



Camrose United Church
Sunday October 25, 2020
Looking Forward with God
Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

Prelude
Welcome & Announcements

Candle Lighting

We light the Christ Candle, aware of God around, among, & within us. In a moment of silence, we prepare ourselves to celebrate God's presence in our community.

Coming into Worship

We have visions, Great Creator.
We hold images and dreams
in our spirits that we long to see come to life,
and we wonder when that can happen
if that can happen.

We come to this time and to you,
knowing that we are on a journey that includes
your invitation to follow the Christ
wherever we are led,
to follow into service, into contemplation,
to be with you and for you.

Holy One, sustain us for the journey.
You are with us, unseen but felt in our souls.
Be known to us and guide us
ever closer to the fulfillment of
healing and wholeness in this world.
Be known to us,
And help us to see that every step
every effort of care
every intention to love and share compassion
is your realm on Earth embodied.

Be known to us as we worship,
and help us to see today's truth,
and your possibilities for the future.

Amen.

Hymn: 🎵 *VU#265 Creating God, your fingers trace*

God's Promises

Based on Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Moses had been leading the people of Israel for 40 years. He was now 120 years old!
He could see very well, and he still had lots of energy.
He had led the people from slavery into freedom, and he led them through life in the desert.

During that time, Moses acted as God's spokesperson.
God would speak to Moses,
and Moses would tell the people what God said.
God often chose to speak with Moses from a mountaintop.

One day, Moses went up a mountain called Mount Nebo.
From the high place, God showed Moses land that stretched a very far distance.
Moses could see flatlands, valleys, trees, cities,
and even the sea.
God told Moses that this land
that he could see was very important.

This was a land of promise, a land where the
people could finally settle after 40 years of living and
travelling through the wilderness!
This was a place they could call home.
Here they could grow their food and raise their families.
This was a place where they could
be happy and free and where they could build and plant.
Guided by God, Moses had led the people to this new land.

After Moses saw the land and talked with God, but before the people entered the land, Moses died.

The people were very, very sad. They mourned and cried for many days. Moses had been an incredible leader. There was no one quite like him.

God had spoken to Moses face-to-face and had appointed Moses to do miracles and wonders that no one else could do. God's power was seen through Moses, and Moses was well-known throughout the whole land of Israel. When the people of Israel had finished crying about Moses, they learnt that they would have a new leader.

Before he died, Moses had chosen Joshua to become the new leader. The people of Israel listened carefully to what Joshua had to say

Wondering:

I wonder how Moses felt when God said...

 this is the goal but you won't reach it?

I wonder if he thought "I was so close"?

I wonder why God thought it was time for a new leader?

I wonder what gifts God thought Joshua had

 that would lead the people into the new world?

Prayer for Awareness and God's grace.

Just a little further...

Just a little more...

Just a little longer...

Just a little closer.

As we journey in life,
we often make the mistake of believing
that the destination is the goal,
rather than notice that the journey itself holds blessings
often unseen and unknown.

We join with Moses in
holding visions of what is possible.
**But, we are not always able
to join Moses in accepting that
we may not see the fulfillment of our dreams.**

This has meant we have missed
some of the beauty, grace,
wonder, and peace
that we could have experienced along the way.

Forgive us, God

help us to be humble enough to be the supports
that give others what they need.

**help us to encourage our fellow travelers
to achieve goals that are meant for them**

help us to treasure the journey and the gifts
you share with us

**so that your world will grow as you desire
Amen**

Words of Assurance

Though we seek better days;

though we long for greater healing;

God trusts us to follow our faith and God's heart.

As we journey together toward unseen destinations,

God goes with us, giving us what we need.

As God always has, and God always will.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn: 🎵 SOTS 3 *In God we Live and Move*

Matthew 22:34-40

Common English Bible

Great commandment

34 When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had left the Sadducees speechless, they met together. 35 One of them, a legal expert, tested him.

36 “Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

37 He replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind.

38 This is the first and greatest commandment.

39 And the second is like it:

You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.

40 All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.”

Scripture Reading(s):

Scripture is our song for the journey, the living word passed on from generation to generation to guide and inspire.

God calls us to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Reflection:

Our continuing accompaniment of Moses and the Israelites as they move through desert and wilderness to the unknown, is becoming almost depressingly familiar. Another day, another challenge. When will it ever stop?

As their chosen leader, Moses has the responsibility of keeping everyone together and not to slide back into reminiscing about the pre-Red Sea days but we also know that he also had to deal with his own worry about what he may have gotten everyone into, of moving with faith through the unknown to the unknown.

In our Moses moment today, we see him talking, again, with God. Together they affirm, again, the possibilities that God is moving reluctant, scared but beloved people toward.

As we have watched, we know that the people would make dubious decisions based on the moment, they would whine, they would give up, they would try to bring back things that didn't mean anything anymore. They hadn't liked where they had been, didn't live where they were well, and seemed to have lost sight of the need to be part of creating a journey of hope forward. They were a lot of work, but Moses kept encouraging and cajoling them to move into the newness before them.

Then God said that Moses' time as leader was done and we learn that a new leader was chosen for the rest of the way.

I wonder if God realized that Moses was exhausted and deserved a rest?

I wonder if it was time for a new perspective...a new voice because the people weren't listening to the old one? The scripture tells us that they listened carefully to Joshua.

