



We are the
Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge
Knox (Didsbury) Pastoral Charge
of the United Church of Canada
Sunday September 12, 2021
Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan



Music Ministry: Rev. Janice and Barry Beaudry – Olds & Knox
Cheri Jahnke, Joyce Wicks, and Judy Jackson – Sundre
Honourary Associate Minister – Rev. Janice Beaudry

Our mission statements:

Olds: A Family of Faith, Spiritually Motivated, Welcoming and Caring
Sundre: Believing, Caring, Sharing
Knox: Caring, Sharing, Believing

*As we worship we gratefully acknowledge that our churches are all
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 have done.*

Prelude

Lighting the Christ Candle

We gather together, in person or through technology, remembering Christ's life and ministry, and the life we are called to live.

We gather as God's people, searching for ways to live out our faith.

We gather to celebrate the last few summer weeks, and the gift of the seasons.

As we light the Christ candle let us rejoice in God's gift to us!

Thanks be to God!

Call to Worship

Praise for tree, star and ocean.

God's creation.

Praise for child, teen, adult, elder.

God's creation.

Praise for sun, snow, and rain.

God's creation.

Praise for creatures finned, winged, and hoofed.

God's creation.

Praise for cell, molecule and atom.

Praise for all of God's creation.

Hymn VU 835 Praise to the Lord

Opening Prayer

O God, you have shaped us in your likeness. You have formed us as part of creation. Your love is our ongoing inheritance. May our living reflect those holy gifts. May we remember that the earth does not belong to us, but that we belong to earth. Amen.

Time with Children “Love for All Creation”

from Seasons of the Spirit Worship Resource,
SeasonsFusion Season of Creation, Pentecost 2021

Hymn MV 37 Each Blade of Grass

Scripture

Genesis 1: 26-28

We pick up where we left off last week – with the creation of people.

26 Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

²⁷ So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.’

Mark 10:41-45

This passage follows after James and John have asked to be chosen by Jesus to sit at his right and his left hand. Jesus tells them that it is not his to choose this privilege, honour and responsibility. And then we read this:

41 When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

Response to the Scripture Reading

This is the witness of the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

As you heard last week, if you were here or participating in worship through the live streaming, this year, I have decided to share with you the Season of Creation. It is an alternate set of readings to the regular lectionary readings, and offers us a perspective based on a commitment to caring for God's creation.

In Olds and Sundre, we've had a group that have focused these past few months, on learning about stewardship, under the leadership of Vicki Nielson, our region's Stewardship resource person – she comes to us through our Mission and Service support. It seemed fitting that we spend the fall focused on being faithful stewards of all that God has gifted to us.

1989 was when the church first began to celebrate this Season of Creation, with the orthodox Christian churches commitment to the environment. Resources first began to emerge from that community. And since then, many other denominations have joined in this mission.

The Season of Creation begins September 1st, The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and ends on October 4th, the Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology.

So, today, we continue the celebration of Creation, with a focus on the creation of humanity. Something that was, is and always will be very, very good, in the eyes of God.

Last week, as part of the children's time, I shared a contemporary version of the Genesis passage – and this is the next piece of that.

“After Creator God created light and sky, oceans and land, plants and trees, lights for the day and the night, creatures to fill the water and sky and the earth, God said, “Let's have humankind, made of my (our) own essence. They'll care for the creatures in the water and the sky and on earth, and be cared for by these same ones, sharing together this life banquet.”

And so it was. The Creator gave them genders, unique bodies, diverse personalities, and all with one spirit. Seeing the beauty of their souls was like looking in the mirror. The Creator blessed them and said,

Fill this world with life, as I have filled you with life.

Love your brothers and sisters, every creature and plant.

You were made from love and for love.

May love be your being and your doing.

Seasons of the Spirit Worship Resource,
SeasonsFusion Season of Creation, Pentecost 2021, pg. 40

I share that with you because of how it reimagines an aspect of the story – the piece where God, in the biblical reading it speaks of subduing the earth, and having dominion over it.

