



Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge
of the United Church of Canada
and Knox United Church, Didsbury

Sunday July 18, 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 (Sundre) MV 156 Dance with the Spirit
(Olds) Country Gospel tunes (Stampede style)

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

Hymn VU 579 The Church is Wherever God's People Are...

Scripture Mark 6: 30-34 and 53-56

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. ³³Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. ³⁴As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

⁵³When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. ⁵⁴When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, ⁵⁵and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Response to the Scripture Reading

The word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Last week, I opened my reflection talking about what I like to read on the beach – my go to being an easy read, not too heady or deep material. It’s the beach after all.

Last week’s gospel reading was right up that alley – as it was filled with intrigue, deceit, and a real sense of good verses bad.

We’re still in that summer mode with today’s gospel reading – as Jesus and his disciples are trying to find a moment’s peace in the midst of the chaos of their lives.

You know what it’s like – you know you need a break – but you just have to finish this one task – oh...and that one, too. And come to think of it, this needs to be finished before you head out on that much deserved break. And before you know it, the break has gotten a day or two shorter, or, you’ve missed the opportunity to take that break entirely, because you just can’t let go and step away from the needs of others. I believe lots of us have been there. I know I have.

Been there, done that, more than once. The realities of these months of pandemic, is that many of us, in spite of isolation supposedly giving us more time to do things, found ourselves even busier - trying to make things work in the new normal that we found ourselves in. It has felt like we’ve lived for too long on the edge of the questions - what next? How are we going to be asked to pivot, to adapt, or to change in order to keep our families and our communities safe?

The changes we made – worth it; and it does feel like we’re coming through the other side of things. And...I do believe a time of summer Sabbath is highly called for.

That is what Jesus was trying to do. The reading from a few readings back tells us that the disciples had been commissioned to go and teach and preach and heal, and today’s reading finds them back with Jesus. They probably had stories to tell, and news to share. Jesus likely wanted to draw away with them for some retreat time, to hear of their experiences and celebrate all that they had done.

So off they went, rowing to a secluded spot along the lakeshore, to take some rest, some Sabbath time after their journeys. What is that saying, though? No rest for the weary.

The people had heard about Jesus and his disciples, and their gifts of healing and their ways of teaching through story telling. The people wanted to know more, to experience those gifts for themselves. They were, as the passage tells us, ‘like sheep without a shepherd’ (vs. 34).

Of course, Jesus had compassion for the people – and took the time needed to reach out to these gathered people, to teach and heal.

Karoline Lewis is one of the preachers who’s gifts and wisdom I got to experience while on my study leave back in May. She has written some wise things about this passage and the compassion Jesus had for the people. Here’s some of what she has written:

“The Greek word for compassion has its root in a word that means “guts” and the seat of feeling. “Feeling it in your gut.” You know that feeling — where your reaction to something sends your stomach churning. ...That’s compassion — a visceral feeling. Jesus has compassion because they (the people) were like sheep without a shepherd. In other words, lost, lacking guidance. But more so, in need of care, of protection, of pasture, of tending, of nurture.

But for Jesus, compassion is not just a feeling but a doing. And Jesus had to show his followers that compassion is inherent to discipleship... It hits you in the gut and sends you into motion for the sake of the other. Think about its etymology — to have sympathy with, co-suffering, passion together. And so, this gut feeling should cause you to go outside of yourself....

But all too often our compassion remains complacent. We might feel it, but don’t do anything about it, don’t act on it, don’t advance its essential truth — that there is no compassion unless it is known by the other — and deeply.”

Isn't that the essence of wisdom in today's passage? In this passage, Jesus' first attempt at showing compassion was for his disciples, his friends for whom he offered a time of restful retreat.

That, however, had to wait, as those with greater need found Jesus and his companions. They, the people sought Jesus out, in order that they might receive healing and hope. Jesus was not one to turn his back on anyone in need. The time for Sabbath rest could wait.

Then, once Jesus and his friends left that secluded spot and began to travel again, people continued to seek them, to receive a touch, to be healed, to be loved.

In your own lives...when you are in need of that kind of compassion that Jesus showed, who do you reach out to? When you encounter someone who needs that compassionate care, are you able to walk with them, offer them care, or stand by them and guide to one who can give them the care they need?

There's a level of risk in being a care-giver, it can be what I call hard heart work. Any of you who have found yourself in that kind of role, either through your vocation or through your role in your family or community, know that there's a reason Jesus sought a time away to rest and renew with his disciples.

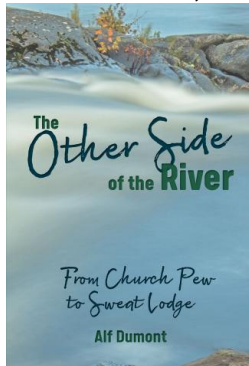
There's a need for balance – for being compassionate to oneself, in order to have the capacity to care for another. I liken to the reason the airlines ask you to put your own mask on before you help the person beside you in an emergency.

