



**Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge of the United Church At
Home Worship**

Sunday October 4, 2020
Olds 9:30 am Sundre 1:30 pm



Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan

As we worship we gratefully acknowledge that we are on the ancient and traditional lands of The Blackfoot Nation, the people of the Treaty 7, and of Metis Region 3.

*May we cherish and care for these lands and the people,
just as those who came before us did.*

Prelude Variety of recorded music

Opening Call

God calls us to come to worship.

God calls us to praise.

God calls us to come in prayer.

God calls us to pray for churches around the world.

God calls us to welcome others.

Let us listen for God, as we worship together.

Prayer

Creator God, we come to this place of worship, aware that around the World, Christians are gathering to pray, to praise, to celebrate. Though this year we do things differently, we know that you are with us, and in community, here with us, and across the globe. Thanks be! Amen.

Musical Interlude VU 402 We Are One

Time with Children

Reading for today Exodus 20: 1-4; 7-9; and 12-20

²⁰Then God spoke all these words: ²¹I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³you shall have no other gods before me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

⁷You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.⁸Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. ⁹Six days you shall labour and do all your work.

¹²Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. ¹³You shall not murder. ¹⁴You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁶You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

¹⁸When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, ¹⁹and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die." ²⁰Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin."

A Message for Today

Okay...you heard them once – can you tell me what they are again? Let me give you some clues...sort of an opposite for each...

1. You are your own boss. Do whatever you want to do whenever you feel like it.
2. Decide who and what is important to you. Pay attention only to those people and things.
3. It does not matter when or how you say God's name. You can use it to swear or cuss or to get what you want (as in "God is on my side so you better do things my way").
4. It doesn't matter if you worship with God's people on Sunday/regularly. If there are other things you'd rather do, go do them.
5. Parents don't get it. Ignore them whenever you can.
6. Kill whatever or whoever gets in your way. The strongest live longest.
7. Don't worry about your family. Think only about yourself and what you want.
8. Finders keepers!
Toddler's Rule of possession: I see it, I want it, it's mine!
If you want it, figure out how to get it.
9. Lie if you have to get out of trouble.

Lie to get what you want.

Lie to make yourself look good – even if it makes someone else look bad.

10. The one who dies with most toys wins.

The world is full of wonderful things. Get your share.

From Carolyn Brown, *Worshiping with Children*, www.worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com

That list of opposites was compiled by Carolyn Brown, an US clergy and theologian, who writes resources for intergenerational worship – and using the opposites of the commandments in learning more about the real commandments is one of her ways of teaching them. In a way – it offers the what NOT to do as a person a faith and commitment to God's way.

Decalogue – that's the formal, biblical way for referring to the Ten Commandments. It's often referred to as "The Law" and the ancient Hebrew people referred to the commandments simply as the 10 words.

I did find a quote that spoke to me, in my readings this week - from The Salt Project (www.saltproject.org) - This is a worship resource of reflections on the weekly readings, for this Sunday, it is entitled "Amazing Grace." I have come to appreciate this resource, which I learned about a year or so ago. The quote says this:

"Understanding the law as essentially covenantal — that is, as a framework for Israel's relationship with God — may transform how we hear it: these commandments aren't arbitrary prohibitions, but rather loving limits that guide human beings toward living with justice, grace, and dignity vis-a-vis God and neighbour. Indeed, through the gift of the law, Israel's relationship with God becomes a tangible, everyday, ongoing form of listening (the root of the word "obedience" is the Latin *audire*, "to listen"). In effect, the law transforms "doing the right thing" into a calling, a vocation, something done not only for its own sake but also as a responsive act of devoted companionship with God."

I think that sometimes the commandments have been understood as more repressive than life giving, and the author of the SALT commentary argues that they are really more about relationship, and healthy boundaries, and effective listening and responding.

The first four commandments describe God's relationship with God's people. They are essentially a foundation for being people of God.

We've come to understand that they were first given to God's people in a time when the people were coming out of exile in Egypt, and out of wandering in foreign lands, among people who followed other gods...and worshipped idols. These first 4 commandments helped God's people understand that their relationship with God is one of covenant – of relationship between God and the people.

So if we look at our lives today, and how they relate to these words – we need to ask what idols we worship today? There is the idol of mass media, and of social media; of constant connection. How many of us live with a cell phone in our pocket or handbag, or a computer that's always on stand-by; or a television that rarely gets turned off? We are constantly connected to the world...and there by connected to corporate advertising, that keeps us wanting more, wanting bigger, wanting better.

One of my mentors and teachers, Betty Marlin, used to remind us that the personal is political, is global. Take our individual desires for more, for bigger and better, and apply them to the politics of today. We live in a world where big business, the corporate world, has incredible influence over governmental leadership...wanting more, and bigger and better – but as Betty Marlin would remind us – we must consider the cost, and who bears the cost.

At what cost do corporate tax breaks come? It's no mystery how the gap between rich and poor gets wider and wider...and the middle class continues to be a smaller and smaller demographic, in Canada and globally.

That desire for a bigger share of the pie, wanting more, and bigger, of course that requires more wealth...we get into a cycle of idolization alright, of the god of more, the god of wealth and power misused for gain. And who bears the cost? Those on the margins, those who have less power, less wealth.

A prime example...who will stand to loose as our provincial government continues to move toward privatization of health services? Who will be most negatively affected? It will be those with less, those who can't afford extra fees to get better care.

What does all that say about how freely we honour God in how we live, especially given Jesus' commandments: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' And to 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' When those on the margins suffer as a result of economic injustice, are we really loving our neighbours as Jesus would have us do?

Add to this the reality that the pursuit of wealth, of more and more, also often comes that the cost of how we honour God's call to Sabbath, to rest and renew. Even 7 day shopping impacts our lives. I wonder if I'm the only one who really has learned from COVID precautions that I don't need to shop nearly as much as I did "pre-COVID". And frankly I don't miss malls and crowded stores.

