

Announcement:

1. Next Sunday , **May 31 is Pentecost**—the birthday of the church. **PLEASE WEAR RED.** We, too today feel the power of God’s Spirit as we engage in the ministry & mission of Jesus. The power of the Holy Spirit enables us, to proclaim the good news of God’s love, comfort & forgiveness in our daily living. RED symbolizes the passion, energy & excitement of the day when the disciples were empowered to go out to proclaim the awesome gospel of Jesus, the Christ. Take a picture of yourself/family in RED & email it to [kerr.annalee@gmail.com](mailto:kerr.annalee@gmail.com). I hope to make a collage of all of us together.
2. Next Sunday we will have **Holy Communion** to celebrate Pentecost. Come to worship with a cracker/cookie/slice of bread and a drink (water, juice, coffee, tea). Our celebration will be virtual , but we will be joined in spirit as we hear the ancient sacred words of the last supper that Jesus had with his disciples..

Grace & Peace to you Dear Friends,

There was certainly hope this week as the first phase of re-opening was established. Golfers must be pleased and I know sailors & boaters are happy. My husband oversaw our sailboat get into the marina at Erieau. More businesses have been allowed to open—with certain restrictions –physical distancing and very careful cleaning is a necessity. I was happy to get broccoli plants, petunias & marigolds at our local greenhouse.

At the church, we had Bible Study—staying 6 ‘ apart. It was so great to seeing each other and share are prayers & concerns. And we emphasized the **HOPE** there is and how important it is to **count our blessings** each day. When you are feeling down, make contact with someone and both you & they will be uplifted by sharing your news—both the joys & the sorrows. It is so important for mental & spiritual health to keep in contact with one another.

I was so pleased to hear from many of you last week and thankful that many are gaining comfort and encouragement from our letters, emails & videos. How wonderful too that you keep in touch with each other by phone, email & texting.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Miracle Food Drive for C-K last Saturday. I heard that in Thamesville, Dresden & Bothwell ,it was tremendously successful. Patty Walters said that the monetary donations in Bothwell totaled \$4,000.

And on Monday, I also heard that Thelma Jacques even had the firetrucks go by her place to celebrate her 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday!

When I was preparing for the message today, I kept seeing flags: the flag of Nova Scotia as we remember the 22 victims of the tragic shootings, & they are still hunting for the dear 3 year old who fell into the river by his grandmother’s property. And then so many Canadian flags—that beautiful red maple leaf as we mourned the passing of Capt Jenn Casey of the snowbirds. In Kamloops the citizens put Canadian flags on the fence by the airport. And so many bouquets of flowers to pay tribute to a woman who exemplified all that we see as the best of our people—brave, smiling, competent, generous.

Now, the flag for our reflections today is the **EARTH FLAG**. Have you ever seen one? I went on-line to check it out again. I have only once seen an earth flag—2 years ago up in Little Current on Manitoulin Island. It was on the back of a sailboat. It showed our whole planet—mainly blue with some green & brown—It reminded me of what our astronauts see when they go into orbit around the earth. The background was navy blue depicting perhaps the universe. I thought at the time—how wonderful! I’m sure Jesus would be impressed! If we all thought of ourselves as **EARTHLINGS**, it would certainly help us to live out God’s call to us “Love your neighbour as yourself”. We would more easily see ourselves as family—the human family—all in this crazy world together. We need to keep all of us

“safe”--not just our immediate family, blood-related circle. (If we believe ourselves related to Adam, we are all blood related!)

The theme today is “**we are all in this together**”. How appropriate this is for the COVID time!

Let’s turn to our scriptures of today: John 17:1-11. This message /prayer from Jesus is truly fitting for this challenging time that we are living through. How often have we heard: “We’re all in this together”

These passages in the gospel of John are often called “the farewell discourses”. Here, we see Jesus in his final hours. He prays for those who would follow him saying, “May my followers be one heart & mind, just as you & I are one heart & mind. And Holy Father, protect and guard them as they pursue this life.”

