



Sunday,, February 4, 2024

“Called by God, as disciples of Jesus, The United Church of Canada seeks to be a bold, connected, evolving church of diverse, courageous, hope-filled communities united in deep spirituality, inspiring worship, and daring justice.”

LAKE OF BAYS PASTORAL CHARGE

Faith communities of
Pioneer Memorial in Hillside,
Stewart Memorial in Dwight
Knox United in Dorset.

Shared Winter services in Pioneer Hall, 10:30 a.m.

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WE GATHER

Welcome

Family Life and Work

Acknowledgement of the Land

When we dance the earth trembles.

When our steps fall on the earth

we feel the shudder of life beneath us,

and the earth feels the beating of our hearts,

and we become one with the earth.

We shall not sever ourselves from the earth.

We must chant our being, and we must dance in time with the rhythms of the earth.

We must keep the earth. RIP N. Scott Momaday

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Call to Worship: (responsive)

People of God, rejoice in God's presence!

As we praise and pray, we know God is with us.

People of God, rejoice in this faith community!

As we support each other, we experience God with us.

People of God, rejoice in our Christian faith!

As we follow the way of Jesus, we are thankful that God is with us.

Opening Hymn: Come and Find the Quiet Centre VU#374

1 Come and find the quiet centre
 in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter,
 clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter,
 be at peace, and simply be.

2 Silence is a friend who claims us,

cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us,
knows our being, face to face,
making space within our thinking,
lifting shades to show the sun,
raising courage when we're shrinking,
finding scope for faith begun.

3 In the Spirit let us travel,
open to each other's pain,
let our loves and fears unravel,
celebrate the space we gain:
there's a place for deepest dreaming,
there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming
there is always room to spare!

Prayer of Approach (unison)

**Here we are, God,
eagerly seeking your healing touch.
We come with bruises and cuts,
with weariness and fatigue,
with wounds hidden and aches concealed.
We come as broken people hoping for new life.
Reach out your hand, we pray,
to fill us with wonder,
that we may be renewed, recharged, and re-formed.
Bless us with your Spirit that we may find your way with Christ. Amen.
Amen**

WE LISTEN

Reading: Mark 1:29-39

Reader: Hear what the Spirit is Saying to the church

Response: Thanks be to God.

Hymn: In the Quiet Curve of Evening *VU 278*

1 In the quiet curve of evening,
in the sinking of the days,
in the silky void of darkness, you are there.
In the lapses of my breathing,
in the space between my ways,
in the crater carved by sadness, you are there.
You are there, you are there, you are there.

2 In the rests between the phrases,
in the cracks between the stars,
in the gaps between the meaning, you are there.
In the melting down of endings,
in the cooling of the sun,
in the solstice of the winter, you are there.
You are there, you are there, you are there.

3 In the mystery of my hungers,
in the silence of my rooms,
in the cloud of my unknowing, you are there.

In the empty cave of grieving,
in the desert of my dreams,
in the tunnel of my sorrow, you are there.
You are there, you are there, you are there.

Sermon/reflection: Wilderness Healer

Sermon Notes for a sermon in progress:

Sallie McFague is one of my favourite theologians. Her book “Metaphorical theology” helped me to find a place within Christianity where I could find sustenance and hope.

In her recent book “A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming she says “There is a deep desire within each of us—our wild space—that tells us a different world is possible.”

“Wild space” she says “ is that part of each of us that doesn’t quite fit into our conventional worlds; it is that part of our own personal world that doesn’t completely overlap with the ordinary world—for us, this is the consumer market-oriented, individualistic, greedy world.

Jesus had a lot of wild space; in fact, we could say that Jesus was a wild man—a wilderness powered man. He imagined and taught with authority about what he called the kingdom of God, where God’s irrepressible presence and God’s uncontrollable love are what the Christian story is all about. It is a story that is about healing and wholeness and fearlessness.

God's love is a wild and wonderful love that resists all the evil powers that would try to control and dominate us. God's love fills us up and surrounds us and assures us that we are precious and—not only that—filled with the Spirit we too, like Jesus, can be filled with power so that we do not fear the principalities and the powers in our world that make us feel helpless and small and powerless.

Jesus came out of his wilderness experience proclaiming this wild and wonderful message of God's love. Not only did he proclaim it but he acted upon it by reaching out to touch people with healing and release.

What we learn from our gospel story today is that this wilderness power was not a once and for all experience. Jesus needed to connect and reconnect with the Source of this power over and over again. And here we catch a glimpse of Jesus' intentional prayer life, his spiritual practice.

If we can simply recognize this about Jesus and make a spiritual practice a part of our daily lives—we will find ourselves experiencing what is spoken about in our reading today in Isaiah—

“ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. 40:30 Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for

the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Sallie McFague's four conversion experiences and her work at Vancouver School of Theology as Theologian in Residence.

So let me tell you two stories out of my own life.

