



**Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge of the United Church At
Home Worship
Sunday September 6, 2020**



Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan

Your Worship Space

*As we continue our time apart, due to restrictions related to the pandemic, we offer to you this service of worship, for your use personally, and with your friends and family. You are welcome to share it with others. **Due to technical difficulties, there will NOT be a recorded version of this week's service on our Facebook group, Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge.***

Try to create a special space for your time of worship. It could be as simple as lighting a candle (either flame or battery); or placing a small cross or a symbol that has meaning for you in front of you. I sometimes like to sit by a window, so I can look out on the garden, and on nice days, I sit on my deck for my worship time.

You might want to write in a journal, as you reflect on the worship experience. Or, perhaps call a friend and share this time with them over the phone. If you are with one or two others, enjoy the conversation that arises...as you practise safe distancing. For interest, and further reflection, consider seeking out another church's offerings and how their message speaks to you, as well. You will find a listing of other churches within Chinook Winds Region that are offering online worship on our website www.oldsunited.ca or www.sundreunited.ca

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.*

Opening Call

Jesus said: Wherever two or three people are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them. As followers of Jesus, we worship...together in spirit, even if we are apart physically. Together, we rejoice with the Spirit who inspires us to worship the God who utterly loves us, and to celebrate Christ who still lives among us.

Prayer

As the warmth of the summer turns to the coolness of autumn and leaves being to change their hue, may we know your presence with us, O God. As the plantings of spring and summer turn to the abundance of harvest, may our hearts turn with gratitude to you, O Creator of all. Amen.

Special Music **It's Song of Praise to the Maker** Download Here:
<https://youtu.be/Z6JSpb9zvzo>

Reading for today **Exodus 12:1-14**

This week's passage is about freedom from slavery, new beginning, and leaving behind. It is about life and death. It teaches us how to get ready to move fast. It is the story of the first Passover.

The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: ²This month shall mark for you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year for you. ³Tell the whole congregation of Israel that on the tenth of this month they are to take a lamb for each family, a lamb for each household.

⁴If a household is too small for a whole lamb, it shall join its closest neighbor in obtaining one; the lamb shall be divided in proportion to the number of people who eat of it. ⁵Your lamb shall be without blemish, a year-old male; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembled congregation of Israel shall slaughter it at twilight.

⁷They shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ⁸They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹Do not eat any of it raw or boiled in water, but roasted over the fire, with its head, legs, and inner organs. ¹⁰You shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn.

¹¹This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly. It is the passover of the LORD. ¹²For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live: when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance.

A Message for Today

We are in a time of transition – in both church and society. We are an aging society, and church. Our economic realities are changing – as we realize we need to become less reliant on our dependency on oil and gas revenues, and more considerate of how we care for our environment.



And with the current pandemic – change has been thrust upon us in ways that have been difficult. The impact on how we connect with one another, on issues of isolation, on travel, and so on, have been huge.

If only there was a way to ‘passover’ the impacts of COVID 19. It is concerning that we are being told that some of the related changes will be with us for another year or more, as this pandemic runs its course.

We, in our humanity, generally don’t like change. Few of us welcome change with open arms. Yet I can’t help but hearing the voice of my grandmother reminding us kids that the only things that are certain in life are death and taxes, and that change was to be expected as we journeyed through life. She was a wise woman, who would remind us that she was born in the days of horse and buggy, and lived to see a man walking on the moon. She also had the first telephone in the town of Black Diamond...not because of wealth or status...but because my grandpa was a lineman for AGT. Of course everyone had to drop by to make calls, and there was always a good hot cup of tea to go with the call.

Things in the church have been in flux for years – denominationally, and also with us locally. It has been just 4 years since we formally became a pastoral charge, after almost 2 years living with a memorandum of understanding.

We are at a point in the life of our communities of faith – both Olds and Sundre, denomination, that we must explore and consider change. In Olds, we have the United Futures Team that has been working through the spring and summer to look at some possibilities. Olds folks will be seeing some information from that team in your mailboxes this week, and they look forward to receiving your responses.

Also, we are beginning a process of conversation and discernment with the congregations along the highway 2 corridor. (I am actually looking for a couple of people from each of Olds and Sundre to be a part of that- they need not be on the board...interested in our future and how we relate to our neighbours is key, however.

We have shifted and changed before. It has been part of the journey of our lives as congregations, and as a pastoral charge. We will shift and change again, and God will continue to inspire and guide us on the way.

Today’s reading from Exodus is one of those passages that tells us a story of impending change, and a long journey about to begin.

As I was preparing for today, I did what I often do – went to one of the sites that offers real world reflections on the scriptures, from the perspective of authors and theologians that come from faith traditions closely related to our own United Church traditions and theologies. The author, Anatheia-Portier Young writes

about this passage and brings to mind for me the realities of how we, as church, must be prepared for change.

She talks about how the passage marks time, and the idea that the author is telling God's people that the time is for them – a time to anticipate a future in the land that God has promised for them.

Portier Young says "To arrive at that future, the people must first leave the past. They must leave Egypt." *Anathea Portier Young*

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=2178

As in any kind of impending change – we must leave behind things that we cannot take with us. This is not always an easy thing to do. Any of you who have tried to downsize, to relocate to a new place to live know that.

There are pieces of the past that can come along for the journey, but they are small...little momentos of a much bigger reality, of much bigger memories and stories. I think of the time we spent downsizing my parents things...first to determine what to take to the seniors residence suite they shared, and then again to move dad into memory care, and a much smaller living space. Each time, there was a process of discerning what to let go of and what to take along. Not an easy task, but a necessary one. In order to move forward, in order to meet change, letting go needs to happen.

