. Sit awhile and be fed. Then he turns to his closest disciples and says to them - the people are hungry – what have we got. And Jesus turns their calculations about what they have (which they think is too little) on its head. Jesus' math was different – it didn't matter that there were only two fish and five loaves – when we turn towards the way – there is always enough.

Sara wasn't sure what got her out of the house one early winter morning, while her daughter was sleeping at her father's house, Sara Miles walked into St. Gregory's Episcopal Church. She had no earthly reason to be there. She had never heard a Gospel reading and never said the Lord's prayer. She did not claim to be a Christian in fact she was more likely to call Christians – religious nuts - then Christians. The church had chairs not pews, 20 people sat in a circle with a table in the middle. Sara walked in, took a chair, and tried not to catch anyone's' eye, Then a man and woman in long tie-dyed robes stood and began chanting in harmony. There was no organ, no choir, no pulpit just the table. She sat down, and stood up, sang and sat down, waited and listened and stood up and sang, and it was all pretty peaceful and sort of interesting.

“Jesus invites everyone to his table,” the woman announced, and everyone started moving toward the table. When they got there there was more singing and standing, and someone was putting a piece of fresh, crumbly, bread in her hands, saying “ the body of Christ” and handing her the goblet of sweet wine, saying “ the blood of Christ” and then something outrageous and terrifying happened. Jesus happened.

Sara writes in her book Take This Bread; the spiritual memoir of a twenty-first-century Christian. "I still can't explain my first communion. It made no sense. I was in tears and physically unbalanced; I felt as if I had just stepped off a curb or been knocked over, painlessly, from behind.

The disconnect between what I thought was happening – I was eating a piece of bread; and what I heard some else say was happening – the piece of bread was the "body" of Christ" caught me." God was feeding her.. Sara was being fed – she could do nothing else but cry.

And Sara kept going back.

That moment of being fed at Jesus table turned into a life's passion for feeding others. Sarah established a feeding program in that church for others who where hungry and in need.

Friends It does not matter what gets you out of the house for we have a God who feeds us. If you think you are beyond healing –Jesus shows us that there is healing and then some. It does not matter if you think you are not good enough – because Jesus shows us that what little we bring God can use and create more. It does not matter if you are scared and unprepared for what comes next – because there is enough – enough courage for everyone. What ever makes you hungry – Jesus assures us that there is enough to take the hunger away – Jesus promises to fill us with good things. To give us enough for another day. The basket is full – and when I have filled my body with what I need - I am invited to pass the basket on to my neighbour so that they might pass it on And on

Friends I pray that you know in your heart and your soul that you are not alone. Our God feeds you and more.

Thank be to our God of grace and abundance. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Today's prayer was a visual prayer comprised of images and music and these words:

Let us pray...

We offer our prayers to you, O God:

In gratitude:

for love of friends, of family, of faith community.

for fun, for rest, for learning, for creation, for health care and caregivers.

And we pray our concerns for those who: are sad, are hurt, are sick, are bored, are angry, are lost, are afraid, are lonely, are confused.

Thank you, God, for hearing our prayers and for sharing your love.

And now we pray together the prayer that Jesus shared:

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: Twelve Baskets Left Over – Jim Gillis

Blessing

Sung Blessing: Like a Rock – Jim Gillis