



We are
Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge
Knox Didsbury Pastoral Charge
of the United Church of Canada
Sunday October 10th, 2021 Thanksgiving Sunday
Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan



Our mission statements:

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

People of God, rejoice and be glad!

The world is full of wonder; God's creation echoes with joy.

When life becomes a challenge,

God can fill us with dreams of hope and courage.

By God's love and grace, our sorrows can become thanksgivings, and our tears can become fountains of grace.

Let us rejoice and give thanks!

Hymn VU 227 For the Fruit of All Creation

Opening Prayer

Gracious God: when we forget to share, when we forget to give thanks, when we forget that you are with us, when we forget to care for others, so that all have reason to celebrate and give thanks, forgive us. Help

us to learn new ways of thanksgiving and thanks-living. Help us remember that just as the changing seasons are part of your eternal cycle of life, you know that we grow and change. We are grateful that you forgive us for the things we have done, or have left undone. In praise and thanksgiving, Amen.

Time with Children “God Will Take Care of You”

(based on Matthew 6: 25-33)

Lectionary Story Bible: Year B by Ralph Milton. 2008, Wood Lake Publishing

Hymn VU 820 Make a Joyful Noise

Scripture Psalm 126 – Harvest Thanksgiving

God has been good to us.

The storm clouds gathered, the hail hung overhead – but it passed by.

Then we laughed and danced;

Our pearls of joy echoed across the lands.

Celebration spread faster than fire through autumn grass,

Faster than rumours on a summer night.

For God has done great things for us.

We were overcome with gratitude.

The desert is not kind, O God.

It demands living on the edge of disaster.

Give us some sparkling springs!

We watered the desert with our tears;

With our hearts in our mouths, we watched the green shoots stretch up.

We risked everything on the seeds we planted;

We sank our lives into this soil.

Now the harvest has come a hundredfold.

God, you have renewed our lives.

From Everyday Psalms by James Taylor; copyright 1994, 2005, 2006, 2010. Woodlake Publishing Inc. Used with permission.

Response to the Scripture Reading

This is the witness of the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Over the past couple of weeks, late in the afternoon, I have had the pleasure of sitting in my office in Olds, looking out those wonderful big windows, and watching all kinds of birds. Several magpies; lots and lots of robins, and this week, many flickers (those small, colourful woodpeckers).

All of them were busy, busy birds – consuming whatever delicacies they were finding in the lawn. Filling up their little bodies, preparing for the long winter ahead. (Hopefully not too long.) I did find myself wondering, the day I saw all the robins, why they were still in our part of the world, and why they hadn't headed south.

I was worried about those little robins, and whether they would get further south before the weather turns, before the snows come. Yes – I was worried...but were the birds? It sure didn't look like it. Those little birds just seemed so very content...happy in the abundant offering that the lawn had set before them.

Why was I so worried? Why couldn't I trust that those wonderful little creatures that are often the first ones to let us know that spring has arrived would also know when winter is coming? Why couldn't I trust the rhythms of God's creation?

That moment of worry took away from the moments of joy in watching those little birds hopping around the lawn enjoying a late lunch. And could my worry about those little birds change anything – for them or for me?

“²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?”

Those are some of the words taken from the NRS bible version of the story I shared earlier during Children's Time. The birds, the beautiful lilies in the garden that don't worry about how they are clothed.

How many of you worry about what you wear? About how you are going to look when you go out each day?

Then there's some of the other little things we worry about. Will there be enough food on the table for our thanksgiving feast? Will our guests all get along?

These days, one wonders – and let's be honest – we worry - if the guests will get into an argument over vaccinations or masks; or politics – especially given that we've been on election mode for most of the fall – both federal and municipal. It does make me sad to see how COVID has become politicized, and how it has created conflict among friends and family – those vaccinated and those not; those who mask and those who don't; those who follow restrictions and those who don't.

Do I worry about that? You bet I do.

²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?"

No, we can't. And in fact, science and medical research have proven that worry can actually take hours off of our lives.

What can I do with my worry? I can give it to God. I can pray about those worries. And I can also take action myself. I can do my best to be kind and compassionate in all my relationships – with those who think like me, and with those who don't. For at the end of the day, isn't that what Jesus would do?

Wouldn't he sit down and have a meal with someone who thought differently than he did, and talk it out, or tell a story. Wouldn't he love them, as strongly as ever he could?

As followers of his way, how might we meet those moments of worry, or conflict, and find the joy in life?

We are in the season of giving thanks. What about if we sought out opportunities to name our gratitudes for each person we encountered...to them. What if we took a moment out of each encounter to look for the good, the positive, to say things like "I appreciate you, and how you did this." Or "Thank you for sharing your time."

Perhaps write a note, or an email, or a text.

Or do something kind for another. Practice small acts of kindness. Show your care and compassion. Do your part to let people know that God loves them more than the little birds, more than the lilies of the field.

I spoke a few weeks ago about the reality that people will trust us more by how we act, by what we do than by what we say.

Give gratitude. Live gratitude. Give thanks, Live thanks. Take the abundant love that you have received from God, and let the world know that it is that love that is the source of peace, hope and joy. And let the world know that God's love is there for them, too.

I do want to share something with you that ties in to what we worry about, what we value, and where we find moments of joy and gratitude. I'm not often one to share stories from the internet – but this one fits...author unknown...

One day a very wealthy father took his son on a trip to the country for the sole purpose of showing his son how it was to be poor. They spent a few days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family.

After their return from the trip, the father asked his son how he liked the trip. "It was great, Dad," the son replied. "Did you see how poor people can be?" the father asked. "Oh Yeah," said the son.

