



Lakefield & Young's Point Pastoral Charge

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October 10, 2021

Thanksgiving Sunday

10:30 a.m.

We Gather with Praise

We welcome Beth Steinmiller, Jessica McNutt & Age Smies for leading in this morning's worship.

Prelude Suite from "The Victorian Kitchen Garden" by Paul Read performed by Age Smies (clarinet)

This suite was created as the theme music for a BBC series called "The Victorian Kitchen Garden". The series was about the recreation of a Kitchen Garden of the Victorian Era.

I. Prelude II. Spring III. Mists IV. Exotica V. Summer

This is a five-movement suite. **Please refrain from clapping until after the fifth movement.**

Greeting

I greet you this morning in the name of the One from whom every good and perfect gift comes. (James 1:17) Let us gather with thanksgiving for the gifts in our lives.

We Light the Candle

In the name of the one who separated light from darkness,
In the name of the One who created the lights in the heavens,
In the name of the One who sent us the Light,
In the name of the One who is a light for our path,
In the name of the One who asked us to let our light shine,
we share the light.

Hymn MV 18 *Lord Prepare Me*

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true;
with thanksgiving, I'll be a living
sanctuary for you.

Call to Worship

We gather to celebrate our God with laughter and joyful songs!

We gather to give thanks for our many blessings:

God we thank you for harvests of plenty.

Small seeds multiplying to feed thousands,
sweet tomatoes ripening on vines,
trees laden with abundant fruit.

Bounty overflowing,
enough for our own needs
and much to share.

God we thank you for harvests from our hearts.

Seeds of righteousness, yielding goodness and mercy.

Seeds of love, proclaiming justice and peace.

Seeds of compassion, bringing healing and renewal.

God we thank you for the holy act of harvest feast.

(Sharing bread and wine in remembrance of Christ gift,

His broken body, his blood poured out for us.

And sharing it may we truly see all creation as beloved by you.)

Let us celebrate and shout our thanksgiving

at the abundance of your beautiful creation!

Adapted from GodSpace, Christine Vine

Opening Prayer

Holy one,

We praise you for the simple gifts

on an autumn day;

the chipmunks darting in and out of the garden,

the tiny nuthatches at the feeder,

the way Thanksgiving springs to our lips

as praise lifts our hearts.

Before we ask, we are forgiven.

Before we notice, we are blessed.

Before we pray, we are already held in your love.

For the blessing of your unending grace

we give thanks, in Jesus name. Amen

Prayer of Illumination

Your word, O God, is a lamp to our feet and a light unto our path.

Open our hearts and minds to the wisdom you have for us this day. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Joel 2:21-27 p. 847

Do not fear, O soil, God will provide.

Psalm 126 p. 572

MT 6:25-33 p. 6

Do not worry what you will eat or drink.

Reflection

Do not fear, O soil. Be glad and rejoice!

Tell the soil to celebrate

and wild animals

to stop being afraid.

Grasslands are green again;

fruit trees and fig trees

are loaded with fruit.

Grapevines are covered

with grapes.

People of Zion,
celebrate in honor
of the Lord your God!

What a wonderful passage for us to contemplate as we consider Thanksgiving. Yes, it may still look a little different from years past as we continue to navigate the COVID -19 pandemic and all its protocols, but we do have much to be thankful for. And October, is a wonderful month to think about the soil rejoicing. Corn on the cob, crisp apples, squashes of all shapes and sizes. Summer berries glistening in mason jars, chutneys and salsas, and pickles ... Oh my!

All we have to do is look out the window, take a walk or a drive down a road and we see fall foliage shouting its praise, perky pumpkins proudly positioned on people's porches, colorful mums and straw bales and skies so blue you just know it's October! Everywhere you look, beauty abounds. God's amazing, abundant creation overflows. Yes, the soil is glad and rejoicing!

