

Sunday 03 May 2020 – Easter 4



Land Acknowledgement

We gather here mindful of the many who, for millennia, have called this valley home or depended on its trails for safe passage. We know this community as Fernie; it is also the unceded territory of the Ktunaxa people. May we be good and gracious guests of this corner of Creation.

Lighting the Christ Candle

As the days lengthen and the shadows recede, may the light of this candle chase away the darkness. May this light remind us of who we are and whose we are during this season of Easter and always. AMEN

Andrea Brennan, Fernie, BC

Call to Worship

From Gathering

ONE: From the comfort of our homes,
we gather to worship.

We gather virtually in a place of serenity,
warmth and community.

ALL: Here we seek the connection to the Divine.

ONE: For generations people have found
this sanctuary to be sacred space.

ALL: We, too, yearn for holy mystery in our lives.

Praise be!

ONE: Praise be! Let us worship together!

Laura Turnbull, Penticton, BC

Opening Prayer

COVID-19 Prayer from Moderator Richard Bott

In this time of COVID-19, we pray:
When we aren't sure, God, help us be calm;
when information comes from all sides, correct and not,
help us to discern;
when fear makes it hard to breathe,
and anxiety seems to be the order of the day,
slow us down, God;
help us to reach out with our hearts,
when we can't touch with our hands;
help us to be socially connected,
when we have to be socially distant;
help us to love as perfectly as we can,
knowing that "perfect love casts out all fear."
For the doctors, we pray,
for the nurses, we pray,
for the technicians and the janitors and the aides and the caregivers,
we pray,
for the researchers and theorists, the epidemiologists and
investigators,
for those who are sick, and those who are grieving, we pray,
for all who are affected, all around the world...
we pray for safety, for health, for wholeness.
May we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty,
clothe the naked and house those without homes;
may we walk with those who feel they are alone,
and may we do all that we can to heal
the sick—
in spite of the epidemic, in spite of the fear.
Help us, O God, that we might help each other.
In the love of the Creator,
in the name of the Healer,
in the life of the Holy Spirit that is in all and with all, we pray.
May it be so.

Right Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator of the United Church of Canada

VU 747 – The Lord's My Shepherd

The Lord's my Shep-herd, I'll not want,
he makes me down to lie
in pas-tures green he leadeth me,
the qui-et wa-ters by.

My soul he doth re-store a-gain,
and me to walk doth make
with-in the paths of right-eous-ness,
even for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's darke vale,
yet will I fear no ill,
for thou art with me;
and thy rod and staff me com-fort still.

My ta-ble thou hast fur-nish-ed
in pres-ence of my foes,
my head thou dost with oil anoint
and my cup o-ver-flows.

Good-ness and mer-cy all my life
shall sure-ly follow me,
and in God's house for ev-er-more
my dwell-ing place shall be.

Prayer of Illumination

ONE: You have been called to tell

the Good News of Jesus Christ,

ALL: And we will do so enthusiastically.

ONE: The Word of God will be read

and reflected on:

ALL: Good News for the varied patterns of life.

ONE: The stories of Jesus will be received

in the midst of all we are facing in this life;

ALL: Good News for all to enjoy and to feel support.

ONE: The parables of Jesus will show the way of
justice and integrity.

ALL: Good news to strengthen and encourage.

ONE: The death-shattering life of Jesus will burst forth;

ALL: Good news when we need heart-filled hope.

ONE: Now let us receive the Word of God.

David Sparks, Summerland, BC

READINGS FOR THE DAY

God offer to us, through prophets and apostles, words of life which in faith become the Living Word.

Let us listen for that Word.

The Proclamation of the Word

Acts 2.42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Life among the Believers

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

'Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

"He was not abandoned to Hades,
nor did his flesh experience corruption."

This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

Psalm 23

The Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

1 Peter 2.19-25

For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

'He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.'

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

John 10.1-10

Jesus the Good Shepherd

'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

HYMN – VU 559 v.1-2 – Come, O Fount of Every Blessing

Come, O Fount of ev-ery bless-ing,
tune my heart to sing your grace;
streams to mer-cy, nev-er ceas-ing
call foor song of end-less praise.
Teach me some me-lo-dious son-net,
sung by flam-ing tongues a-bove.
Praise the mount, I'm fixed up-on it,
mount of God's un-fail-ing love.

