

**Full Service Text:
Sunday October 11th , 2020
Thanksgiving Sunday
Music: Yuki**

Gathering

Introit: MV 18, Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary x 2

Welcome and Announcements

- from announcement sheet (these announcements can be found in service video or in the Friday Forecast e-mail from the church. To subscribe to e-mail news from the church please contact the church office.

- If you are planning on joining us for in-person worship please watch after the service for a special recorded announcement to help you know what to expect when you arrive.

- For all who are worshiping in person, please remember that following local health unit guidelines we will not be singing our hymns today. I invite you to join me in the spiritual practice of silence or to sing internally, as we rest in the hymns, allowing the music and the words to hold us, bless us, and draw us together in praise

Recognition of Traditional Territory

- As we gather for worship we remember that for thousands of years, Indigenous people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. As we worship today, we recognize that we are all treaty people. We are part of Saugeen Treaty 45 ½ and we are gathered on the tradition territory of the Haudensaunee, Ojibway, Anishnabek, and Metis people. We acknowledge the ongoing pain and broken relationship that has come with colonization. We pray that God may lead us in working towards building right relationships.

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Centring Prayer – Micol

God-of-All,

We have set aside this day of thanksgiving,

because we sometimes have difficulty remembering

to live our thanks-giving.
So—thank you,
for everything!
Open our hearts to realize
where thanks need to be given.
Open our spirits to share the words.
Open our lives to be your love.
As disciples of Jesus, we ask this.
May it be so. Amen.

- Written by Richard Bott, Vancouver, B.C., **Gathering**, Pentecost 2 2020, page 46. Used with Permission.

Hymn: VU 236, Now Thank We All Our God

Reflecting

Minute for Mission:

Jenn Olivero

Today's Minute for Mission can be found at:

https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/minutes_for_mission_2020_pdf.pdf

Scripture: Luke 17:11-19

Jenn Olivero

Sermon: From Thanksgiving to Thankful Living

Rev. Micol Cottrell

Last month at an online meeting of our regional council executive our president, Gary Clark, read to us this line from Psalm 81: "I would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you." He then asked us to share with one another where we experienced honey from the rock – where we experience joy and nourishment during this time. The conversation turned out to be a wonderful moment of giving thanks. In the midst of all of the disruption and difficulty of this pandemic we were being asked to think about the blessings. We took turns sharing our stories of honey from the rock. One person shared the joy of Sunday supper with family spread across the country as they ate together online. A couple of people shared thankfulness for a slower pace that allowed them to spend more time with their children. Jessica and I are

both on the executive and we shared the joy of co-leading worship together over the first six months of this pandemic – the first time we were able to do this. Our sharing reminded us that even during these trying times God has been and continues to be blessing us during this time.

As Jesus walks with his followers towards the town ten people with skin conditions call out to him from a distance. “Heal us.” It is a stance they are used to, standing at a distance begging for help. In Jesus’ time people who had, what the bible translates as leprosy and which is actually any number of skin conditions, were outcasts. Those labeled as unclean because of skin disease were considered untouchable. They were removed from society and couldn’t enter the towns. It was written into the laws of scripture. Colonies of these people often lived outside of the towns where they would beg for the necessities of life. If a person was fortunate enough to have the skin condition heal itself they could go to the priests who would determine if they were clean and able to enter society again. Being labeled as a leper was more than just having to live with a devastating disease, it meant being treated with fear and rejection, it meant being an outcast.

“Heal us,” the ten call out. Jesus responds by telling them to go see the priest and as they go they are healed. Seeing this, one of them, a Samaritan, turns and runs towards Jesus praising God. She falls to Jesus' feet and says “thank you.” We don't hear anything else about the other nine.

I have to say, when I think about where I would be in this story if I were one of the ten, I don’t think I would be the one running back to Jesus. I don't think the other nine characters in this story are ungrateful. Who can blame them for what they do? Being healed for them is salvation. Being healed and determined to be clean means they can

go home. They can see their family and their friends. They can go back to work and provide for their loved ones. Life has been restored for them. This is salvation for them – they are saved from being outcasts and untouchable. I think I would be with the nine, running home with joy.

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Today is a special holiday weekend in our culture – it's Thanksgiving. Like so much in our lives right now Thanksgiving for many of us has been disrupted. Maybe you chose not to have a family get together or maybe it looks different this year. Maybe this year feels off and like so many others you are just waiting for 2020 to end as you think back on all the difficult moments this year has entailed. I have to say, I'm one of these people. Maybe you're going to mark Thanksgiving in a different way, an online dinner or games with friends or family. Some of us will think back to better Thanksgivings with a mixture of sadness and gratitude for what was. Maybe you'll be thinking about someone who is no longer with you. We are meeting Thanksgiving in many different ways this year.

At the heart of Thanksgiving is an invitation to slow down and enter into gratitude. And how many other days of the year tell us to take the day to be thankful?