It is interesting to compare this prayer with the one in the other gospels.

For John, this prayer comes immediately before Jesus’ arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. In contrast, Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have Jesus praying for God to remove this “cup of suffering.” John, on the other hand, presents a different kind of prayer. This prayer focuses on unity, on glorifying the church, and for the disciples to be blessed in their work.

For John, the focus is on “how do we move forward?” The prayer’s power lies in Jesus’ request that God will protect the disciples (the church) and keep them (it) unified. Jesus’ hopes that they may not be divided in vision or purpose.

One of the commentaries I read said: “This emphasis on unity does *not* mean that all Christians are expected to agree – that would be foolish at best – but rather the fervent hope that we will recognize that what unites us is far greater than what divides us.”

Here we are 2,000 years later and this is still Jesus’ prayer, “that all might be one”, unified in our love and caring for one another. It is true, we are watching closely what is happening in China, Italy and around the world. Some countries are a month or 2 ahead of us in this COVID- 19 response and we can learn from them. We also share information concerning treatments to alleviate symptoms and eventually have a vaccine. The scientists of the world are working under the Earth flag and sharing information.

We remember a time not too long ago, when to have AIDS was a death sentence. Today many are able to live full & long lives with this condition because we, as global people, worked together to find solutions. When we have unity of purpose and caring, when we live as earthlings, we can most clearly live out our lives as Jesus has prayed for us.

I have a story that illustrates this well:

One day, a man said to God, “O My Holy One, would you explain to me about Heaven & Hell. God showed the man two doors. Inside the first one, in the middle of the room, was a large round table with a large pot of stew. It smelled delicious and made the man’s mouth water, but the people sitting around the table were thin and sickly. They appeared to be famished. They were holding spoons with very long handles and each found it possible to reach into the pot of stew and take a spoonful, but because the handle was longer than their arms, they could not get the spoons back into their mouths.

The man shuddered at the sight of their misery and suffering. God said, “You have seen Hell.”

Behind the second door, the room appeared exactly the same. There was the large round table with the large pot of wonderful stew that made the man’s mouth water. The people had the same long-handled spoons, but they were well nourished and healthy, laughing and talking.

The man said, “I don’t understand.” God smiled. It is simple, he said, Love only requires one skill. These people learned early on to share and feed one another. While the greedy only think of themselves... Sometimes, when we are so self centred & think only of ourselves, we

tend to forget our interdependence with everyone and everything around us. As the parable makes it clear, not to help our fellow human beings simply means harming our very selves, since **we are all connected on a very deep level.**      **“We are all in this together.”**

Thanks be to God for this great wisdom! To God be the glory! AMEN!

PRAYERS for healing, comfort & courage:

The family & friends of Capt. Jenn Casey, the snowbird

All persons on the front lines battling COVID- 19 We pray for ourselves too. Help us to be safe, take precautions & not be in constant fear. May we have a realistic perspective.

In our faith community: Frank Sinasac, Cheryl Fisher, Dorothy Vogt, Lisa (Downie) Power, Donna Jewett, Larry Saylor Shirley Bolton, Deb Griffith, Luis Pereira. Rev. Ross & Mary Williams in Strathmere Lodge, Strathroy.

PRAYERS for blessing, praise & celebration:

Wonderful spring weather & the careful opening up from the complete lockdown

Birthdays for May—Keith Imeson, Xander Herr, Daniel Kerr & Doug Johnson, Bev Coleman (on the 31st)

For THE MERRY HEART

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|--|-----------------------------|
| 1)What is a woodpecker’s favourite kind of joke? | A knock--knock              |
| 2)What is the biggest diamond in the world?      | A baseball diamond          |
| 3)What driver does not need a license?           | A screwdriver               |
| 4)What keys can’t open locks?                    | Monkeys, donkeys, & turkeys |
| 5) What is the smallest room in the world?       | A mushroom                  |

If you would like to send a card to Rev. Ross & Mary:

Rev. Ross & Mary Williams

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Have a good week. Stay safe!

Shalom, Annalee

