



UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA MELFORT ETHELTON PASTORAL CHARGE

Office: (306) 752-2288 Email: melfortuc@sasktel.net

Website: www.melfortunitedchurch.com

Worship Time: 10:30 AM

Ministers: All of us

Worship Leader: Marion Heavin

Music: Jodi Allen Corbett

Music Director: Mavis Peters

Office Administrator: Mavis Busby

Caretaker: Faye Greier

Today's Greeter:

Scripture Reader:

ORDER OF WORSHIP

February 28th, 2021

Lent 2

WE GATHER AS A COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

As we gather for worship today we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 Territory. We honour the Cree and Métis people for whom this place has been a homeland for thousands of years. We respect the sacredness of our home and the ground on which we walk and we are grateful to gather here in peace and hope.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, ANNIVERSARIES & CONCERNS:

CALL TO WORSHIP:

One: We who fear the marvels of creation

All: have come to praise the Creator.

One: Our Creator does not hide from the hardship and suffering of our world.

All: In the midst of suffering, our Creator finds ways to satisfy the hungry and provide deliverance to the oppressed.

One: From generation to generation,

**All: we come to celebrate our Creator,
who seeks goodness for all creation.**

OPENING PRAYER: *(in unison)*

Blessed Creator,
from generation to generation,
we bless your holy name,
and marvel at the magnificent things that you have done.
We offer you our gratitude and praise through today's
worship,
may it please you.

We ask that your Holy Spirit intercede on our behalf,
when we struggle to articulate how much you truly mean to us,
and how grateful we are for this time together. Amen.

HYMN (MV 161) *"I Have Called You by Your Name"*

PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE: *(in unison)*

Creator God,
Forgive us for the many ways we try to profit by the
world's standards: seeking fame over pride, wealth
over integrity, comfort over justice.
Hold us to a higher standard where we weigh hope
over fear, love over indifference and divine things
over human things. Have mercy on us, we ask.
In Jesus's name, Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE:

Remember, God's goodness is forever, and God's mercies
will always endure.

PRAYER RESPONSE (MV 147)

"God, Help Us to Treasure"

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD TO US

SPECIAL MUSIC:

"God Help the Outcasts" - Menken/Schwartz
- Live performance by Mavis Peters and Jodi Allen Corbett

MINUTE FOR MISSION:

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

HEBREW READING:

*For Home Reading:
Review from Feb 7, 2021*

EPISTLE READING:

GOSPEL READING:

GENESIS 17:1-7

The covenant between Abram, Sarai, and God.

ROMANS 5:1-5

God's promise rests on grace and faith.

MARK 8:31-38

Those who lose their life for the gospel will save it.

SERMON: Reflection: Soaring With Eagles While Living With Turkeys

Thank you to Rev. Beth W. Johnston of Bridging Waters Pastoral Charge who has graciously allowed us to share her sermon this morning.

There is a poster I have seen which depicts a tom turkey and the caption, "It's hard to soar with eagles when you live with a bunch of turkeys!" It's supposed to be a joke, but we know its truth! It **IS** hard to counteract negativity when you are trying your hardest to be positive. It's hard to soar when others are dragging you down!

My father often spoke of his fascination with the bald eagles that nested near the farm, at home on PEI. When they spotted something good to eat on the ground, they would swoop down, and without missing a wing beat, grasp with their large talons the tasty morsel (usually a baby pig that had died) and effortlessly become airborne once again. Raptors can also snag a moving animal.

In Greek mythology, Icarus, and his father Daedalus were imprisoned on the island of Crete. To help his son escape, Daedalus fashioned a pair of wings for the boy out of wax and feathers and warned him not to fly too close to the sun. Ignoring his father's warning, as sons do from time to time, he did fly too close to the sun, the wax was melted and he fell into the sea and drowned. The moral of that story could simply be, "listen to your father!" or it could have more to do with human ego and pride. It's not good to boast when doing something that is not usually accomplished by mere mortals!