The truth is, I know it because I live it, it can be easy to rush through life or to get overwhelmed by the struggles and losses. When life is good time seems to go too quickly. In the difficult times we can become overwhelmed by the pain that we miss everything else.

The nine who do not return in today's Gospel reading are not ungrateful. They are happy. They are so excited that they rush – it's not that they aren't thankful for what Jesus did they just want to go home.

Our scripture today invites us to slow down and enter into the sacred act of giving thanks to God. The medieval mystic, monk, and minister Meister Eckhart wrote “if the only prayer you said in your life was, 'thank you,' that would be enough.” Our faith invites us to slow down, be present to the moment and all that it brings, and to give thanks. This doesn't mean being delusional and ignoring the problems, injustices, and pains of living. The difficulty of thanksgiving is that there are times where we may not feel like giving thanks.

By slowing down, focusing on the present moment, and giving thanks, in good times and bad, we are reconnected to the Sacred Source, to the blessings, beauty, and bounty of creation. From this sacred awareness we are then empowered and made bold to be the healing hands of Christ in this place. From this Holy empowerment we can delve into our pain and the aching of others and join in the God-given, communal, act of healing. Thanksgiving leads us in the path of hope and love. Thanksgiving leads us to thankful living.

This act of being present and offering thanksgiving is a holy art, a spiritual practice. And like all spiritual practices, it takes some work and diligence. Gratitude is like a muscle that we need to use in order for it to work fully. For some the art of thanksgiving is starting or ending each day by saying a thanksgiving prayer – it can be as simple pausing and saying the words “thank you.” For others it is saying grace at each meal. Some people have bells that go off in their house – a clock, or a watch, or a meditation timer – and each time they hear that sound they can take a couple of good breaths, look around, and say to God “thank you.” If you work at a computer all day you can use that moment of the computer booting up or shutting down. For others it may be lighting a special candle, meditating, a cup of coffee in the morning, or sharing a cup of tea and watching the sunset. Meister Eckhart knew well that the very simple acts of thanksgiving opens us up to the all abundant presence of God. It is what turns the one healed person around, leads

her to run up to Jesus and take the time to say “thank you” before she runs to the priest so she too can go home.

God provides us honey, even from the rock. Blessings find us each and every day. May gratitude become a spiritual practice that opens us to God’s presence and to the richness of life. May we feel God’s love flowing through us and leading us to be a healing presence in this world. Amen. Thanks be to God.

Responding

Gift of Music “Great Is Thy Faithfulness”

Bob Blackmore

Prayers of the People

God, the beginning and end of all things,
in your providence and care
you watch unceasingly over all creation;
we offer our prayers
that in us and in all your people your will may be done,
according to your wise and loving purpose in Christ our Lord.

We pray for all through whom we receive sustenance and life;
for farmers and agricultural workers,
for packers, distributors and company boards;
as you have so ordered our life that we depend upon each other,
enable us by your grace to seek the well-being of others before our own.

We pray for all engaged in research to safeguard crops against disease,
and to produce abundant life among those who hunger
and whose lives are at risk.
Prosper the work of their hands
and the searching of their minds,
that their labour may be for the welfare of all.

We pray for governments and aid agencies,
and those areas of the world where there is disaster, drought
and starvation.

By the grace of your Spirit,
touch our hearts
and the hearts of all who live in comfortable plenty,
and make us wise stewards of your gifts.

We pray for those who are ill,
remembering those in hospital and nursing homes
those who are struggling with COVID-19 and other diagnoses
and all who are known to us.
We pray for all who care for them.
Give skill and understanding
to all who work for their well-being.

We remember those who have died,
whom we entrust to your eternal love
in the hope of resurrection to new life.

We offer ourselves and the gifts of our time, talents, and treasures
that we have brought this day to your service,
asking that by the Spirit at work in us
others may receive a rich harvest of love and joy and peace.

O God,
presider over the affairs of persons and nations,
move us to thanksgiving,
not because of what we have, but because of whose we are;
not because of present blessings,
but because of your continuing providence;
not because of the moment,
but because of the lifetime of relationship with you.
Let our thanksgiving be expressed
not only in feasting but in sharing;
not only in passive enjoyment but in active service;
not only in annual observance but in daily attitude.
And because your concern for wholesome living
embraces every person upon the earth,
we pray for ourselves and for others in the silence of our hearts...

God of grace,
as you are ever at work in your creation,
so fulfil your wise and loving purpose in us
and in all for whom we pray,
that with them and in all that you have made,
your glory may be revealed
and the whole earth give praise to you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who taught us how to pray saying together:

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.

Announcement:

Following our blessing and musical benediction our ushers will help lead you out of the sanctuary. They will invite those at the back of the sanctuary to exit first. We ask that as you leave you are mindful of not blocking doors, sidewalks, or access to the parking lot and that you continue to keep safe distance of 2 meters.

Hymn: “Thanks-giving Days”, by Miriam Therese Winters (Tune VU 81)

Blessing

Musical Benediction: Go My Friends In Grace by David Wight

Postlude

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