We might see ourselves on that wilderness journey, not happy about where we are, not always digging in to make better choices, forgetting how to join in with the Holy on a journey of hope.

It seems to me that it is time for us to take a new perspective, to look at things a little bit differently, to be ready to try something new instead of trying to get back to the old.

This week, the Council of Camrose United Church took time to listen to the words of the folk who answered questions about going back. We asked if folk were ready to come back to church and we found that they were, instead, ready for a new direction.

COVID is exhausting us. We are tired of travelling this road. In the voices shared with us we found an invitation to look forward to possibilities before us, instead of jumping back

into what is behind us. We heard a caring for all of our people in the answers that we received – not just for each person’s needs or wants. God’s people, loving God’s people.

We are not going to return to full worship in our Sanctuary yet. That is not what is wanted, it is not what is safe. However, there is a yearning to be in community, to connect with each other. The words of Jesus inspire us to do what each other needs. To love our neighbours in new ways, to put their needs above our own, to look at ways of supporting each other as we would want to be supported and loved.

Looking at options with a view to newness the church is shaking off some of it’s tiredness and inviting energy back. We’ll have to learn a few new habits – but we believe that this travelling band of people have learned enough that we can do that too.

Small groups and small committees are coming back into our building... sharing the responsibility of keeping our spaces clean and safe for all.

We are going to offer small group worship through the week. Numbers at each session will be limited and you’ll need to pre-register, but we will offer each other a space to hear God and tell our stories – no whining allowed!

Children’s ministry is gearing up to re-connect with children, inviting them into faith adventures by picking up activity packs and then sharing their learning with us.

It’s not the same as where we were, but we’re going to be the new voices that God needs to get us to the next place.

So, as people of God, travelling a road that needs a bit of tender, loving care, what new ways can we see to journey together? How can we resist the grumbling and fear so that we can move ahead with God?

Moses shows us tenacity – never giving up... just keep walking.

Joshua shows us a willingness to take on new roles.

Jesus tells us – put God first. Know that God is with us, never give up on the strength and faith that binds us together in the Holy.

Jesus tells us – take care of each other. Do what we need to do to keep it together. Be careful and full of care.

Wherever we are

how are we responding to God's call to follow?

Are we digging in to what was?

Are we ready to find a way to travel together with love?

Loving God, Loving our Neighbour as ourselves.

What better way is there to journey together?

Amen.

Offering Invitation

As followers and prophets of God,

what can we see ahead that needs our support to succeed?

Are we the next leaders that God is calling into service?

What gifts are we sharing so that

the dreams and visions of God can come to life?

As we consider how our faith is seen to be lived in the world,

let us offer support to God's church

so that it may, too, live God's love where it is needed most.

Minute for Mission:

Prayer of Dedication:

As people following through the wilderness, towards a better place that only you can see, God, we offer our gifts to you.

May we offer them in the knowledge that they are tools for loving your world, your creatures, all people.

May we be content to have you use them as you see best.

Amen.

☩ Hymn: ♪ SOTS 9 Strength for the journey.

Prayers from God's People, For God's People

Loving God,

we are grateful that you are with us always.

You are with us as we embark upon

journeys of life and faith

journeys of family and career,

journeys of friendship and imagination,

journeys of community building.

**And we live, always, with the hope
that our living will reflect your loving.**

We stop on our journey to give thanks and pray
for our leaders: the prophets of our world who hold up the
visions and show us the potential we can bring forth.

**For those who give their best to bring us forward
out of violence, out of bewilderment, out of wilderness,
into places of rest, peace and welcome.**

For those who begin the journey with us,
but find themselves drawn to other purposes
and make space for new leaders to share their gifts.

**May they hear your voice, O God,
guiding them as they journey.**

We pray for the ones who, rather than sitting waiting for
something to do, get busy.

**The ones who are action people
and offer their energy to make us whole.**

Those who give us comfort

Those who put their own lives on hold for ours

**Those who see the vision and work towards it
even when we don't understand.**

Those who know the power of community
even when the community is worn and tired.

**May they hear your voice, O God,
guiding them as they journey.**

We pray for those who are hurting

Those who are ill

Those who are mourning

Those who live with violence

Those who live without sustenance and shelter.

Those who are worried because

they can't see the end of a journey that feels so long.

Be with them, we pray, that they will feel

your great compassion and strength

moving them into peacefulness and joy.

May they hear your voice, O God,

guiding them as they journey.

We pray for ourselves,

That we will be aware that we are

on a journey to be your people on Earth;

that even though we can't see the goal

we will trust that

your love will take us to

the people and places that are

where you need us to be.

May we hear your voice, O God,

guiding us as we journey.

Amen.

✠ Sending Forth and Blessing

As we go emerge from this time of worship,

Joining once again God journey in the world

May we know that God's love

surrounds us and holds us.

May we see God's face in the world,

May we be God's face in the world.

Let us trust that God will guide us and be with us.

As God always has

As God always will.

Amen.

Changing the Christ Candle:

The light of Christ, shining into all the corners of the earth, showing us where we are and where we are meant to be. The Spirit of God. Breathe it in...and know that God is with us wherever we go.

œ Sending Song: ♪ VU#651 Guide my, O Thou Great Jehovah

Acknowledgements

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