



Rockway and First (North Pelham) Pastoral Charge
Sunday May 9, 2021
Christian Family Sunday 6th Sunday of Easter Worship at Home
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Take a moment to quieten yourself, and to prepare for worship, bringing your heart and mind to this time with God. (you may light a candle for your time of worship)

Call to Worship:

Psalm 98

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
 We will sing praises to the Lord with the lyre and the sound of the horn.
 Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.
 We will sing you a new song, O God, for the marvelous things you have done.
 Let us worship God. Amen.

Opening Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

God, we are surrounded by your glory and splendour. When we feel the wind on our back, feel the warmth of the sun on our face, or even the mist of a foggy morning we bear witness to your glorious creation. Through your design the birds fly, fish swim, creatures in the fields and woods leap and run. We are surrounded by your glory and splendour and every creature sings a song in praise of your plan for them. Through your Son, Jesus the Christ, you make our joy complete and we worship you with hearts, hands and voices filled with songs of adoration.

God, there are times when we find it difficult to love others as you commanded. We try our best to do your will, but often our priorities lead us in other directions. We want to know that we are secure before the well-being of others. There are times when we do what is best for us, rather than act for the common good. We justify our own interests and fail to understand the cost they take on the earth and others. Forgive us. Help us to renew our commitment to live out your love even when it demands more of us than we expect.

And we respond using the words, that He taught us:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Scripture Reading: Jeremiah 18: 1 – 6 (NIV)

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: “Go down to the potter’s house, and there I will give you my message.” So I went down to the potter’s house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

Then the word of the LORD came to me. He said, “Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?” declares the LORD. “Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.

A note from Rev. Marian:

When I heard that there was going to be a “Mother’s Day Tea Cup celebration, I remembered this meditation. Our Mothers – and those who are like a Mom to us, help to shape and re-shape the people that we become, inspired by God – Creator, Son and Holy Spirit.

In preparation for this meditation, please take a cup and saucer, fill with coffee, tea or beverage of your choosing and reflect on “the cup”.

Reflection: “The Cup”

The story of the “Potter and the Clay” turns the idea of a loving God on its head. Reminding us that depending on our human response, God is capable not only of intending good and evil toward humanity, but also of changing the divine mind about pending doom and blessings. Maybe when you go back to reread today’s Old Testament reading you might ask, “Where is the love?”

Jeremiah the Prophet was from Anathoth, just North of Jerusalem (3 miles), easily walking to the city. He was a young man when Yhwh called him to prophesy. As he took a stand for the Lord, Jeremiah suffered beatings and public humiliation (20:1 – 6), and public humiliation (6:13 – 14, 28: 1 – 17, 29: 8 – 9). Throughout Jeremiah, we hear echoes of his questioning – wondering why the Lord let him suffer so much. He repeatedly issues complaints to God, revealing how deeply Jeremiah struggled with the task God had given him (15:10, 15 – 18, 20:7 – 10, 14 – 18). But we read about a man who had a deep relationship with God, a man who knew he could trust God with his innermost thoughts and feelings.

Jeremiah prophesied during Judah’s last 40 years (627 – 587 BCE), a time when many of society were trusting in empty religious rituals believing that God would bless Jerusalem regardless of how they lived their lives. God send Jeremiah to warn the people to repent, but unfortunately many did not.

The book of Jeremiah has much to teach us, today, we reflect on the story of the potter. A pottery was a place of the people. Sure there were incredibly expensive objects that commanded serious money 2600 years ago, items afforded by the wealthiest Judeans. But Jeremiah takes us to the Pottery. The clay pots were the everyday ware of Judea, maybe not perfect in shape or colour, but useable by a family to hold grain or wine enough to sustain common life. This wasn’t melmac – it wasn’t corelle – it was clay, and these clay pots had a relatively short life span – a trip to the local potter was both familiar and frequent.

As the potter worked with the clay and the pot take shape – it might actually collapse on the potter’s wheel as it was being turned – forcing the potter to start all over again. Again, I ask the question – among these clay pots – where is the love? The love is found in the potter’s hands. The Potter, Yahweh, the Lord God, the great I Am is like the potter, and can start again on the pot Israel after breaking it down. The love is found as the potter works with the pot – the common easily cracked pot – we are the cracked pots of God. The Apostle Paul writes, “we have this treasure in clay jars” (2 Cor. 4:7).

I would like to share with you a story that was given to me by the Rev. Dr. George Scott, while in ministry in Kincardine Ontario.

“A couple were shopping in a beautiful antique store. Spotting an exceptional cup, they asked, “May we see that. We have never seen a cup quite so beautiful.”

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the tea cup spoke; “You don’t understand,” the tea cup said. “I have not always been a tea cup. There was a time when I was just a lump of red clay. My master took me and rolled me and pounded and patted me over and over and I yelled out, ‘Don’t do that. I don’t like it! Leave me alone,’” but he only smiled and gently said, “Not yet.”

Then, Wham! I was placed on a spinning wheel and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. “Stop it! I’m getting so dizzy I am going to be sick,” I screamed. But the master only nodded and said quietly, “Not yet.”

He spun me and poked me and bent me out of shape to suit himself and then ... he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I yelled and knocked and pounded at the door. "Help! Get me out of here!" I could see him through the glass in the door and I could read his lips as he shook his head from side to side, "Not yet!"

"When I thought I couldn't bear it another minute, the door opened. He carefully took me out and put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. Oh, that felt so good! 'Ah, this is much better, I thought.'"

