

Worship with McClure United Church

October 4, 2020

Opening

Welcome to worship with the McClure United Church.

Thank you for spending this time with us.

It is my prayer that what is offered here today will be a blessing to you as you live out your call as a disciple of Jesus.

McClure is a church of welcome and mission. It is with gratitude that we offer this ministry on Treaty 6 land and the traditional homeland of the metis.

Here are a few things to keep in mind this coming week.

Rainbow Village is up and running on line –10am via Zoom. If you have not received the Zoom link, please let Laura know or join the Rainbow Village Facebook Group for more information.

Youth group started last week and they are meeting again this week in the Youth Lounge in the building at 11am. Masks are necessary and physical distancing will be observed.

Noon on Sundays - Laura and I are going to host a coffee time. Check out our Facebook page for information as to how to join in.

WE had a yummy Pie Sale – Thanks to all the bakers and the purchasers of Pie and especially to Ebba and Marlene who took our donations and distributed pies. Thanks also Mary Jane who made sure we all sanitized our hands and wore a mask – who knew the church would need a bouncer.

WE are going to be doing a Full congregations “check in” by phone over the next few weeks and if you would like to be a phoner we could use your help. Please contact Ruth if you can help out.

You will also be receiving a survey soon asking question about our penitential opening of the building. Your feedback is so very important.

And please – please do not hesitate to reach out to Laura or I if you have worries or concerns and need a chat. If you have something you have to celebrate and just can't hold it in please pick up the phone and let us in on the news. We are not too busy.

I want to thank all those who are part of keeping this worship connection alive and well.

I want to thank Andrew for his many skills,
And our Scared Sound Band for offering their gift of music.

Keep connected to the website for information.

Opening Prayer

And now friends I invite you to take a moment to just ground yourselves in this time and in this place. Take a deep breath of God's love... a love that moves through you, surrounds you... and surrounds the world in love, care and compassion.

And now today as I light this candle, I light it remembering that Christians all over the world are celebrating together the light and love of Jesus Christ. That although we are not together in person... although we will not taste today the bread and the juice, we hold on to the memories of times we have been in community in that way, and know that that community continues to be with us now wherever we are... and not just our community... not just the community of McClure but the community of Christ's followers all around the world.

So we give thanks for this light... the light that warms us and helps us to see our way.

So now I invite you to take just a moment to pray with me...

O God we draw near to you and to others in faith

We come today remembering the taste of bread and the taste of wine.

We come remembering all that this Holy Sacrament stands for.... We remember the freedom of forgiveness and the strength of your presence.

Draw us nearer to you.

Help us O God to remember and hold on to the truth that our lives do, indeed, start from faith and end in faith and that you have journeyed and

will continue to journey with us all along the way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Scripture

Luke 24:13-35

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." ²⁵Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. ²⁸As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their

companions gathered together. ³⁴They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

Prayer: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you O God, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

I work mostly from home these days it keeps my bubble small. However, one afternoon a week, I head out and spend some time in the Office at the church. I like going into the church office - It is a great time to check in with Irene and Elaine, they are often around taking care our accounts. Sometimes I get to say hi to Terry Cutler who is taking care of messages and emails. Going into the church office once a week is a good way to keep connected.

When I am at the church not only do I connect with our fine office folk and tend to some things at my desk but I also take some time in the sanctuary. I sometimes take our church directory with me and I sit on the couch at the back and pray. The first time I did this, about six weeks ago now, I sat down on the couch and burst into tears, overwhelmed by the loss of our “in building” church life together. Overwhelmed by the distance that exists between you and I; between us all.

This week as I watched the colours of the stain glass window move across the empty communion table, I shed yet another tear as this week we, along with other Christian communities, around the world, would have been celebrating communion together – this Sunday is designated as world communion Sunday. Yet another loss.

There are so many things that divide us as Christians, theology, practise, degree of welcome and so much more but it is the Bread and the Wine that seems to binds us - it is the one thing that unites us and continues to witness to the hope that someday we will be one. It is not about what we think happens to the bread or whether we drink wine or juice, or how we

eat and drink - but it is the breaking, remembering and the sharing that we hold in common. It is the act of communion that unites us not the stuff. What makes communion, communion for me is not the bread and the juice but rather it's about the verbs surrounding the bread and the juice. In the **breaking** we are reminded that the world is broken and into this brokenness the God power enters to be broken too – when we **remember** Jesus life, his death and the resurrection we are reminded of the power of love – and when we **share** this meal - this broken world it somehow puts it back together.

People are fed, the thirsty drink and love prevails. It is the most profound and radical act of resistance and hope that we participate in. This meal of bread and juice.

So how can we share communion now - in these times of Covid, with masks and physical distancing, closed worship spaces and tiny gatherings? Today I turn to the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. I hope you appreciated the creative telling of this story by the two senior men on their porch. Their sharing the story is how the story would have been shared and shared and shared again over the years. The story would have been told by the fire side, and around the kitchen table and on the porch by our ancestors, until it was written down for future generation to read and re-read.

I don't know what it was like for those disciples as they walked the road to Emmaus but it would seem they were walking in a time of confusion, uncertainty and grief and their story sure touches my heart in these times.

You would perhaps agree that the world is in turmoil and it feels a little crazy out here. We walk in a time of confusion, uncertainty and grief too. The world is divided in so many ways so many people struggle, mistakes of the past continue to impact the lives of those today. As I marked orange shirt day September 30, I was reminded of all the children who were taken from their families and placed in residential schools and the long term effect that has had on first nation culture, our society as a whole, and on the lives of individuals. As I watched the final moments of Joyce Echaquan's life on the news the other night, a woman who began to record her pain on Facebook because she couldn't get anyone to listen to her cries for help. When I heard the litany of name calling and watched the nurses who were supposed to help her - treat her so horribly. It made me sick to witness such hate and abuse. Our world is in great turmoil and we need to do something.

