

Worship – August 15, 2021

Announcements

Welcome to worship with McClure United Church.
We do our best to be a church of welcome and mission.

We have had a very busy week in the church building. The board decided in June to be open not only for 12 step programs but also for funerals. As regulations have changed and with consultation we were able to host three funerals this week for families which are precious to us. We celebrated the life of Keith Davidson, Betty Webb and Jack Millar. I want to sincerely thank everyone who worked together to welcome and care for these families. Especially our funeral hospitality folks. Ebba and the team thank you so much for figuring out how to keep everyone safe and yet also be welcoming.

The office is open now for visitors and for those who have church business to attend to. Currently the office is open Tuesday – Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00 to 3:00. You will need to mask up and sign in but it will be good to see you.

I can be found in the church office Monday & Tuesday and Thursday & Friday however Wednesdays I am going to be working from home. And Laura is on holiday till the end of August.

Calling the church office is a good way to connect with me and all the information about our events can be found by checking the website or Facebook page.

I want to remind you about in person coffee time Friday mornings at 10am in the church parking lot. Bring along a lawn chair and your favorite beverage and we will gather in the shade and have a good visit. Everyone is welcome.

I know Eden and Brook, our summer community support folks, have been busy planning some things for us and Eden has some information for us and so I will turn things over to her for some announcements.

Opening words/ candle lighting

In the midst of the storms of worry and struggle we are not overwhelmed by the waves. For the God power has transformed us, equipping us through loving relationship, to survive and to thrive amidst life's chaos.

We are each part of the body of Christ.

We are free to live and to grow and to heal.

We are part of the body of Christ, many members but one body, equipped to serve, to lookout for the others as others care for us. Together we worship and give thanks.

We **light this candle** to remind us of God's love for us and for God's promise to be a light for us each and every day.

Opening prayer

Creative God, beauty is all around us, in the birds call, in the crashing waves and in the silence of the sunrise.

Beauty is all around us in the people that you have created and gifted. As we pause now to consider you and what you are asking of us at this time, open our minds and our hearts. Help us truly see the beauty and honour it though our words and actions. In this time of worship calm our worries and heal our wounds. Send us from this time refreshed and renewed by your abundant love. Amen

Luke 12.1-8

Meanwhile, when the crowd gathered by the thousands, so that they trampled on one another, he began to speak first to his disciples, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, that is, their hypocrisy. ²Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ³Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops. ⁴"I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. ⁵But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! ⁶Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one

of them is forgotten in God's sight. ⁷But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. ⁸"And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God;

Sermon: Rev. Debra Berg

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.

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. ⁷But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Do not be afraid – Jesus says to his disciples. Last week they were in a boat and were watching Jesus walk on water. Jesus walking right into the storm and they were afraid. And he said to them "Do not be afraid". This week the disciples are being bullied by the religious leaders and it is getting ugly and Jesus is telling them once again. "Do not be afraid".

"Do not be afraid" is one of the most common themes found in the Bible. I find it rather challenging. Because, I don't know about you – but I have been outside – and there is lots of things to be afraid of out there.

COVID brought a whole level of fear into our lives. We became afraid of our own family and our neighbors. We wore masks and washed our hands until they were raw - in fear that we might catch or pass on a truly deadly virus. There is lots to be afraid of. It is why we stand behind barriers at the zoo. //// We watch the news each evening so we can plan to stay as far away as possible from the latest natural disaster or human created disaster. We stay away from the doctor's office because we're afraid to hear what the doctor might say. Some of us hide from new relationships

because we were afraid of being hurt again and some of us lie - we lie to ourselves and others to hide that which we are truly afraid - that we are inadequate - a fraud - a failure - not smart enough - not good enough. Quite frankly friends there is plenty to be afraid of - what's on your list?

There is plenty to be afraid of and quite frankly sometimes our fears keep us and those we love safe. So, what does "do not be afraid" really mean?

Maybe we are being asked to add- being unafraid – to our check list of what we think we need to do to be a good Christian. You know the list, we create in our minds, so we will be better.

I will:

Love my neighbour, love my enemy, share my stuff, stop cursing at people who cut me off in traffic, recycle and to really prove I got this Christian thing in the bag – I will not be afraid. //

I don't think this is what God is asking of us. I don't think living without fear is a character trait that we should be trying to aspire to. I think fear is something else in God's realm.

I think fear is a thief. Fear steals away love, joy and justice. Fear steals away the things God hopes for us. I think "do not be afraid" is a warning.

