



Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge  
of the United Church of Canada  
Sunday July 4, 2021

Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan

A Family of Faith, Spiritually Motivated, Welcoming and  
Caring



*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**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

The light shines all around us. The candle flame reminds us of the Spirit's presence among us, brightening the path that we travel. Thanks be to God, our Creator, for the light of Christ.

**Call to Worship**

This is the day that God has made.

**This is a day of wonder and grace.**

This is a day to praise God.

**This is a day to marvel at God's handiwork.**

This is a day for seeking God's will.

**This is a day to worship God.**

**Hymn** VU 291 All Things Bright and Beautiful (chorus at beginning and ending only)

**Opening Prayer**

In creation we see your constant, loving presence, O God. Yet sometimes we get weary and worn from life's challenges. May your Spirit work within us with power and with promise, that we may become those who you created us to be. May we open ourselves to Christ's presence and Jesus' work of self-giving love. Amen.

**Time with Children** God sightings? Where do you see God in the world?

**Hymn** MV 145 Draw the Circle Wide

**Scripture** Mark 6: 1-13

He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. <sup>2</sup>On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! <sup>3</sup>Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. <sup>4</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." <sup>5</sup>And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. <sup>6</sup>And he was amazed at their unbelief. Then he went about among the villages teaching. <sup>7</sup>He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. <sup>8</sup>He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; <sup>9</sup>but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. <sup>10</sup>He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. <sup>11</sup>If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." <sup>12</sup>So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. <sup>13</sup>They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

### **Response to the Scripture Reading**

The word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Reflection**

There are really two stories in this gospel passage today – distinct, yet related. The first speaks of Jesus' taking his ministry home. He's been travelling, and gaining a following wherever he goes, and it is time to go home and see the folks.

Yet, going home isn't that easy. The folks, the people that you'd assume know him best, are less than welcoming of his message.

Sometimes, as I prepare to preach, I look at more than one version of the focus passage. Today, I'd like to share with you this same story, as told by Eugene Peterson, from *The Message*. Peterson translates directly from the ancient languages into modern day English. So passages like this one have a bit of a different tone.

**6** <sup>1-2</sup> He left there and returned to his hometown. His disciples came along. On the Sabbath, he gave a lecture in the meeting place. He stole the show, impressing everyone. "We had no idea he was this good!" they said. "How did he get so wise all of a sudden, get such ability?"

<sup>3</sup> But in the next breath they were cutting him down: "He's just a carpenter— Mary's boy. We've known him since he was a kid. We know his brothers, James,

Justus, Jude, and Simon, and his sisters. Who does he think he is?" They tripped over what little they knew about him and fell, sprawling. And they never got any further.

<sup>4-6</sup> Jesus told them, "A prophet has little honor in his hometown, among his relatives, on the streets he played in as a child." Jesus wasn't able to do much of anything there—he laid hands on a few sick people and healed them, that's all. He couldn't get over their stubbornness. He left and made a circuit of the other villages, teaching.

### **The Twelve**

<sup>7-8</sup> Jesus called the Twelve to him, and sent them out in pairs. He gave them authority and power to deal with the evil opposition. He sent them off with these instructions:

<sup>8-9</sup> "Don't think you need a lot of extra equipment for this. *You* are the equipment. No special appeals for funds. Keep it simple.

<sup>10</sup> "And no luxury inns. Get a modest place and be content there until you leave.

<sup>11</sup> "If you're not welcomed, not listened to, quietly withdraw. Don't make a scene. Shrug your shoulders and be on your way."

<sup>12-13</sup> Then they were on the road. They preached with joyful urgency that life can be radically different; right and left they sent the demons packing; they brought wellness to the sick, anointing their bodies, healing their spirits.

As I said earlier – this is really 2 distinct stories within the one passage. As we enter the first part of the passage, it's helpful to know that Jesus has returned home after some positive experiences of teaching and preaching in the synagogues of neighbouring towns. His was honoured in those places, and was gaining a respectful following of people.

So, it stands to reason that while in the area, he would bring his disciples to his own home community and spend some time. Initially, that was a welcoming experience. Yet it quickly soured. First – notice how in both readings, Jesus was referred to by some of the critical folk as being 'just a carpenter,' and then just Mary's son, and the brother of 4 men who are also named.

Did you notice that Jesus' father gets nary a whisper? That was a social put down – a reference to Mary not being wed to Joseph when Jesus was born. In their critique of Jesus, they dredge up old stuff from the past, that really says more about their judgement of Mary and Joseph, but also that these people are passing that judgement down to Jesus too.

