

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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3rd Pentecost Sunday, June 13th, 2021

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3rd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 13, 2021

11:00 a.m. Morning Prayer

OPENING HYMN

We would like to begin by acknowledging that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg Peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

Celebrant: Lord, open our lips,

People: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Celebrant: O God, make speed to save us.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Quietly accept the message planted in your hearts; it can bring you salvation. James 1.21

VENITE

PSALM 95.1–7

Celebrant: Come, let us sing to the Lord;

People: let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

Celebrant: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving

People: and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

Celebrant: For the Lord is a great God,

People: and a great king above all gods.

Celebrant: In his hand are the caverns of the earth,

People: and the heights of the hills are his also.

Celebrant: The sea is his for he made it,

People: and his hands have moulded the dry land.

Celebrant: Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,

People: and kneel before the Lord our maker.

Celebrant: For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

People: Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

THE PSALMS

PSALM 92:1-4, 12-15

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;2 to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands, I sing for joy.

The righteous flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God.

In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap, showing that the LORD is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

People: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever. Amen.

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

THE READINGS

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL 17:22-24

Thus says the Lord GOD: I myself will take a sprig from the lofty top of a cedar; I will set it out. I will break off a tender one from the topmost of its young twigs; I myself will plant it on a high and lofty mountain. On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, in order that it may produce boughs and bear fruit, and become a noble cedar. Under it every kind of bird will live; in the shade of its branches will nest winged creatures of every kind. All the trees of the field shall know that I am the LORD. I bring low the high tree, I make high the low tree; I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish. I the LORD have spoken; I will accomplish it.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

A READING FROM THE SECOND BOOK OF CORINTHIANS 5:6-10, 14-17

So, we are always confident; even though we know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord -- for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we do have confidence, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

For all of us must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive recompense for what has been done in the body, whether good or evil. For the love of Christ urges us on because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MARK 4:26-34

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

He also said, "The kingdom of God is as if someone would scatter seed on the ground, and would sleep and rise night and day, and the seed would sprout and grow, he does not know how. The earth produces of itself, first the stalk, then the head, then the full grain in the head. But when the grain is ripe, at once he goes in with his sickle, because the harvest has come."

He also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples.

The Gospel of Christ.

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON

Small beginnings – big things

The Bible has so many wonderful images of growth and regeneration. This morning – right from the Psalm, the readings from Ezekiel and 2 Corinthians and in the Gospel – there is this common thread. The Psalmist reminds us that “the righteous” – those who stand in right relationship to God and their neighbour – “flourish like the palm tree and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the LORD; they flourish in the courts of our God. In old age they still produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap.” While the language and imagery might not be something we use in our common context and culture, the imagery carries with it the sense of ongoing growth, abundance and vitality.

The same is true of our reading from Ezekiel. While it might be hard for us to place ourselves on the dry slopes of the hills and mountains of the Lebanon and Palestine where these humongous cedars flourish, we might have no difficulty appreciating the imagery of a tree that is abundant and encompassing that life finds shelter in it.

That same imagery of abundance and flourishing is carried through in the two parables about the Kingdom of God from the Gospel today. The first is of a crop that a farmer plants that flourishes and grows and is set for harvest and – by implication – for the feeding of many. The second is of a mustard seed that flourishes and becomes a large dense bush that shelters new life.

However, we imagine these images they all start from a common assumption, that from a small beginning – whether a date palm or a sprig from a cedar or a kernel of grain or a mustard seed – something productive,

flourishing and life giving emerges under the care of God. That sometimes we need to look at the small beginnings of God's work in faith to see the fullness and abundance of God's generosity. That most times we need to be willing to start small as we follow God's initiative and believe that God has something far greater in mind.

Each of these images has a sense of surprise to it – an old date palm that is still fruitful, a small sprig of cedar that is broken off, planted at some incredible height, takes root and become a giant tree; seed that is hand cast or scattered on the ground and simply grows for no reason; this tiny little mustard seed that produces something so encompassing – because the input is so small, against common wisdom, accidental and the outcome is so unbelievable, against all odds, beyond reason or astonishing. But that is exactly how God works and that is one of the key indicators of God's mission and characteristics of the kingdom of God.

Borrowing the words of Paul from his second letter to the church in Corinth, "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!"