As you journey through these summer days, may there be for you, moments of Sabbath renewal, and moments of care and compassion. May there be balance and health in both, and may you know the presence of God walking with you, each day. Amen.

Hymn VU 563 Jesus, You Have Come to the Lakeshore

This Week's Minute for Mission

"As we share, we learn from the gifts that we have been given."



Alf Dumont's memoir bridges First Nations and non-First Nations understandings.

Credit: The United Church of Canada

Published On: June 23, 2021

When Alf Dumont's Roman Catholic father and Anishinaabe mother asked the priest serving the Shawanaga reserve to marry them, the priest rejected their request, advising them to

“marry someone of their own kind.” Nearby, a United Church minister had a different response. He told the couple he had just two rules: “If you have differences, talk them out and just try to get along.”

“Dad and Mom said ‘I think we can do that.’ They brought together First Nations understanding and non-First Nations understanding. That’s how I came to the church,” Dumont recounts in a United in Learning [webinar\(opens in a new tab\)](#). Dumont spent his life as a spiritual leader, serving the United Church as a minister while staying connected with his traditional Indigenous spirituality. His memoir [The Other Side of the River: From Church Pew to Sweat Lodge\(opens in a new tab\)](#) shares stories of how Dumont walks between the two worlds of Indigenous and settler, traditional spirituality and Christianity.

“Part of the struggle with me in life was to find out who I was as Anishinaabe and who I was as French, Irish, and English mix,” Dumont shares. With a foot in both sides of the river, Dumont’s words eloquently draw together spiritual threads. “There are seven truths in some of the Anishinaabe teaching: love, courage, respect, humility, truth, wisdom, and honesty. But you can’t have one of those teachings or truths without having the other. So you can’t have respect without love. You can’t have truth without humility,” explains Dumont. “I took those underlying teachings and applied them to the four teachings on love: Love God. Love your neighbour. Love your enemy. Love yourself. You can’t have one teaching without the other. You can’t love God if you don’t truly love yourself. You cannot love your neighbour unless you truly love God.”

In an [interview\(opens in a new tab\)](#), *Broadview* magazine asked Dumont to weigh in on the future of reconciliation: “Part of the struggle has to do with learning to walk together again. It means being as open as we can,” he says. “You bring a gift that I don’t have; I bring a gift that you may not have. And as we share, we learn from the gifts that we have been given.”

Your gifts through [Mission & Service](#) help support the creation and publication of luminous, timely work like Dumont’s book as well as the webinar discussions and education events that follow. Through listening and learning, we take important steps forward on the journey toward reconciliation.

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

Holy God, your grace is amazing and beyond comprehension, surrounding and filling all creation.

We give you thanks for your unbounded love, for glimpses of your kingdom, for faith lived and visible, for hope that will not let go, and for joy that comes with each new day.

Where weeping lingers, where grief overwhelms, where colour divides, where fires rage, where hate is on display, where love is unacceptable, and where cynicism threatens -give us courage to reach out a hand.

And where we have tried to pull away—ignoring our part, whitewashing our history, accepting lies as truth—stand firm in your call and your promise and give us courage to live your truth according to your way, in order that all may have life.

O Christ, you are the master carpenter. Use your tools well in the workshop of our world. Build us into your household and fill the house with your Spirit. Hold us together and never let us go.

When we are tempted to move on places of injustice – like Israel and Palestine, Haiti, from residential school yards, from racial injustice and stories of missing and murdered women, give us your heart, and break us open to tear down dividing walls, that we may love one another as you love us.

Help us to rejoice with those who rejoice, to celebrate love and commitment, to insist that your covenant is indeed for all people, all creation.

You, O God, are the builder of the house and we your living stones. Ground us in the word preached by your apostles and prophets and build us up into your kingdom, with room for all and dividing walls for none.

Open our hands as you open our hearts, move us by your Spirit to reach out beyond our comfort, beyond our understanding, and into the work of your hope and promise.

May we know your presence with us as we take a moment of silent reflection to lift up the prayers of our hearts...

We pray in the name of the One whose empty hands stretch out to all creation, creating one humanity fit for your kingdom, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray together...

Adapted from a prayer by Teri Peterson,
<https://revgalblogpals.org/2021/07/13/worship-words-for-18-july/>

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 MV 37 Each Blade of Grass

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 50th Street, Olds AB. T4H 1E4

email office@oldsunited.ca website www.oldsunited.ca 403-556-3052

Sundre United Church

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

email sundreuc@telus.net website www.sundreunited.ca 403-638-4428

Knox United Church

P.O. Box 57 1406 - 19th Avenue Didsbury, AB, T0M 0W0

email knoxdidsbury@shaw.ca website www.knoxunited.com 403-335-8373

Rev. Tammy's confidential email minister@oldsunited.ca