At first glance, you would think that one's own home town would be the one place you could trust that people would be kind and accepting – yet Jesus met criticism and judgement. What is that about?

He names himself as a prophet. A prophet was someone who was called by God to name the realities of injustice, to teach and guide people to seek change and build a better world. The hard part of that was that the nature of the prophetic call meant that there was often a challenge to engage in self reflective action in order to examine one's own role in the injustices spoken of.

So was Jesus – a man from questionable beginnings in the minds of the people – somehow threatening their sense of comfort, by coming and preaching and teaching there?

One of my mentors and teachers – a prophet herself, Diaconal Minister, Betty Marlin, used to remind us that the prophetic role is about comforting the afflicted, and afflicting the comfortable. In other words, the prophetic role is about addressing injustice at all levels of both personal and political reality. Each influences the other.

It is also about bringing comfort where that is truly needed – hence, there are aspects of healing ministry in this story.

Here was this man Jesus...who many in his home town likely would have seen as this kid Jesus...not just showing off what he knew, but asking his own community to look at how they lived, and indeed, challenging them to change. This kid had not just come home to get some of mom's comfort food. He was practising what he preached, even there. And most of the hometown folk weren't too appreciative of feeling challenged to do better.

I'd suggest that there were some that were more open to Jesus' message – as they were open to receiving from him, his gifts of healing. There would be a sense of trust in that, I believe. That comes though, as almost an after thought at the end of this piece of the story.

The second half of today's passage shifts the focus from Jesus' ministry to his commissioning of the 12 to go and take up their own calling. This is where I appreciate Eugene Peterson's translation, as in that version, Jesus tells the disciples not to take a lot of equipment along. That line "You are the equipment" says it all.

In the NRSV version, Jesus tells the disciples to take nothing but a staff – a walking stick. Seems indicative that this isn't just going to be a short stroll between villages, but a long journey. They may need those sticks along the way. They're also told to wear sandals...in ancient times, the more elite would have had full shoes, crafted from leather, covering the whole foot. Simpler folk would have worn the sandals.

Jesus wanted his followers to live simply. He wanted them to connect with those who lived simply, too - with those most in need of hearing messages of hope and justice – messages that promised, as Peterson writes it, "...that life can be radically different."

We sometimes refer to ourselves as disciples. Often we call ourselves followers of the way of Jesus. As followers of the way, are we too, not called to be prophetic in our speaking and acting? Where does that message of hope that life can be radically different need to be heard today? Where do you think Jesus wants you to go and share that kind of hope?

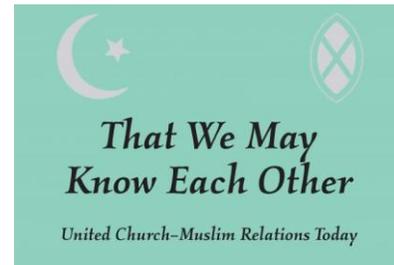
As you go into your week ahead, I invite you to take those questions with you. Where might you take up the call to discipleship?

**Hymn** VU 567 Will You Come and Follow Me

### **This Week's Minute for Mission**

*Our United Church is deeply committed to working with Muslims and others for peace and justice.*

Cover of the 2004 study document  
Credit: The United Church of Canada



Published On: June 23, 2021

On June 6, not far from the oldest mosque in London, Ontario, a family of five out for a walk were deliberately run over by a truck. Three adults and one teenager were killed. A nine-year-old boy is the sole survivor. Police say the family was targeted because they are Muslim. In a statement, The United Church of Canada **condemned the horrific and hate-filled attack.**

"Many people in the United Church are weeping alongside the extended families and friends of the family members who were killed and injured in this premeditated hate crime and are grieving the innocent lives lost in this abhorrent attack," the statement reads, acknowledging the fearfulness that some people in the Muslim community feel as a result.

Did you know that 322 anti-Muslim hate crimes were reported in Canada between 2013 and 2019? And that's just the crimes we know about.

Prejudice runs deep. A **2017 study** ([opens in a new tab](#))

published by the Angus Reid Institute states that almost half of all Canadians have an unfavourable view of Islam, a perception evident in attitudes toward religious clothing. While 88 percent of Canadians support a nun wearing a habit, just 32 percent approve of a person wearing the niqab.