Sometimes, from my human perspective, we might look at the "little things" that folk do with the view that it is pointless or beyond making an impact or ineffective or downright stupid and pathetic. Sometimes we might think to ourselves – "do it big or go home" – as if it does not count unless it is on a scale that is hard to ignore. But the Gospel has taught me something else – it has taught me about the accumulative effect of individual small actions combined having a profound impact; that every action counts; that starting small gives us the space and time to learn from our mistakes and to build upon what works; that things take time to take traction; that who I am is way more important than what I do; that trust takes time to build; that I can learn to grow into love; that God takes a few things given in faith – a few loaves and fishes – to feed a multitude. That ultimately, if it is going to truly flourish and be sustained, it is about God's gracious generosity worked out in me and I need to get out of the way and watch God at work.

People: Amen

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Celebrant: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

People: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS

Prayer #2

(Let us pray with confidence to the Lord, saying, "Lord hear our prayer.")

Celebrant: O Lord, guard and direct your Church in the way of unity, service, and praise.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Give to all nations an awareness of the unity of the human family.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Cleanse our hearts of prejudice and selfishness and inspire us to hunger and thirst for what is right.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Teach us to use your creation for your greater praise, that all may share the good things you provide.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Strengthen all who give their energy or skill for the healing of those who are sick in body or in mind.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Set free all who are bound by fear and despair.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

Celebrant: Grant a peaceful end and eternal rest to all who are dying, and your comfort to those who mourn.

People: Lord, hear our prayer.

People: Amen.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, without you we are not able to please you. Mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Celebrant: And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People: 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. And 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.

DISMISSAL

Celebrant: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

NOTICES

Church Re-opening - We will be reopening the office next week. I will start working from there on Monday. We will start recording the services back in the church from next week - both for Wednesdays and Sundays. We will start in-church worship on the first Sunday in July (the 4th) at 15 or 25% capacity - whichever the government allows by then. The Sunday services will be live-streamed and recorded. While we will have in-church worship on Wednesdays, it will be pre-recorded as well for folks to watch at home as morning prayer. Folk will need to register their attendance with the office before the service so that we do not have to turn folk away.

Financial Update – we have finally worked through our financial reserves and we are going to need to increase our income if we want to pay our bills. Due to the drop in giving associated with the church being closed we are looking at a short-fall of \$3,400 per month.

Bible Study – through June we will be meeting each Thursday via Zoom at 7:30 to study the book of Joel.

Breakfast-to-Go – we are partnering with Westside Lutheran to host the breakfast program for homeless folk at the Salvation Army each Friday between 8:00 and 9:30. We are looking for volunteers.

BLESSING:

Celebrant: The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour and grant us peace. **Amen.**

People: **Amen.**

CLOSING HYMN

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Prayer for those Who Did not Return Home from Residential School and for all Missing and Murdered Indigenous People By Toronto Urban Native Ministry

A Litany for the Healing and Restoration of our Church From the Anglican Diocese of Rupert's Land, 2017

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Assisting Rev. Simon today:

Celebrant/Preacher: The Rev. Simon Bell
Video: Simon Bell/David Paradis

This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:

Tomkins Family; Michelle Sinclair, Mom and Family; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jane & Ron Lewis; Adesh; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Cecilia Mowat; Tanya Bowskill; Sheri Scott; Audrey Moody; Wally Raymond; Christine; Kim; AJ; Dorothy & Chuck; Carl; Mark & Erin; Wendy; Adara; Jean Glionna; Brenda Jessem; Shirley; Lynda Raye; Kilravey; Rhonda; Sherrie O.; Jane Tutty; Tanya North; Brenda & Brian; Derek; Theresa & Pete; Jaxon Croft; Sean; Sophia L; Amanda Stewart; Kathryn

The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:

Bill and Ann Canning; Kevin Hamann; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Laura Johnston; Marilyn Foley; Kadeem Broomes; Diane M.; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Jen Galicinski; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Stephanie; Fr. Murray; Marg Abbott; Jordan; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy Goodyer; Donna Wilson; Garn Mennell; Gordon Kennedy; Paul & Rose McIntyre; Jim Tomkins; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Martin & Stephen Bertelsen; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Diocese of Chotanagpur (India)

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Regional Deans