When I look to our neighbours to the South and the political turmoil found there, I cringe. You can almost see the hate, the anger and the deep divide between left and right, creeping like a dense fog into our country. I see political ads where political parties are attacking one another, parties are name calling and in sighting fear all the while ignoring the need for constructive debate about how to solve the problems that are in so much need of attention.

Then there is COVID, it has changed everything and like those two wise men on their porch, one of whom could not remember what he had for lunch the day before - well many of us cannot even remember what day it is. Paydays and Holy Days and Carefree days seem long gone. The story that the two men share on their porch, the story of the Road to Emmaus is a story for our time. It is a story that reminds us that where grief, confusion and uncertainty are, Jesus has a tendency to show up. It is a story about two disciples of Jesus, like you and me, journeying in uncertain times, who wonder about what will happen next. Who in the midst of the chaos are joined by a stranger who reminds them of - the life of Jesus and the power of love - who - in the breaking of bread is recognized as Jesus himself. It is a story that keeps me going in days like these - it is a story of hope that I can hang my hat on.

It is a story that encourages me to keep watch. To watch for those moments when the holy breaks into the chaos. I don't always see it, but it is often there. The holy is present in small act of kindness, when I hear

words of hope, or gentleness, or understanding, or resistance or compassion. When I sit quietly and with a friend or laugh out loud or share a meal with my boys.

This week I'm going to bake some bread – I'm going to bake my favorite receipt – I have attached it to the written component of this sermon so you can use it too if you like – One of the things I like about this receipt is that it breaks easily into two loaves. As I knead the one loaves I am going to remember this story of Jesus walking the road with his disciples and how he was known in the breaking and sharing of bread, as I knead I hope that other stories of Jesus breaking into broken places with healing and compassion will come to mind. Perhaps the story of the resurrection of Lazarus, or the story of the bent woman or the blindman who was healed will come to mind. And then I am going to break that one loaf into two – one I will share with my boys around our family table and the other I intend to share. This will be my Communion this week.

I would invite you to make some bread this week, and split the recipe into two parts, have some for yourself, find a quiet spot with a Cup of coffee or a Cup of tea or a glass of milk and as you enjoy your favorite beverage and the bread, remember the beauty and the wonder and the hope and the love that is ours as people of God. Then take the other piece and share it, share it with a family member or a neighbor or someone you want to get to know better - just share it with someone. Perhaps this will be your communion this world communion Sunday. Perhaps as we break, remember and share Jesus once again will break into our world of turmoil and confusion, with healing, generosity and radical love.

It seems to me that communion is possible when we are apart from one another. In fact it is not only possible it is essential.

Amen.

Bread Receipt:

Thanks to Jean Pare, of Company is Coming for this, is my favorite easy bread receipt. (pg 110 Bread and More)

2 ½ cups	All purpose flour
3 tbsp	Granulated sugar
2 tbsp	Baking powder
1 tsp	Salt
2 tbsp	Butter or margarine
1 cup	Mashed potatoes
1 cup	Milk

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Add butter. Cut in until it is in tiny pieces.

Add potatoes. Cut and stir in potatoes.

Pour in milk. Stir with fork to form ball. Turn out on working surface.

Knead about 10 times.

Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Pat down to ¾ to 1 inch thick. Bake in 400 degree F oven for about 20 minutes or until well browned.

(Brush with melted butter when you remove it from the oven)

Prayers of the People/Lord's Prayer

On this worldwide communion Sunday, let us join our hearts and minds in prayer.

God, in whose love we live and move, we give You thanks that we are all made in Your image, with such rich diversity.

We pray for a world crying out to feel loved, wanted, cherished and unique. Creator God help us to remember that you are the source of love

We pray for a world torn by conflict and war.

A world that lives uneasily in a climate of fear and anxiety with no clear vision for future days.

Creator God help us to remember that you are the source of hope

We pray for a world that thinks less of others than of self.
A world where division between nations, race, religion,
neighbor and family leads to distrust and discord.
Creator God help us to remember that you are the source of peace

We pray for a world that is short on happiness,
too busy to enjoy this world you have created,
too preoccupied with living to appreciate life.
Creator God help us to remember that you are the source of joy

We pray for a world where spiritual longing is satisfied
by fashionable notions and temporary solutions rather than intentional
seeking.
Creator God help us to remember that you are the source of grace.

We pray for all those affected by Covid 19, those who are ill, those who are
grieving a loss, those who are isolated and alone. We pray for all in our
community and in our church family who seek your healing presence and
have asked for our prayers. God help us to offer our personal prayers for
each person as their names are read. We particularly remember today.
Creator God help us to remember that you are the source of all healing.

On this World Communion Sunday, we are in solidarity with those of our
own faith but also with other faith traditions here and around the world.

As we break bread together, we remember that we are one body in You,
even though we have different languages, cultures and traditions, different
ways of worship, praying and praising. In solidarity we drink the cup of
hope, of new life, together, knowing that Your will is for Your people to be
one body. We are one body, but we are not the same—it is through the gift
of diversity that we are able to be Your body. We thank You and praise You
for making us all who we are, individually and collectively. We each
celebrate all ancestries, cultures, and ethnicities, and we continue to pray
now as we sing together the prayer your son Jesus Christ taught us....

Blessing

On this road

Let us continue our journey walking in love

Let us care for each other,
Let us care for the earth,
Let us seek justice
And make peace,
God goes before us so let us live our lives boldly.

We go in the light of our Parent God,
The rebel son and
the relentless spirit.

Amen.