Rejoicing indeed, but this passage comes after some very hard times. Joel's community has faced a series of calamities. Most notably, a recent plague of locusts that has decimated the fields, threatening the people with starvation. Think back to this summer and the gypsy moth infestation and you might get a sense of the depth of anxiety this plague might have caused. Our world was disrupted by moths who destroyed foliage and dropped from the skies onto our decks and patios, but they did not consume field after field of crops. This plague meant devastation to community after community because primitive agrarian societies had little slack to help them through this kind of crisis. Neighbours might help a farmer whose crops fail, but a crisis that affects all farmers was too much. I can only imagine the anxiety, the worry that must have invaded people's hearts.

Worry and anxiety. Familiar adversaries in the lives of people no matter the era. In March of this year, Statistics Canada reported that 1 in 5 Canadians screened positive for depression, anxiety or post traumatic stress disorder. Not surprising in the midst of the third wave of a global pandemic. But the truth is, we have been anxious and worried long before the pandemic.

I worry all the time. I worry whether my sermon will touch people's hearts. I worry that my prayers reflect the reality of people's lives and challenge us to live differently. I worry about whether people like me. Or respect me. I worry about whether my kids will find work that gives them a sense of purpose and will help them make the world a better place. I worry about whether they will find a love so deep and wide that will carry them through all the plagues that life is sure to send their way. I worry about time, and family, and the amount of work that gets left undone each and every day, and about the people that I journey with through sickness, tragedy, despair, grief. I worry about relationships – so many relationships. I worry about you, all of you and the things going on in your lives. I worry about the Church – The

United Church and all the churches. I worry whether the new cookie recipe I just baked will taste good. And sometimes, I worry so much that I cannot sleep at night. And I am so thankful that I do not have to worry about the basic necessities of life: food, a roof over my head, warm clothes for the onset of winter. Those are big worries. Locust plague and crops destroyed kinds of worries. I know that my worries are legitimate and profound, and also sometimes ridiculous and trivial. And I also know that all that worrying gets me nowhere. In fact, they rob me of the joy to be found in the moment.

Our scripture passages this morning reflect these worries. Do not fear says Joel. Do not worry says Matthew. And I don't think they are telling us to ignore the things that niggle the corners of our hearts and minds. I don't think they are suggesting we live a cavalier life, or don't prepare, or blindly trust that everything will be ok. The Greek word used in the book of Matthew means *be preoccupied with* or *be absorbed by*. And I think that holds the key for us. Yes, the worry is always there. Yes, there is much to fear, much to be anxious about. But we cannot allow ourselves or each other to be absorbed by our worry. We can do that because we have each other. This community is a big part of how we get through the big stuff of life. We can do that because of our faith in the One who knows us, and loves us, and watches over us and provides for us – no matter what. Joel says “Do not fear” not because all was well in his world but because of who God is. Without a doubt, my worries are small, and even when they aren't they don't seem to paralyze me as they do others. Sometimes, my worries are all of my own making! Still, whether real or real to me, even my small worries get in the way of my living in the moment. They take away from my fully experiencing and appreciating what is right in front of me.

It is Thanksgiving. And gratitude goes a long way to dispelling anxiety. Or maybe just easing it, even temporarily. It is important to remember that we are thankful not just for the blessings we have received, the blessings of health and family, friends and the beauty of creation, for prosperity and church. But we are also thankful when times are tough because we trust in the promise that God is there. Our United Church Creed reminds us that in life – the fullness of life with all its blessings and concerns, in death – the finality and suddenness of death, in life beyond death – the mystery that we do not yet comprehend, we are not alone. Thanks be to God!

When Jesus asks us to consider the lilies, he is not asking us to cast off our worries. He is not asking us to nonchalantly shrug away those things that rest heavy in our hearts. The Greek word for “consider” means “to look carefully at” or “closely examine.” This is not a lesson of subtraction, a means of erasing the worry and the real troubles facing us or our world. This is an invitation to trust deeply. To know that no matter what, worry or no worry, that we can rest in the sure and certain confidence that we are not alone, and that God will somehow bring new life out of calamity. These scriptures remind us of what God has already done in the world and in our lives. It reminds us that as we trust in God, somehow it always works out. That the soil will rejoice once more.