I think this is what Jesus is trying to get at, in our gospel reading today. Jesus is talking to the disciples, giving them some words of encouragement, he speaks to them about the ones who would speak against his way, about those who would try and take away the good news of love and joy and justice. Jesus tells his disciples to not be afraid of them. I think Jesus is telling them not to let fear of the other, steal away what they know to be true.

In past year we have watched a new movement grow, the black lives matters movement. We have watched as people of colour have not let fear steal away their rights, their dignity and their truth.

We have heard indigenous people in the midst of grief not let fear steal away their rights, their dignity and their truth.

We have heard members of the LGBTQ+ community not let fear steal away their rights, their dignity and their truth.

We have heard those for whom Mental Health is a challenge not let fear steal away their rights, their dignity and their truth.

I think Jesus is telling all of us to not let fear of the other, steal away what we know to be true. Jesus asks us all to, not be afraid of those who would try and take away the good news of love and joy and justice.

Rosa Louise McCauley Parks was an [African-American activist](#) in the [civil rights movement](#) best known for her pivotal role in the [Montgomery bus boycott](#). The [United States Congress](#) has honored her as "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement".^[1]

On December 1, 1955, in [Montgomery, Alabama](#), Parks rejected bus driver [James F. Blake](#)'s order to vacate a row of four seats in the "[colored](#)" section in favor of a white passenger, once the "white" section was filled.^[2] Parks was not the first person to resist bus segregation, but the [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#) (NAACP) believed that she was the best candidate for seeing through a court challenge after her arrest for [civil disobedience](#) in violating Alabama segregation laws, and she helped inspire the black community to boycott the Montgomery buses for over a year. The case became bogged down in the state courts, but the federal Montgomery bus lawsuit resulted in a decision that bus segregation is unconstitutional.

[Elijah Harper](#) was thrust into the history books for his actions during the federal government's attempt in 1990 to enact the Meech Lake Accord, crafted to secure Quebec's signature on the Constitution. In order for the Accord to be ratified, it required province-by-province agreement. Manitoba MLAs were asked to waive a two-day waiting period in order to speed up approval of the resolution. MLA Harper, frustrated by the fact that Aboriginal issues were not included in the Accord discussions, refused to allow rules to be waived. The iconic image of Elijah Harper, eagle feather in hand, steadfastly and quietly repeating "No" until the deadline for signing had passed, lives on.

The list of those who have stood in the face of difficult consequences, who have stood in fear, but who have stood regardless for what they believe to be true and right is long.

"Do not be afraid" Jesus says. Do not let fear of the other, steal away what you know to be true. Jesus asks us all, to not be afraid of those who would try and take away the good news of love and joy and justice.

Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Companion God, we have had our share of storms this year some of us have found our way to the other side and some are still searching for a calm shore. Wherever we are, we seek your wisdom, your guidance and your healing.

Many in our church family, our community and our world are experiencing great struggles. And so we take a moment in our time of prayers to speak of those around us who are in need of help, comfort, healing and hope. We pray for those who are sick that all may have the medical assistance they need and the gifts of healing in body mind and spirit.

We pray for those who are grieving that they may experience the comforting peace of your presence and the assurance that they do not walk alone.

We pray for those who are hungry, homeless, who are experiencing the stress and uncertainty of poverty. Give all with more resources the confidence to share generously and to speak to the powers that perpetuate unjust systems.

We pray for those who always find themselves in the last place, for those at the end of the line, for those who are left out or forgotten. Let all know the joy of being first in your eyes and give us the courage to work for change so that no one is left behind.

We pray for those who work in prisons especially for chaplains and volunteers who stand alongside those in pain, with love and grace.

We pray for those who seek to show hospitality to others in their homes and their workplaces and in the church. Help us create a world where everyone has a place and everyone belongs.

We take a moment now to pray for ourselves sharing with you prayers of concern and celebration and those prayers too deep for words. (silence)

We give you thanks that in the midst of our daily journey, to follow the way of Jesus - to love what is good and to do what is right you promised never to leave us or turn away from us. God, because you are companion and guide we will not be lost in fear. We pray always in the name of Jesus our teacher, the one who walks into the storm and the one who taught us to pray together saying

Our Father and 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
- OUR FATHER>>

Benediction

Friends let us continue the 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 boldly.

And may the
Grace of Jesus the Christ,
The Love of God and the
Companionship of the Holy Spirit be with us this day and every day.

Amen.