In the contemporary piece, it speaks of caring – humanity for the earth, and the earth for humanity. It speaks of sharing the life banquet. For too long, we – humanity – have dominated earth, rather than cared for earth.

Last week, I introduced some commentary by the major contributor to the Seasons of the Spirit resources for this season, Norman Habel, a Lutheran theologian.

He writes of this, saying this:

“In my Christian tradition, I now identify a range of texts, teachings, and attitudes that reduce Earth to a disposable body of matter. They also imply that Earth was created for humans to inhabit, tame, and harness while en route to heaven. The option that Earth is the true mother of humans – body, mind, and consciousness- was rejected as a residue of pagan thought. ...

We belong, after all, to a fragile web of interconnected and interdependent forces on this planet.”

Norman Habel, Seasons of the Spirit Worship Resource, SeasonsFusion Season of Creation, Pentecost 2021, pg. 39

The reality of that – our connectedness to the planet, to Earth – can't be more clear this year, with forest fires burning throughout the summer, more in number and intensity than ever before; with more frequent tropical storms reeking havoc along coastlines; with prairie drought – all those negative effects of an Earth that is hurting, an Earth that exists under the pressure of our 'dominion.' We're seeing our that affects agriculture, forestry, aqua-culture, in food security and so much more.

To quote Habel again – “Ecology makes it clear that we are born of Earth, nurtured by Earth, and received back to Earth in death.”

Norman Habel, Seasons of the Spirit Worship Resource, SeasonsFusion Season of Creation, Pentecost 2021, pg. 39

Allow me to read again the last part of that contemporary reading – and God's call to...

*“Fill this world with life, as I have filled you with life.
Love your brothers and sisters, every creature and plant.
You were made from love and for love.*

May love be your being and your doing.”

Seasons of the Spirit Worship Resource,
SeasonsFusion Season of Creation, Pentecost 2021, pg. 40

We are as connected to each other as to the rest of creation. We are called to love our brothers and sisters, made *from* love and *for* love. Love your brothers and sisters not just those you are immediately connected to, but your siblings in all humanity.

It's good to reflect 20 years after September 11, 2011, on that call, and where we've come in 2 decades.

Many this week, were remembering where they were. What you were doing that morning? How did you first learn of what had happened?

That day we saw some of the worst of humanities actions toward one another – yet that day and beyond that day we also saw some of the best of humanity's actions toward one another.

Any of you who have seen the musical “Come From Away” know the kind of spirit of kindness and love that emerged as airplanes descended on Gander, people from around the world, cared for, loved, by complete strangers.

And there are so many stories of compassionate and brave acts of people, love that arose from the rubble of that day, at ground zero.

Twenty years later – and the years in between – we have the evil of humanity gone wrong in places like Israel and Palestine, Syria, Afghanistan. We have stories of racism, homophobia, sexism, and other forms of oppression in our own country.

So much of that violence and hate is based on abuses of power, or on acts of seeking to have power over other members of humanity.

Yet, remember these words: “whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant,” (Mark 10:43). Jesus compares two styles of leadership – that of ruling over, and that of discipleship, and serving a Christ served.

And in these past 20 years, there are places where that servant leadership, that discipleship, has been seen. I think of the mission based work of organizations like Doctors Without Borders; and Action of Church Together (ACT); and the many NGO's that have gone into places of political unrest to monitor elections, to offer medical care, to bring food and other supplies to refugee camps; to teach and share skills and knowledge.

In our own circles of living – we too are called to be Christ-like in our interactions with others – to make love our being and our doing. As we go

from here into the week ahead, may we carry with us the will to follow that call. Amen.

Hymn MV 44 Shadow and Substance

This Week's Minute for Mission: No Longer Asking "where will I eat?" An update from Our Place.

Staff at Our Place serve food outside at a special barbecue for guests. *Photo Credit: Our Place Society*



Published On: August 21, 2021

When the pandemic began to ramp up last year, Grant McKenzie, the Communications Director at Our Place Society—a Mission & Service partner—told us one of the questions street-involved guests often asked is “Where will I eat?”