Here I pause in my so-journ-ing,
giv-ing thanks for hav-ing come,
come to trust, at ev-ery turn-ing,
God will guide me safe-ly home.
Je-sus sought me when a strang-er,
wan-dering from the fold of God,
came to res-cue me from dan-ger,
pre-cious pres-ence, prec-ious blood.

Sermon: The Reverend Andrea L. Brennan

WE RESPOND IN GIVING AND GRATITUDE

Our Church Tithes and Offerings

Call to Offering

from Gathering

Making an offering is a radical act, in response to Jesus radical offering. But when we think of offering, is it just money? The money is vital but it is a symbol, too, for intentional care, for daring to be inclusive, for daring to strive to reach beyond discrimination, sexism, racism and homophobia. For Jesus did not follow what was popular, do what he was told to do; but rather, he lived with integrity, daring to question the authorities. May our discipleship, too, be more than following, but imitate Jesus offering by radically doing what is right and loving. We give.

David Lander, Grafton, ON

Prayer of Dedication

In gratitude and humble trust we bring our best today
to serve your cause and share your love with all along life's way.
O God, who gave yourself to us in Jesus Christ, your Son,
teach us to give ourselves each day until life's work is done.

Hymn of Thanksgiving

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.
Praise God all creatures high and low
Give thanks to God in love made known
Creator, Word and Spirit one!

A Statement of Faith

You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous,
good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.

You have revealed and provided
your love for us in Jesus Christ,
who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal; you overcome death.

You are our God. We worship you.

From A New Zealand Prayer Book

Prayers of the People

Petition and **Response:**

God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love**

God of love and mercy, be with us as we gather in these uncertain times.
Calm our minds, give us the deep peace we seek as we yearn to know you.
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

Bless all those front line workers; hospital, health unit, police, ambulance and EMT's; grocery clerks, pharmacists and their assistants who are testing their own health that they may keep us safe, fed and supported.
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

Bless all those in the Elk Valley who care for our corner of creation.
For our Mayor, Ange; our Premier, John; and our Prime Minister, Justin.
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

Bless all those who lead us in small and large ways.
For our Conference Minister Kathy, our Regional Minister Treena, and for our Moderator, Richard. For our Bishop Lynne, our Regional Dean Yme, and for our Primate, Linda.
For the Pacific Mountain Region, for the United Church of Canada.
For the Diocese of Kootenay, for the Anglican Church of Canada
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

Bless and protect those who are on our hearts today.
Who's names we offer to you silently or aloud --
PAUSE
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

Be with those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and are separated from their families. We give thanks for those who have recovered from the virus. We pray that for those whom cure is not possible, that their death may be merciful, swift and gentle.
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

God of Mercy be with those who will die this day. Draw them into your arms and let them know they have found a home with you.
God, as we fear – **Open our hearts to love.**

**Joining our prayers and praises together,
Let us pray in the way our Saviour taught us.**

Our Father, who art in heaven,
Hallowed by 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
For thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory,
For ever and ever. AMEN

VU 271 – There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

There's a wide-ness in God's mer-cy
like the wide-ness of the sea;
there is no place where earth's fail-ings
have such gra-cious judge-ment given.

There is no place where earth's sor-rows
are more felt than up in heaven;
there is no place where earth's fail-ings
have such gra-cious judge-ment given.

MINUTE FOR MISSION – Mary Elson
Past Overseas Personnel: Caroline Macdonald

Commissioning

From Gathering

ONE: Christ is risen...
ALL: and the Christ keeps on rising.
ONE: The drama is not concluded...
ALL: It has become our own.
ONE: We respond as doers of the Word...
ALL: We know that God goes with us.
ONE: Return to the world, seeking to be
instruments of God's music of love.
Go, seek God's goodness
in everything and in everyone.
Go, be God's goodness, in Christ's name.
Amen. Alleluia!

George Allan, Chatham, ON

Extinguishing the Christ Candle

As we prepare to continue with our day
we extinguish our candles, knowing
we will be together again, soon.

SENDING HYMN – MV90 Don't Be Afraid

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
and I have promised, promised to be always near.

Credits: The liturgy today has been compiled with resources from Gathering: Lent to Easter, Year A – 2020, Celebrate God's Presence and Voices United. Candle lighting Liturgy written by Reverend Andrea Brennan. Statement of Faith from A New Zealand Prayer Book.