"So what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father. The son answered, "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night. Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon.

We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others.

We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them." The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added, "It showed me just how poor we really are."

Too many times we forget what we have and concentrate on what we don't have. What is one person's worthless object is another's prize possession. It is all based on one's perspective.

Sometimes it takes the perspective of a child to remind us what's important.

Hymn VU 517 Praise God for the Harvest

This Week's Minute for Mission

"Dignity is on the Menu"

Published On: September 20, 2021

Most of us appreciate a well-dressed table and can afford to go out for dinner from time to time. Many of us will be sitting down to elaborate Thanksgiving dinners. Our daily experience doesn't involve standing in line for every single meal with a tray in hand.

That's why special dinners like Café Cinq-Zéro-Sept that Ottawa-based Mission & Service partner Centre 507 hosts are so important. Several times a year, the adult drop-in centre sets up a small room for a special fine-dining meal with gourmet food, decorations, and candlelight. For just two dollars, participants have their choice of meal accompanied by full service and great company.



“We realized that people in our community struggling with poverty had to wait in line a long time for a meal. When they were served, they weren’t given any choice and felt pressured to leave so that the next person could be served. That’s why we started Café Cinq-Zéro-Sept,” says Richard LeBlanc, Centre 507’s Executive Director. “We saw such a change in how people felt about themselves after experiencing this kind of a meal that our ultimate goal is that this dining experience becomes the norm rather than the exception.”

While COVID-19 has been challenging, it has also helped the drop-in take an important step toward achieving their goal. “One of the great things that happened is that when COVID hit, we had to start a system where everyone sat down and was served,” says LeBlanc.

Centre 507 now serves 25 people at sit-down meals and provides 150 people with meals to go each day. The café has incorporated a training program where participants learn to be servers, too. “We are taking the next step toward achieving our goal. We aren’t going back to line-ups after the pandemic,” vows LeBlanc.

Thank you for giving generously through [Mission & Service](#). Your support helps create a world where everyone has enough food AND it’s served with dignity.

A Stewardship Message Barb Olsen

Hymn S of S 38 This Little Light of Mine
(vs. 1, 2, & 3)

Offertory Music MV 191 What Can I Do?

Offertory Prayer

As you refresh us with all your gifts, O God, we offer our gifts, so that others may be touched by your grace. In gratitude we share from our abundance. Amen.

Transfer of Membership

Today we welcome Bob and Susan MacKenzie into full membership in the United Church of Canada, here at Olds United Church.



Tammy: At various moments on the journey of life in Christ, we have opportunity to reaffirm and renew the faith proclaimed in baptism. Today, we gather to reaffirm the power of the Holy Spirit and celebrate the place of Bob and Susan in the Olds United Church family. We give thanks for their gifts, as witnessed in this community, and promise to continue to walk with them in faith.

Olds UC Representative: On behalf of the congregation of Olds United Church, I present Susan and Bob, who seek to transfer their memberships from Knox United Church (Three Hills) to Olds United Church.

Tammy: Do you believe in one God, who is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new, and who works in us and others by the Spirit?

Susan and Bob: I do, by the grace of God.

Tammy: Do you seek to resist evil and live in love and just?

Susan and Bob: I do, by the grace of God.

Tammy: Will you proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, in your words and actions?

Susan and Bob: I will, God being my helper.

Tammy: Will you continue to join with your family of faith in this community, to celebrate God's presence, live with respect in creation, and love and serve others?

Susan and Bob: I will, God being my helper.

Tammy (to the congregation): As a baptized and baptizing church, let us pledge to Bob and Susan our continued support and care.

Congregation: *We welcome you into our community of faith, and we will continue to support you, walk with you, and grow with you. With God's help we will live out our baptism as a loving community in Christ: nurturing one another in faith, upholding one another in prayer, encouraging one another in God's work.*

Prayer *(in unison)*

Gracious God, giver of life, you have called us by name and pledge to each of us your faithful love. We give thanks that Bob and Susan have chosen to join our family of faith. May we all be reminded of the promises of baptism. Renew us that we may serve you with joy, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers for the Day

O God of poverty and plenty, in this season of thanksgiving, open our hearts and widen our tables, that every hunger may be fed, that the abundant land may be cared for, and the labour of all hands will be valued.

God of new life, we pray for those who live with violence or war – that peace may come and your creation may not live in fear.

God of community, we pray for all who lead in governments...and we pray for our country, for those who courageously stood as candidates in our federal election, and those who are doing so in our municipal elections. May we each be guided with your wisdom to exercise our right and responsibility to vote, and may those who are successful candidates be guided by wisdom and integrity in their leadership.

We pray for our community and our church, that we may be filled with your love as we live in relationship with one another. We give thanks for the new opportunities arising out of our Memorandum of Understanding with Olds, Knox and Sundre.

As we journey into the week ahead, we hold in prayer all those who are in need of your healing love. We pray for those who have lost loved ones in the past weeks, those who are struggling with illness, or undergoing tests or treatments.

We take a moment of silence to lift to you the unspoken prayers of our hearts...

We offer you these our prayers, loving God, with praise and thanksgiving, and join our voices together, sharing the words that Jesus taught us 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 VU 242 Let All Things Now Living

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 and Knox (Didsbury) Pastoral Charge worship experience.

Beginning in October, Olds and Didsbury will alternate hosting live worship, while live-streaming to the other church. You are welcome to attend either location at 9:30.

Sundre continues to have in- person worship at 1:30. All are welcome there as well.

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, TOM OWO

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

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