Back to the commandments, the law - the last 6 refer to how we, people of God, are in relationship with one another.

As we look at that commandment to honour your father and mother, we can't help but acknowledge that for some, that can be a difficult, perhaps even an

impossible thing to do. We have, in our world, families where one or both parents in not present, for all manner of reasons – broken relationships; untimely death; ...and so on.

Yet, those words...Show respect for the welfare of your elder people...its about community. In any given community there are those wise, nurturing, teaching, caring elders – people whose labours of love have been the foundation of the community...and just as we believe it takes a village to raise a child; we must hold onto the truth that the village must respect and care for its elders.

We've seen sadly, the failure of the system to do that, in all the stories of understaffed seniors residences, underpaid care-givers, staff having to work at 2 or 3 residences because owners and managers could save on costs of benefits for those workers. The pandemic has revealed a lot of sad truth about how our society values it's elders...or doesn't value them enough.

Indeed, all of the final 6 commandments are about respecting and honouring others – in all of our relationships – those more intimate, human relationships; and the relationships we have with our neighbours – near and far.

Perhaps, if we were to be more aware of the call of God to live in healthy and life-giving relationships, there would be less fear in our world, less discrimination, less violence and hatred.

I leave you today with a poem, written by Andrew King...that for me, encapsulates the significance of the Commandments for our time and place, in this 21st Century, in terms of how we are called to live in right relationship with God, and with one another.

THE TEN WORDS ([Exodus 20: 1-21](#))

*This is a moment of new creation:
blast of a trumpet and fire and smoke and the people gathered at the foot of a mountain
and Moses on the summit, receiving words:
words that are beacons, words that cast shadow,
words that are firesparks struck from stone,
words that are trumpet, calling to silence,
words that will echo through ages to come,
words that are the beating heart of a covenant,
words of requirement, words that are gift,
words that are bones in the body of a people,
words that are blood flowing into their veins,
words that are power, spoken to weakness,
words that are freedom because they are fence,
words that challenge us, words that summon us,*

words that are song for a life-long dance,
words that are dwelling place, words of foundation,
words that are law, given in grace,
words that are signposts, words that are journey,
words that are a pathway pointing to peace.

This is a moment of new creation:

blast of a trumpet and fire and smoke

and we are the people at the foot of a mountain

and we have these words, and our heart for their home.

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*From the blog of Andrew King called 'A Poetic Kind of Place.'
<http://earth2earth.wordpress.com/about/#comment-213>*

A Message for Today

Musical Interlude VU 356 Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God

This Week's Minute for Mission

Offertory Music VU 542 We Give You But Your Own

Offertory Prayer

O God, you have blessed us with life, and gifts more than we can number. Receive our offerings today, and transform them into gifts of ministry and love. Place your blessing upon them, we pray. Amen.

Celebration of Communion

God of hope and love, we gather at this table, to offer our thanks and to taste afresh the wonder of your love, revealed to us in the life of Jesus, who walks with us – our wisdom and our way.

We praise you, loving God, for creating all things, for making us in your image, and for seeking us when we turn from you.

We share this meal in remembrance of Jesus, offering you our lives, in praise and gratitude. Fill us with your Spirit, make us one in Christ, and one in love for you and all creation.

Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit. All glory is yours, now and forever. Amen.

Just as Jesus did on the night before he died - he took bread, broke it, and as he did so, he gave thanks. He shared the bread with his friends, saying "Take, eat; each time you do this, remember me."

Then, in the same manner, he took the cup, and said, "Take, and drink of this cup. Each time you do this, remember me."

As we gather at this table, send your Spirit upon us, O God, and what we do here, that we, and these gifts that are touched by your love, may be signs of life and love to all the world.

The gifts of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Distribution

Prayer

God of the journey, may your gifts of love transform us that we may live lives of thanksgiving; for bread that brings wholeness; for wine poured that replenishes; and for time spent with Christ and one another that is gift and grace. Amen.

Musical Interlude MV 202 Bread for the Journey (played 3 times)

Prayers for This Day Prayers for This Day

Gracious and loving God, with thanksgiving we remember the teachers and mentors that have witnessed to us about your love and nurtured us in faith. We give thanks too, for the people who have come to our community of faith as seekers, as pray that you will give us what we need to be effective and caring mentors ourselves.

Clarify our understanding of the gifts of the Spirit you give us. May we have the courage to use those gifts wisely, for the building up of your realm, as your covenant people we pray this.

We pray for those who live in places that are lacking in peace and security. We think of our neighbours in the US, as they approach election time. We pray for wisdom to prevail, and for an end to the mean-spiritedness.

Comforting God, you know the concerns of our hearts, the needs of our loved ones, even the needs of those who are strangers to us. We pray for those struggling with illness; with loneliness, with the affects of poverty or abuse. We think of all those for whom this time of pandemic has created feelings of isolation, stress, or anxiety.

We offer now the prayers from this community, and those held deep in our hearts....

We give thanks for your love, O God, and in gratitude, join our voices together, sharing the words that Jesus taught so long ago...

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.

A Blessing for Today

As we go from this time of worship, may we be inspired to live as followers of the way. May we go knowing that God goes with us, every step of the way. Thanks be to God. **Amen.**

Choral Blessing Go Now in Peace, Never Be Afraid

And the good news...we are back to in person worship, with careful COVID precautions!

The bulletin and sermon will continue to be posted to the websites, for those who are unable to join us. If you have any questions, please call or email.

Please note that effective September 13 – Olds will worship at 9:30, to accommodate Redemption Church's worship at 11:00 Sundre will worship at the usual time of 1:30.



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