



Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge of the United Church
Thanksgiving Sunday October 11, 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

Praise God with our whole heart!

Give thanks to your name for your steadfast love!

Let us bow before God's presence and respond to God's calling:

"Share My Abundance!"

Let us praise God together.

Prayer

As we gather in worship, our hearts are filled with gratitude for our many blessings:

The gifts of seeds and harvest, friendship and family, our homes and our freedoms.

Encounter us now, we pray, as we worship. By your holy Spirit, move among us,

To heal, to reconcile, to inspire, and to empower us, that we might live with open hearts and open hands to serve the world. Amen.

Musical Interlude VU 242 Let All Things Now Living

Time with Children A Thanksgiving Story

Readings for today

Deuteronomy 8: 7-18

In this text Moses is talking to all the people who have finally made it through the wilderness and are standing on the edge of the Promised Land.

⁷For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, ^{8a}a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ^{9a}a land where you may eat bread without scarcity, where

you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron and from whose hills you may mine copper.

¹⁰You shall eat your fill and bless the Lord your God for the good land that he has given you. ¹¹Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments, his ordinances, and his statutes, which I am commanding you today. ¹²When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, ¹³and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, ¹⁶and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. ¹⁷Do not say to yourself, “My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.” ¹⁸But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.

Luke 17:11-19

A simple story, yet as is often true, a simple story with rich meaning.

¹¹On 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.”

A Message for Today

We return to the story of the Exodus, and the journey of a people who travelled from exile to wilderness, as they sought the promised land of milk and honey. What might this story say to us about gratitude, about giving thanks?

We’ve been, over the last few weeks focusing on this journey. The people had been, for so many years, a wilderness people, a people in transition, and they were coming into this new land that God had promised them. Finally, life was coming together, and they were, as today’s passage unfolds, entering into in a prosperous land, a long promised and hoped for land.

If we know anything about human nature, we know that transition comes with all manner of mixed emotions – there is joy and excitement at the new things that might lie ahead – but there can also be fear, anxiety, confusion as a community and / or individuals try to come to terms with all that has changed in their lives.

No matter how wonderful the promised new land might have been, there would have been losses that came from leaving the previous land.

This passage serves to remind the people that it was God who had walked with them on their wilderness journey, and that it was God that was with them as their lives changed, as they built a new life, new homes, and learned to prosper in this new land.

Each week, for several weeks, we've heard pieces of this story, each offered us the reminder of the presence of God throughout time – a God who hears the cries, knows the struggles, feels the sorrows - of God's people.

As I look at this passage, I want to lift up verse 11: "Take care that you do not forget God."

The people were being reminded that it was with God's guidance that they came to this place of promise, and they were reminded to give glory to God for the blessings they had received along the way, and those they would receive in days and years to come. They are reminded not to forget God's blessing as they lived their lives in this new land of abundance.

And, in today's gospel reading, we hear of those 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus. We can assume that all were grateful, but only one came back to thank Jesus—a Samaritan.

In Jesus' day, it would have been risky for this one Samaritan to associate with a group of Jews. In this case, the whole group of 10 would have been marginalized by society – by the nature of their illness, their world would have deemed them 'unclean, and untouchable.'

The Samaritan would also have been the victim of cultural and racial discrimination, yet in spite of all that, it's this one person that comes forth to Jesus to give thanks.

Why would the others not do so? We can only wonder. Perhaps they just needed to get their heads around how dramatically their lives had changed, with this blessing Jesus had given them. Maybe, could it be, that their thanks would come in time...as they adjusted to this new reality that Jesus had given them?

It's true that some of us need to reflect, to let our gratitude fill in the spaces in our hearts and souls that have been hurt; or have been empty, or have been fearful,

before we can come forward and express our gratitude to those who have lifted us up, and supported us on life's journey.

May we hold in our hearts and minds that truth that Jesus met those on the margins with the same grace and love as he met anyone else...and perhaps even more so. For indeed, I believe that he lived the ideal of giving preferential option to the poor, the hurting, the oppressed – those that society as a whole didn't / and often still doesn't see, or refuses to see.

We are called to take what we know and believe about Jesus, and act as he did, extending grace and love to anyone we encounter, and especially to those who find themselves - for whatever reason - on the margins of our society.

How can we be more like that 10th person who returned to Jesus, and more Christ like in how we relate to others? How can we live both gratitude and grace?

Some of you brought symbols of your thanks – some of you wrote words of thanks – and those have been placed on our communion table. May this collection inspire you to take more moments to be grateful.

Many of us will gather at table with family or friends today or tomorrow, and enjoy a feast. I invite you to add a conversation about gratitude to that table gathering. Maybe make it part of your spiritual practice as a family or circle of friends – to name your gratitudes, and share them with others, whenever you gather.

The scriptures remind us of our call to be a people of thankfulness; a people of gratitude. May we heed that call, not just this weekend; not just in the season of autumn, of harvest; not just at worship on Sundays. May we be people of thanksgiving every day of our lives. And may that be a spark that shines brightly for the world to see! Amen.

Musical Interlude VU 227 For the Fruit of All Creation

This Week's Minute for Mission A Thanksgiving Video
<https://youtu.be/HwvH9W1jo48>

Offertory Music VU 542 We Give You But Your Own

Offertory Prayer

Generous and loving God, we bring you these gifts as a sign of love poured out for you. We share our gifts because you have shared so much with us. Bless these offerings, that they may spread your love to those who need it. Amen.

Prayers for This Day

God, giver of all good, you continually pour your benefits upon us.
Age after age the living wait upon you and find that your faithfulness has no end,
that your care is unfailing.

We praise you that the mystery of life is a mystery of infinite goodness.
We praise you for the order and constancy of nature; for the beauty and bounty
of the earth; for day and night, summer and winter, seedtime and harvest;
for the varied gifts of loveliness which every season brings.

We give you thanks for all the comfort and joy of life, for our homes, for our
friends, and for all the love, sympathy, and goodwill of all people.

—from *Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services for The United Church of
Canada* (UCPH, 2000)

We continue our prayer, O God...trusting in your love, we pray that your healing
would touch those who struggle with health concerns, physical or mental; those
who are living with loss of relationship, of economic security, of a sense of hope
and safety. In this season of thanks, we pray for hope for those living with
stresses and challenges in their lives.

We take a moment this day to bring the unspoken prayers of our hearts – in a
time of silent reflection...

And we gather our hearts and voices as one, praying the words that Jesus taught
us to pray...

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

Let us go from this place with thankful hearts and joyful senses, and let us
continue to share earth's gifts—abundantly!

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 Olds worship is now 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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Painting dates: The idea: to paint stones with images of poppies, and place them at the Centetaph and/or Field of Honour, commemorating Remembrance Day.

Who: all who want to join.

When: In Sundre: Wed. Oct. 21 at 1:30 and Wed. Oct. 28 at 10:00

In Olds: Thurs. Oct. 22 at 10:00 and Thurs. Oct. 29 at 1:30

Rocks, paints and brushes supplied.