

St. Andrew's United Church (Williams Lake) – October 11, 2020
Sunday Worship – Thanksgiving Sunday

“Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel
to say your nightly prayer.”

Maya Angelou

Welcome

Welcome to the gathering of the family of Jesus. We gather on lands walked for thousands of years by people of the First Nations. We acknowledge the history, culture, and spirituality of the Secwépemc (Shuswap) People. We also honour the heritage and gifts of the Métis people. We remember our responsibility as persons who inhabit this land alongside our First Nations and Métis sisters and brothers. May we live the respect that our words offer.

In the name of Jesus, who is alive in each of us, peace to you.
And also with you.

We light a candle when we gather – a visible sign of God's presence, if you have a candle where you are, please join me as I light the candle.

Hymn – Jesus, remember me

VU 148

Jesus, remember me when you come in-to your kingdom.
Jesus, remember me when you come in-to your kingdom.

Call to Worship

**The people respond: We praise you, O God!*

One: God of the rivers, you bring water to our communities
that quenches our thirst and soaks our fields.

All: We praise you, O God.

One: God of the land, you nourish the soil and grow life
in trees and grasses and gardens.

All: We praise you, O God.

One: God of the harvest, you bring forth bounty from the
earth and share with us.

All: We praise you, O God.

One: God of community, you call on us to share with one
another, to make room at our table, to be grateful.

All: We praise you, O God.

One: We give thanks!

All: We praise you, O God!

Let us sing together with joy...

Hymn – Rejoice in the Lord Always

VU 249

Rejoice in the Lord al-ways and again I say re-
joice! (*clap, clap*) Re-joice in the Lord al-ways and a-
gain I say re-joice! (*clap, clap*) Re-joice, re-
joice, and a-gain I say re-joice! (*clap, clap*)

Opening Prayer (*Based on Psalm 65*)

If you're with someone where you are, I invite you to join hands, if you'd like to...

Creator God,
we come together today to praise our awesome deeds.
God who answers prayer, we give our hopes, our dreams,
our struggles to you.
We give thanks for your goodness, your mercy, your
presence among us.
You crown the year with your bounty, and we are grateful.
We are so grateful. Amen.

Special Music – *We Sing Thanksgiving* by Arlene Grey *Rocco Catalano and Michael Bruce*

Chorus:

*We sing Thanksgiving, loving and living,
Shaping a world where the holy is found.
Changing, creating, and recreating
So light will be brought to shadow.*

Prayer of Confession

Gracious and loving God,
we know there are times when we forget your generous
nature and your generous love for us.
We insert ourselves in moments when we should lift you up.
Help us to be more grateful, less boastful;
more caring, less conceited.
In the moments we forget you,
help us to be humble and grateful and happy.
Help us remember the transforming power of your love.
Amen.

Words of Affirmation

God's love that was poured over our faith ancestors who
were slaves in Egypt, carried them through the wilderness.
With the passage of time, that same love washes over us

today. God's endless love for us renews our spirits when
we feel disconnected and prepares us to model that love
for others. Amen.

Scripture Readings

Philippians 4:1-9

4¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. ⁹Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Luke 17:11-19

11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' ¹⁴When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?' ¹⁸Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' ¹⁹Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'

Sermon/Reflection –

Picking up from Blair Odney from the PMRC Town Hall:

In the passage from Phillipians ...

Paul was writing to his favourite church, the church in Phillippi

Blair said really Paul was writing to the United Church, his favourite church
maybe, but I think,

Paul was really writing to his very favourite church –

St. Andrew's United Church right here in Williams Lake

In his letter to us ...

Paul was encouraging us, almost pleading with us,
to let our needs be known to God

AND exhorting us to practice the joy of thanksgiving
telling us to REJOICE!

to 'rejoice in the Lord always, AGAIN he said
over and over and over

"Rejoice in the Lord ... again I say rejoice"

Practicing joy is one of the first calls of our Christian faith

Rejoicing always, choosing joy and gratitude even when there isn't much to be joyful or grateful isn't an instant presto fix, it's not like plugging your ears or closing your eyes or doing both and everything will go away as if it was all just an awful, terrible dream – BUT the shift to gratitude, thanksgiving and joy will for sure help us get through whatever hard stuff we're in the midst of. That's not naïve; that's one of the teachings of our Christian faith.