Maybe, in the end, all we really need to do is listen to Jesus. Consider the lilies, which can also be translated as the wild flowers. Perhaps we need only step outside, look at the purple asters, the golden rod, the brilliant sumac, walk past those laden front porches, ponder those perky pumpkins, taste the sweet, tart flavour of an apple, gaze at that October blue sky, the still green grass, the now crimson trees - to be reminded of the gift Jesus offers now in pointing to God's tender care for all that is.

And so these words are ours this Thanksgiving - urging us to let go of the worry - and to entrust whatever it is that would rob our lives of peace and joy - urging us to finally give it all back to God who gives us all of that for which we give thanks in the first place.

Hear once more these words from Joel:

Do not fear, O soil;
 be glad and rejoice,
 for the Lord has done great things!
Do not fear, you animals of the field,
 for the pastures of the wilderness are green;
the tree bears its fruit,
 the fig tree and vine give their full yield.
O children of Zion, be glad
 and rejoice in the Lord your God.

<http://words.dancingwiththeword.com/2012/11/no-more-worries.html>

Hymn **VU 518** *As Those of Old*

Pastoral Prayer

Creator,

For all of our five senses that perceive creation around us.

We are grateful

For the treasure of loved ones who encourage us to be who we are.

We are grateful

For the eyes of faith, for seeing and believing in the presence of God.

We are grateful

For the messengers of God- people, events, written or spoken word- that came to us at just the right time and helped us to grow.

We are grateful

For God calling us to work with our gifts, grateful that we can be of service to others.

We are grateful

That we have the basic necessities of life,

and the means and the ability to hear the cries of the poor and respond to them.

We are grateful

For the promise of your abiding presence to those who need it.

We are grateful.

For the miracle of healing –

of hearts, minds and bodies, and for acceptance of the finitude of life.

We are grateful.

For the gift of this day, and all its many blessings,

We are grateful

Fill our hearts with gratitude as we name in the silence the blessings and challenges that rest on our hearts . . .

Silence

Creator, we are grateful that we can turn to you with our joys and our concerns.

Our voices resound in a chorus of praise in the familiar words of the Christ ...

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, 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.

Remembering the Offering

God who has given us so much,

here and now we offer our gifts

in thanksgiving for what we have been given.

May our hearts rejoice in the opportunity to share your gifts with the world.

Amen

Extinguish the Candle

Benediction

With heart and hands and voices,

we thank God for wondrous things.
We go from here so filled with the love of God
that all the world feels the welcome of it.
For the blessing and the love and the peace of God
goes with us, now and evermore.

Robin Wardlaw, Gathering Pentecost 2, 2021

Sung Benediction MV 216

REFRAIN: Wherever you may go, I will follow, and your people shall be my people too.
Wherever you may go, I will follow, for I would be faithful, loyal and true.
Say the word and I will stay, I will never go away,
we will travel side by side and God's love will be our guide. REFRAIN
From beginning to the end I will always be your friend,
when you need me I'll be there, you can trust my faithful care. REFRAIN

Thank you to Jessica McNutt and Age Smies for blessing us with their talents.

Postlude "Stranger On the Shore" by Acker Bilk

What's happening at Lakefield United Church?

Masks, physical distancing and proof of vaccination required to enter the building. Please make an appointment before coming to visit staff.

2021 Summit on Aging Thursday October 28, 2021 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Age Friendly Peterborough (AFP) in partnership with Community Care Lakefield are organizing this annual Summit on Aging. Join virtually from the comfort of home, or in-person at Lakefield United Church.

Lakefield In-person event: Lakefield United Church (auditorium)

Register at Community Care Lakefield, 705 652 8655

Virtual event: register between September 21 – October 21 at www.peterborough.ca/aging

All Saints Day/New Member Service Sunday October 31, 2021 10:30 a.m.

On this Sunday we will be welcoming new members into our congregation by transfer and profession of faith.

Birthdays: Best wishes to Pam Feilders and all who are celebrating a birthday this week.

Anniversaries: Congratulations to Robin & Barb Hennessey all who are celebrating a wedding anniversary this week.