What are the things we may need to let go, in order to become the church of our future? What things are we able to treasure, and carry with us along the journey, to inspire us and help us on the way.

The people of Israel had to let go too. They were given clear instructions on the preparations that needed to happen, on how to get ready and prepare for the freedom from the bondage they had been experiencing. The thing was, they were preparing for change...for an unknown future...and moving forward into the unknown could be as chaotic as what they had been experiencing in Egypt...and at least Egypt had become familiar.

You know what that's like...the situation may not be the best, but it's familiar. To change the situation, well that means facing an unknown future. That can be more intimidating than the situation we're already in. It's human nature to be afraid of what we don't know.

Now, there is a piece of instruction given to the Israelites that rings true for me. It's in that direction to act as the whole congregation of Israel...to act as community, together. And further, where households are too small to obtain a lamb, to join with another household...act as neighbour supporting neighbour. Look out for the littlest, the least. Take care of each other. Be community.

There's a message in there for us, I believe as we enter into this journey of missional discernment with our neighbouring United Churches.

There's more to the message in the passage too. In all this, dress for travel...sandals on...staff in hand...be ready for movement, for change. It's coming. Work together, support one another...get ready, together. The journey is about to begin, the journey to a new future. Get ready, as community, to travel forward in faith.

That's the message I think we need to hear...as faith communities, as people engaging in looking ahead to the new things that are emerging for us as faith communities.

The Exodus people of biblical times trusted that God was with them. May we too put our trust in God, as we step into the future with faith and hope. Amen.

Special Music **All Who Hunger** download here:
<https://youtu.be/hFWnGmc0vGs>

This Week's Minute for Mission



Published on:
June 30, 2020

Mission & Service has been supporting the Deaf ministry in Newfoundland and Labrador for 33 years.

In 1987, the School for the Deaf in St. John's wrote a letter to the local presbytery requesting pastoral care on behalf of the United Church. Beverley Ares, a lay delegate, was asked to consider the role. She was interested but concerned that she didn't know sign language. Nonetheless, she answered the call, first as a volunteer and then as an employee. Beverley began learning American Sign Language and also took courses in theology. She was a quick study. Over the next 23 years she served the students and their families as an interpreter at worship services at First United Church in Mount Pearl, as a faith formation

leader at the school, as an advocate for the Deaf community, and as a pastoral care provider and friend.

But by 2010, enrollment was greatly declining and the provincial government decided to close the school. Thanks to the vision and commitment of a local ecumenical committee, the Deaf ministry continued. Today, Beverley and others continue to provide community, worship leadership, and pastoral care to the Deaf community in and around St. John's. Thanks to the support of local churches and Mission & Service, individuals like Beverley have made a real difference in the lives of many Deaf children and adults and their families.

Nancy Emberly, a former student, says, "While I attended church regularly as a child, I didn't understand who God was until I met Beverley." Nancy is now a teacher and has replaced Beverley as the coordinator of Deaf ministry in Newfoundland.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.

Prayers for this day

O God on this Labour Day Sunday, we hold up all before you all those who work: those whose wages barely afford them a living, those who labour under poor working conditions, those who are not recognized for their efforts. We give thanks for those who work to ensure the rights of workers are upheld.

We pray also for routine and essential work – especially for those who risk health and live in service of others.

We pray for the work of the church, for administrators and clergy, for the ministry of congregation members and community supporters. As children and teachers and families re-enter schools and develop new routines, we pray that they do so with safety and health in mind.

As we prepare to begin worshipping together again next week, we hold in prayer those for whom health and safety concerns mean they will not be able to gather with us in person, and we hold them in love.

God of grace and compassion, we take a moment to pray for those in our communities of faith who are living with loss, and those who are struggling with illness. May your healing love enfold them.

Gracious and loving God, we trust that you hold all of our prayers – these written here, and those we hold in our hearts. Wrap us in love as we share the words of Jesus.



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

May the love that brought us into being fill us with hope.
May the peace that passes understanding be upon us all.
May the joy that lives where justice is be alive in each and every one of us. Amen.

Thank you so much for using this worship resource! Feel free to share it! You will also find worship and reflective posts on our Facebook Group – Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge. Feel free to invite others to join that group.

We are grateful for your connection to the Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge, and to both Olds and Sundre United Churches. As the time of COVID 19 social distancing progresses, know that we are still the United Church in our communities, striving to serve you and the community. Our ability to do that requires financial support, and we are so very grateful for those who are able to continue to support us in these challenging times. We also are aware for some, this time of pandemic has created hardship, and we pray for peace and hope.

If you already give to the church with PAR (Pre-Authorized Giving) things will carry on as usual, unless you need to make a change. If so, call the church office for assistance with that.

If you give through envelopes, it would be greatly appreciated if you would mail your offering in, or bring it to the office, however please call first to confirm someone is there, as in these days our staff must be cautious as well.

And finally, if you are not a regular giver, but wish to support our ministries, we would gratefully accept your gift. Our church mailing addresses are:

Olds United Church 4810 50th Street, Olds AB. T4H 1E4

and

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

*And the good news...Olds and Sundre United Churches will resume worship on
September 13th, 2020*

A letter will be sent out explaining all precautions and COVID safety protocol, this coming week. It is our hope that you will discern your own personal risk level, and decide if you will join us. We will also be posting worship to our website, and hope to continue recording worship and posting it to our Facebook Group.

**Please note that effective September 13 – Olds will worship at 9:30, to
accommodate Redemption Church's worship at 11:00
Sundre will worship at the usual time of 1:30.**

Praise be!