Since there have been human beings, those human beings have envied the birds, and their ability to escape gravity and soar

over the earth. In the third decade of the 21st century, we take airplanes, of all sizes, and even spaceships, for granted but there was a time when those things were only a seemingly impossible dream that lived in the hearts of some inventors. Alexander Graham Bell, born in Scotland is known not only of his invention of the telephone but also for his innovations in heavier than air flying machines. After this pandemic is over, I suggest that you go to Baddeck, on the Bras d'Or Lakes of Cape Breton, NS and visit his museum! I'm sure Christine or Karen would be happy to tell you all about Baddeck's adopted son! It wasn't just the Wright brothers!

Every child that has fallen out of a tree, or off of a roof, knows about gravity. Every child who donned a Superman cape knows that **THEY DON'T WORK!** While they had no name for it, people in Isaiah's time knew the basic laws of physics! Stuff falls down and cannot remain suspended in the air! Even after childhood is long behind us, we adults can look at eagles, hummingbirds and flocks of Canada Geese on their twice yearly migration and marvel at that freedom, that power and that grace.

Throughout history, there have been times when whole groups of people needed to be reminded that they could have hope, that they could soar. In times of trouble and great despair the prophets spoke to such people with words and images of hope.

Isaiah 40 marks a turning point in that great book. Scholars agree that the previous chapters were written by a different person, at a different time. Between the closing verses of Isaiah 39 and the first verses of Isaiah 40, something drastic happened.

There are various events in more recent history that are impossible to "get behind". The events of 9/11 are the most obvious. In the middle of ever changing COVID restrictions, it is hard to tell if we will ever be back to "normal" or if once all restrictions are lifted, life will be irreparably changed.

The drastic event that is behind the scenes, between Isaiah 30 and Isaiah 40 is called "the Exile". The situation in which the second writer called Isaiah lived, is very important. In the recent past, the Babylonians had defeated Israel and many of the people were carried off into captivity. Taken captive in three different "waves", the brightest and best of the people – the leadership – ended up in Babylon. They were exiles. They were refugees.

Not only had their God let them down and abandoned them in their time of need, it was obvious that the god of the Babylonians was

stronger, or they would not have won! While our Bible gives a picture of their lives as one of complete despair, Babylonian records, show that it was not as bad as we might imagine. For a number of reasons, the Babylonian king did not want to turn them into slaves, and it seems they were allowed to live as a group in certain areas. One of the things that became important to them was to preserve their identity by continuing some of their unique practices, such as dietary laws and male circumcision.

This writer named Isaiah in reminding them of the great tradition from which they have come. The writer is reminding them that they have no need to despair. The God of Creation had **NOT** abandoned them. The God of their ancestors had **NOT** abandoned them. The God who led them out of Egypt, through the wilderness and into the land of promise, had **NOT** abandoned them. Their God was **NOT** wandering around the ruins of their beloved city pining for people to raise their voices in prayer and holy song. This God **WAS WITH** them, **EVEN** in Exile.

When I was in high school, a young man from BC, who had lost a leg to bone cancer, dipped his artificial leg in the Atlantic Ocean and headed for BC with the goal of raising money for cancer research. Terry Fox's personal Marathon of Hope ended just outside of Thunder Bay, ON **BUT** in a way, it has never ended. Every year, children take part in annual runs, and these are child of parents who weren't even born in 1980. His dream "somewhere the hurting must stop" spurs us on!

A few months ago, a British war veteran, approaching his hundredth birthday, wanted to raise a few thousand pounds for Britain's National Health Service, as a way of thanking them for their work treating those who were affected by the COVID epidemic. He accepted the challenge to walk 100 laps of the garden at his retirement home. As he came closer and closer to his goal, he received more and more media attention. When his trek ended, he was given an honour guard and the title of Honorary Colonel of a military college. At the end of his trek his total raised was almost 45M £. In one of his many interviews, he spoke of his wartime service and noted that there would be better days ahead. Capt. Sir Tom Moore was knighted by the Queen for his extraordinary service. He died recently of COVID. Even as I heard the news of his death, I could also hear the words of Dame Vera Lynn as she sang of hope

in a very dark time in her country's history. "There'll be bluebirds over the white cliffs of Dover," and "We'll meet again".