No one asks that question at Our Place anymore.

“The reason for that is simple. We have never stopped providing three meals a day. And as this pandemic continues, we endeavour to make more food options available. Due to social distancing, our kitchen staff need to think more creatively as they plan one-bowl meals that can be safely handed out at our front gates. We are also busy providing water, tea, coffee, and milk,” says McKenzie

That doesn't mean there is no stress. The fentanyl crisis, overdoses, magnified social isolation, and mounting stress and anxiety as the pandemic continues take a heavy toll. Still, guests have reassurance that **Our Place** will continue to offer three square meals a day, whether indoors or out.

“In this strange and difficult time, my heart breaks with sorrow at the vulnerable people struggling to survive with yet another obstacle in their path, but my heart also swells with pride at the people who are stepping up to help,” he says.

Reassurance can be hard to come by in uncertain times. Your gifts through **Mission & Service** continue to provide steady support during the long COVID-19 crisis. Thank you.

Offertory Music MV 191 What Can I Do?

Offertory Prayer

O God, your love and grace sustain us day by day. May we too, offer love and grace with gratitude, and may we offer our own gifts with the generosity you have shown to us. Bless what we share this day. Amen.

Prayers for the Day

Responses – We give thanks, O God. (3 times)

- **We pray for healing, O God.**
- **We pray for the will to choose wisely, O God.**

God of love, for the gift of air, home to dragonfly and sparrow; made oxygen-rich by tall standing trees; necessary for breath – *the people say: We give thanks, O God.*

For the gift of water, home to plankton and trout; sculpting valleys and coastlines; Necessary for life - *the people say: We give thanks, O God.*

For the gift of plants, home to caterpillar and koala; recycling into rich soil; necessary for food - *the people say: We give thanks, O God.*

Where these gifts are harmed by debris and pollution, by climate change, by destruction of habitat, by corruption and greed - *the people say: We pray for healing, O God.*

Where these gifts are harmed and decisions are needed from all with power to make new choices - *the people say: We pray for the will to choose wisely, O God.*

This gift of interdependence, woven into every part of creation, tells us we cannot stand apart from all we share with Earth. Guide us, O God, as we seek to tread gently on Earth and live in harmony with all of creation.

Seasons of the Spirit Worship Resource,
SeasonsFusion Season of Creation, Pentecost 2021, pg. 37-38

Gracious God, we take a moment of quiet reflection to lift up the prayers of these gathered communities...

In praise and thanksgiving for your never ending presence, O God, we join our voices, in the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples 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.

Hymn MV 174 Soil of God, You and I

A Blessing for Today

May the joy of the soaring birds be ours,

May the peace of star-filled nights be ours.

May the hope of sprouting seeds be ours.

May the strength of flowing rivers be ours.

May God's love for all of creation be ours, this day and forevermore.

Amen.

Choral Benediction MV 224 May the God of Peace

Postlude

Thank you for taking time to be part of the Olds-Sundre and Knox (Didsbury) Pastoral Charges worship experience.

Olds and Knox are worshipping together at 9:30 a.m., some people in person at each church, and some participating in worship via live stream. Sundre's worship, for the next few months, is at 1:30, in person, at the church there. We are patiently awaiting upgrades in technology for Sundre, so they can join us in Sunday morning worship. Like many things these days, necessary components are back-ordered.

We are continuing to practise careful COVID precautions in all our meeting places.

The bulletin and sermon will continue to be posted to the websites, for those who are unable to join us, or to access the livestreaming.

Also, we have a Facebook presence at "Olds and Sundre United Churches".

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

Please note: Today, **September 12, following worship**, each church will be holding a meeting to make decisions related to moving forward with the shared ministry arrangement, and to accept the drafted Memorandum of Agreement associated with that. To learn more, contact one of the churches, or Tammy.

Questions? Wish to financially support our ministries? Contact information for our churches:

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