Story about my Buddhist encounter and discovery of Jesus prayer.

My “death of God” experience---a voice deep down and all around “Meg, listen to me. Your image of me has changed—but I have not changed. I am here—I am still here as I always have been.”

Out of this experience has come the realization that God's presence is a deep down unavoidable mystery for which we have many names. Out of this experience I have found the ground for an exploration into the various experiences of God that people from many and varied backgrounds have described. I have also found the ground from which to be able to accept and respect images with which for the longest time I had a great deal of difficulty. I have been able to make my peace with God the Father.

And so –to summarize.

Make time to be alone with God. Take time to be alone with God. Allow yourself to enter a place of unknowing, a place beyond what words can say—and enter into the holy act of God-wrestling in whatever way best suits you at this time in your life—and then say “Amen. May this be the ground from which all my actions grow.”

WE RESPOND

Offertory Hymn “Grant Us, God, the Grace of Giving” VU#540

Grant us, God, the grace of giving,
with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living
we may offer faithfully.

Offertory/Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

The Lord’s Prayer (Neil Douglas Klotz translation of the Aramaic)

Abwoon d’bwashmaya

O Birther!

Father-Mother of the Cosmos/ you create all that moves in light.

Nethqadash shmakh

Focus your light within us and make it useful

Teytey malkuthakh

Create your reign of unity now—through our firey hearts and willing hands.

Nehwey sebyanach aykanna d’bwashmaya aph b’arha.

Your one desire then acts with ours,
as in all light, so in all forms.

Habwlan lachma d’sunqanan yaomana.

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight:
subsistence for the call of growing life.

Washboqlan khaubayn (wakhtahayn)

aykana daph khnan shbwoqan l’khayyabayn.

Loose the cords of mistakes binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others’ guilt.

VWela tahlan l’nesyuna

Don’t let us enter forgetfulness

Ela patzan min bisha.

But free us from unripeness

Metol dilakhie malkutha wahayla wateshbukhta l'ahlam almin.

From you is born all ruling will, the power and the life to do,
the song that beautifies all, from age to age it renews.

Ameyn.

Truly empower these statements—
may they be the source from which all our actions grow.

Amen.

Closing Hymn: Spirit Open My Heart MV#79

Refrain:

Spirit open my heart
To the joy and pain of living
As you love may I love
In receiving and in giving Spirit,
open my heart

1 God, replace my stony heart
with a heart that's kind and tender.

All my coldness and fear
to your grace I now surrender.

Refrain:

Spirit open my heart
To the joy and pain of living
As you love may I love
In receiving and in giving Spirit,
open my heart

2 Write your love upon my heart
as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word, and deed,
may my living bring you glory.

Refrain:

Spirit open my heart
To the joy and pain of living
As you love may I love
In receiving and in giving Spirit,
open my heart

3 May I weep with those who weep,
share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ,
may we welcome one another.

Refrain:

Spirit open my heart
To the joy and pain of living
As you love may I love
In receiving and in giving Spirit,
open my heart

Commissioning and Benediction

We go from this time of worship
With a daring and courageous love.
And as we go may we experience the blessing of God
deep in our hearts
Open to both the joy and pain of living

now and always Amen

Calendar of upcoming Events

- Feb 4** Epiphany 5 Worship
Feb 11 Transfiguration Sunday-Communion. Set up for Shrove Tuesday!!!
Helpers needed.
Feb 13 Shrove Tuesday Pancake Lunch 11:30 am 1:30 p.m.
Feb 14 ASH WEDNESDAY beginning of Lent .
Feb18 First Sunday in Lent.
Feb 20 Lenten Study Group 3:30-5pm. Pioneer Hall
Feb 22 Circle Dance 6:30-800 Pioneer Hall
Feb 25 Second Sunday in Lent - Worship Meeting following lunch
Feb 29-Mar 3. Dot the T Productions presents "Shirley Valentine" In Pioneer Hall with Jodie Auckland
March 3 World Day of Prayer service
March 5 Lenten Study group participates in the Mod Squad online Book Group 3:30-5 pm. Pioneer Hall

LENTEN STUDY BOOK AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

ACT/FAST: "SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR A CLIMATE IN CRISIS" Study group meets every Tuesday 3:30-5pm

Ongoing Stewardship:

There are several different options for you to gift your offering to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge. **1.**In person and on the plate. **2.**Via PAR (preauthorized remittance). Then you don't have to think about it again. Money is withdrawn monthly **3.** By e-transfer. The email address for donations via e-transfer is lobunitedchurches@gmail.com In the subject line/comment please identify to which of the Churches you wish to donate, Pioneer in Hillside, Stewart in Dwight or Knox in Dorset. **4.** By cheque: If you send a cheque, please make it out to Lake of Bays Pastoral Charge and mail it to: LOB United Churches, P.O. Box 196, Dwight, ON P0A 1H0