On her 103rd birthday when her nation was living in fear, not of bombs falling from the sky, but of a deadly virus they could not see, she advised her fellow Britons to "find moments of joy." She died last June but her voice of hope will never be silenced as long as people continue to hear the music, and take the words to heart.

Sometimes we forget that we are not the first people to go through difficult times, whether it be a series of personal difficulties, or a pandemic such as the one ravaging the world as we speak. Sometimes we forget to hear the words of hope that in spite of what seem like impossible odds, the faithful can persevere and overcome.

One day this will be behind us and like Peter's mother-in-law, we will be freed for service.

LISTEN, sometimes there is so much clatter that we cannot hear the eagle's cry, let alone the songs of the Spring peepers or the chirping of songbirds. Too often the "anti this" and the "anti that" voices seem to really get us down and distract us from our goal of healing and wellness.

Have you not heard, can you not see, the eagles are soaring-wouldn't you like to soar with them! Amen!

SPECIAL MUSIC (VU P-808) "*On Eagle Wings*" - Psalm 91
- Performed by Ryan, Rachele, Alexis & Will Heavin

OUR RESPONSE

OFFERING:

(Please use the offering box at the front/back of the Sanctuary as you exit. Thank you!)

OFFERTORY HYMN (VU 538)

"For the Gift of Creation"
“

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (in unison)

**May these gifts build on the legacy that we
will leave for future generations.**

**May ours be a legacy of justice, hope, faith and,
most importantly, love. Amen.**

**May the Triune love of the Creator, Redeemer and
Sustainer, Mother, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and always.**

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE:

Loving parent, hoping against hope, we come to you in prayer,
expecting that you will use our desires to call into existence things
that do not yet exist in our world, but are plentiful in yours.

We dream of a just peace in places stricken
by oppression and violence...

We dream of loving-kindness among people
afflicted by prejudice and hate...

We dream of abundant life in communities
Suffering from generational trauma...

We dream of healing mercies in people living
with devastating illness...

We dream of your reign here on earth, as it is in heaven.

And so, with our siblings and cousins in the faith, from
generation to generation, we join in the prayer that Jesus taught...

THE LORD'S PRAYER

SENDING FORTH

HYMN (VU 567) *"Will you come and follow me"*

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING:

Love God in all things equally.

For God is equally near to all creatures.

And among these creatures God does not love any
one person more than any other.

God is all and is one.

All things become nothing but God.

Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things.

If we spent enough time with the tiniest creature

– even a caterpillar –

we would never need sermons.

So full of God is every creature.

Go and spend time in God's Creation

and in the amazing presence of God in all things.

CHORAL BLESSING (MV 214)

“May God’s Sheltering Wings”

PRAYER RESOURCES:

**Seasons of the Spirit – Seasons FUSION Lent Easter 2021; The United Church of Canada Lent Easter 2021, Year B, Gathering Resources for Worship Planners. Used with permission*

NEXT WEEK’S (March 7, 2021) READINGS

*Exodus 20:1-17
1 Corinthians 1:18-25
John 2:13-22*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THIS WEEK AT MELFORT UNITED CHURCH

Tuesday, March 3rd @ 4:40 pm – Worship Committee

Pastoral Care - Contact Information

Should you need emergency pastoral care please call Ron Nielsen
@ 306-921-7794 or 306-752-4119.

Transfer or Applying for Membership

If you wish to transfer or apply for membership in our church, please contact the church office or a member of the Membership Committee.

Changes to Contact Information

If you have changed your address or phone number, please advise the Church Office so that we can keep your information current. Thank you!

FundScrip for February

The FundScrip deadline for February is Thursday, February 25th. It will be ready for pickup on Thursday, March 4th.

New Office Hours – January 2021

Starting January 5th, 2021 the new office hours are
Tuesday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Stewardship Seconds

Dominion belongs to God. To us is given the blessing and privilege of being good stewards of God’s dominion.