And then there were those 10 lepers – or maybe 10 who had COVID – who encountered Jesus when they were getting tested, or getting their results, or were in the ER or maybe admitted to the ICU or had been in quarantine or self-isolation or such ... and FINALLY they got their test, or their results, or they were discharged from ER, got out of ICU, or their 14 days were done ...

Quicker than the weather changed yesterday – numerous times – they split!

Gone! Outta there!

Except that one. She came back

to thank the ICU nurse,

to thank the tech who administered the test,

to thank the man who called with the test result

Their expression of gratitude didn't go un-noticed or un-rewarded

they were made well

their gratitude healed the helpers, as Mr Roger's might call them

their gratitude healed some part of themselves

for sure their gratitude and thanksgiving made their not so good experience easier

joy is a choice

gratitude is a choice

being thankful is a choice

Paul and Jesus are on the same page – encouraging us to make that choice

to rejoice, to be joyful, to be grateful, to be thankful

all choices that are ours to make

choices that will make us well

And why not make that choice?

Let's begin in thanks.

... and then we had everyone on the Zoom call share in a few words what they're thankful for today ...

Amen and amen and amen.

Special Music – *Sing to the Lord of Harvest*

Rocco Catalano and Michael Bruce

Community Prayer

Generous and loving God,

we bring you these gifts – of money and of bounty of the harvest and our gardens –

as a sign of our love poured out for you.

We share these gifts because you have shared so much with us.

Take and bless all our offerings for the building of your kin-dom.

May they spread your love to those who need it;

may they help shine a light where there are shadows.

Life-giving God,

we come before you grateful for the many gifts you've given

to this community and to each one of us.
We've fed on your word today and recognize that our
gratitude doesn't end with saying "thanks" to you.
You call us to respond to your generosity by mirroring a
generous spirit in our relationships with others and acts
of service in our wider community.
May we respond to your many gifts in a way that reflects
your light in the world.
May others be nurtured and comforted by that light.

Creator,

We come before you with the prayers of our community,
we remember before you in those experiencing health issues
and ask that you be especially present to them and their families at this time:

George and Marian Rainey,
Marvin and Bonnie Ashley,
Sharon Dodson,
and other's whose names and situations are known only to you.

The 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.**

Minute for Mission Snippet

Our gifts for Mission & Service support theological education in seven theological schools across Canada. Emmanuel College in Toronto is one of them.

Oct 11: Taking a Leap of Faith
Emmanuel College,
Toronto

The Life and Work of our Church

- Thank you for remembering that the work of the church needs your support even when we aren't able to meet in person:
 - we do appreciate all your gifts and support;
 - first and foremost – for the gift of YOU in the life of our congregation;
 - thank you for continuing to send in or drop off your offering or using PAR;

- **Fall Book Study – *Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend***, by Andy Stanley. The Board has decided to read and study this book about stewardship. You are all invited, welcome, encouraged to join us as we learn and understand more about stewardship. The books have arrived! The idea/plan is to read the book first, and then to discuss over a number of sessions....
Let Nancy know if you're interested in participating.
- **Advent Small Group Study** – four sessions through the Season of Advent. We'll use a study from *The Prayer Bench* by Rev. Janice MacLean, an UCC minister in Riverview, New Brunswick.
- **Winter Book Study – *God, Improv and the Art of Living***, by MaryAnn McKibben Dana. Goodreads says this about this book... **God, Improv, and the Art of Living** is a playful, insightful book written by MaryAnn McKibben Dana. Finding the connection between her hobby of **Improv** and her Christian faith, the author has some fresh ways of looking at life.
- **Winter Small Group Study** – looking at a number of Jesus' parables with aid of a book by Amy-Jill Levine called *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*, for perspective, insight and inspiration.

Commissioning and Benediction

Our loving and generous Creator is calling us to share
 God's many gifts with the wider community.
 Remember God's words.
 Be grateful.
 Share God's love with others....

Remembering,
 "The world is too dangerous for anything but truth,
 and too small for anything but love." (William Sloane Coffin.)

The grace of Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Sung Amen.

VU 974

A-men! A-men! Hal-le-lu-jah, amen!