Our United Church is deeply committed to working with Muslims and others for peace and justice. That's why your Mission & Service gifts help us as a church to

develop statements and educational resources to combat prejudice and discrimination.

In 2006, for example, the church released the statement "[That We May Know Each Other: United Church-Muslim Relations Today.](#)" It was preceded by an important study document with the same name designed to help church communities deepen loving relationships with our faith cousins. Similar study guides have been created to foster interfaith relationships, including Jewish and Hindu faiths (respectively, "Bearing Faithful Witness" and "Honouring the Divine in Each Other").

Education begins with us. Your Mission & Service gifts help raise awareness and understanding that in turn contributes to a more peaceful world. One where no one is harmed by the hatred of another. Where no more children have to grow up without their family.

In the [words of our current Moderator Richard Bott \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

, "Let us use all that we have and all that we are to stand in the face of the evil that would allow and cause this crime of hatred. Even as one man has been arrested for his actions, let us uncover and work against the beliefs, the worldview, the racism and the hatred that supported his choice."

Amen.

*Your gifts through [Mission & Service](#) help raise awareness and understanding that in turn contributes to a more peaceful world. Thank you.*

**Offertory Music**    MV    191    What Can I Do?

### **Offertory Prayer**

**Loving God, receive our offering this day; may it be used to ease the suffering of those you love, and bring hope to the world. We bring our gifts in praise and thanksgiving for your abundant grace. Amen.**

### **Prayers for the Day**

O God of justice and hope, we come to you with many prayers on our hearts. We are grateful for a break from the heat – for those who farm, across the prairies, worried about crops – we especially pray.

Devastation by fire has come to the fore again. This week we pray for the people of Lytton BC, and other communities threatened by forest fires.

We also pray for the families, friends, and victims of the fire in Chestmere that has taken the lives of 7 people. May they find comfort in their faith, and support in their community.

We pray also for the emergency personnel in these situations – both of which will bring for those personnel all manner of emotional and physical anguish. Watch over them we pray.

We are hearing stories of the church communities in Calgary and across our country, that have experienced vandalism to their buildings. We lift those situations up to you, O God, and at the same time pray for a better way for those who perpetrated these acts. May they find ways to address their pain and anger related to the painful legacy of the residential school system and the role of churches in that system.

We also hear of violence against our Muslim brothers and sisters, in our own province, and elsewhere. We pray for peace and understanding, O God.

As we enter into the summer months, O God, and an easing of COVID restrictions, we give thanks for all those who have maintained careful vigil throughout this crisis, and we pray that they may find moments of rest and renewal. We too, are grateful that we can spend time with loved ones in less restricted ways, and give thanks for opportunities to be together again.

O God of grace and love – each of us brings the prayers from our hearts, as we take a quiet moment of reflection...  
In gratitude for your never-ending presence among us, we pray the words Jesus taught his disciples...

### **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.**

**Hymn** VU 575 I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me

### **A Blessing for Today**

Let us go from here to serve the world that God loves.

**We go with hearts full of tenderness and joy, and minds full of hope.**

May the blessing of God surround each of us, this day and always.

**Amen.**

**Choral Benediction** MV 224 May the God of Peace

### **Postlude**

*Thank you for taking time to be part of the Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge worship experience.*

*Today we also welcome the people of Knox (Didsbury) United Church, joining us in worship via ZOOM, at 9:30.*

*Olds and Sundre are having in- person worship with careful COVID precautions:  
Olds – 9:30am and Sundre - 1:30pm.*

*The bulletin and sermon will continue to be posted to the websites, for those who are unable to join us. Messages will also be posted to the Facebook Page, Olds and Sundre United Churches.*

*Each week, via email, there will be updates and announcements. If you'd like to receive those emails, please contact your church office and ask to be included.*

***Questions? Wish to financially support our ministries?***

***To Contact us:***

***Olds United Church***

*4810 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Olds AB. T4H 1E4*

*email [office@oldsunited.ca](mailto:office@oldsunited.ca) website [www.oldsunited.ca](http://www.oldsunited.ca) 403-556-3052*

***Sundre United Church***

*Box 614 118 Centre Street North, Sundre AB. T0M 1X0*

*email [sundreuc@telus.net](mailto:sundreuc@telus.net) website [www.sundreunited.ca](http://www.sundreunited.ca) 403-638-4428*

***Rev. Tammy's confidential email [minister@oldsunited.ca](mailto:minister@oldsunited.ca)***