But after I had cooled he picked me up and he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. "Oh, stop it, stop it" I cried. He only shook his head and said, "Not yet."

Then suddenly he put me back in the oven. Only it was not like the first time. This was twice as hot and I just knew I would suffocate. I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. I was convinced that I would never make it. I was ready to give up.

Just then the door opened and he took me out and again placed me on the shelf, where I cooled and waited ... and waited, wondering what he is going to do next.

An hour later he handed me a mirror and said, "look at yourself." And I did. I said, "That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful."

Quietly he spoke: "I want you to remember, then", he said, "I know it hurt to be rolled and pounded and patted, but had I just left you alone, you would have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it hurt and was disagreeable in the oven, but if I had not put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted all over you, but if I had not done that you never would have hardened. You would not have had any colour in your life. If I had not put you in the second oven, you would not have survived long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. Now you are what I had in mind when I first began with you."

God knows what He is doing for each one of us. He is the potter and we are his clay. He will mold us and make us, and expose us to just enough pressures of just the right kinds that we may be made into a flawless piece of work to fulfill His good, pleasing and perfect will.

So when life seems hard, and you are being pounded and patted and pushed almost beyond endurance; when your world seems to be spinning out of control; when you feel like you are in a fiery furnace of trials; when life seems to "stink" try this – brew a cup of your favourite tea in your prettiest tea cup, sit down and think of this story, and then have a little talk with the Potter.
Amen.

Sung Response: "Be still and know that I am God" # 64

1. Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am God.
Be still and know that I am God.
2. I am the Lord that healeth Thee, I am the Lord that healeth Thee.
I am the Lord that healeth Thee.
3. In thee, O Lord, I put my trust. In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.
In thee, O Lord, I put my trust.

Our Offerings:

You are able to make your offering by sending a **cheque or using the PAR** (pre-authorized remittance). For Rockway contact Bonnie Roland (905-685-3985), 213 Rykert Street, St. Catharines, ON L2S 2B5 and for North Pelham contact Janice Aulph (905-892-5244) or mail 602 Metler Rd, Fenwick L0S 1C0 or drop them in the mailbox.

Prayer of Dedication Let us pray:

Generous God, we bless you for your gift of life renewed through Christ's love. Bless us and the gifts we bring so that our lives may reflect the hope and renewal we have found in Christ throughout our community and in the world you love, in His holy name. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

God of our lives and our loving, we thank you for the signs of resurrection that are all around us, showing that life is stronger than death. Give us the grace to recognize and embrace the gifts of new life that your love makes possible for us all, as we pray for your resurrecting power to renew the world amid all its challenges.

God of home and family, today we thank you for our families, especially for our mothers and grandmothers. We are grateful for their love and attention, their hard work and the deep hope they have cherished for each one of us. We honour before you each mother, grandmother and great grandmother who has died; and we pray for all those who have felt isolated from their families in these months of pandemic. Reunite us in your love.

God of connections and compassion, today we thank you for our friends and relations, for the neighbours and fellow citizens who help to make our lives complete. We thank you for smiles shared, helping hands offered, commitments honoured. And we pray for all those around us who are facing particular challenges this day... (speak their name followed by a time of silence)

Restore our hope with your love.

God of courage and new possibility, today we pray for all those who have felt life or love slipping through their fingers in the times of distancing we've had to endure, and for those who have struggled with their physical or mental health, whatever the reason. We pray for communities trying to sort out how to recover from the pandemic and for all those worried about their personal future. Encourage us with your love.

God of forgiveness and renewal: today we pray for those whose relationships are need of repair and for all who work for peace and reconciliation in the face of deep divisions. We pray for families, churches, communities and countries facing conflict, and ask that your Spirit open hearts and minds to deeper understanding. Reconcile us through your love.

In a moment of silence we lift up our prayers of concern for our world, our country, community, church family and for our selves.

We offer these our prayers in humble grace as an Easter people who claims God's love. Amen.

CLOSING BLESSING

Live in the joy of Christ's love and in all the marvelous things that God is doing! May the righteous fairness of God, the loving friendship of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit go with you all. Amen.

Sung Response: Go Now in Peace

Go now in peace. Never be afraid. God will go with you each hour of every day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true. Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe. Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there, watching from above. Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Don Besig & Nancy Price © 1988

**We acknowledge that we meet on the traditional
territory of the Haudensaunee and Anishnaabee**

**With the provincial Stay at Home order,
Worship and activities have been suspended at both churches.**

Mission Moment – Ministry of Hope and Care

Fernando's dream of becoming a police officer seemed out of reach when he and his brother were children living on the streets of Mische, a rural village in Romania. Twelve years later, he attends university and is closer to fulfilling his dream thanks to Samuel House, where Fernando and his brother found a welcoming home. Samuel House is a Christian social ministry of the Reformed Church in Romania, Királyhágómellék District, providing nutritious food, education and after-school care to children from disadvantaged families. Presbyterians Sharing has been supporting this important ministry of hope and care since 2014.

Upcoming events:

Rockway Yard Sale (Sat. May 22nd) and North Pelham Plant and Bake Sale (Sat. May 29th):

While no final decision has been taken regarding these activities, it is highly unlikely these events will take place as the Emergency Stay at Home order will only be evaluated on May 20th.

More information will follow.

Sunday May 23rd: Pentecost Sunday. The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be included in the Worship at Home material.

Sunday May 30th Deadline for the next newsletter!

