

~ Sharing Time as we meet and join in conversation together ~

~ Joys and Concerns ~

~ A Call to Worship from Matthew 28: 16-20 ~

The disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.

Marianne: *Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

We gather in worship today knowing that Jesus is with us – now and always. Let us pray...

~ Prayer and Words of Hope ~

Creator God, we gather as two communities of faith with joyful hearts remembering all you have done for us. You spoke and the world came into being – beauty and balance between all things. In loving partnership, you made us in your image and called us to walk with you in creation. When we wandered away, you came to us in Jesus to show us how to live and love more fully. Your Holy Spirit keeps coming to us as comforter and guide. We give praise and thanks that in all ways and all times you are with us.

Holy One, we confess that we have not lived wisely in your creation and so the earth suffers. We have not valued ourselves or one another as we should and so our relationships are strained. We have not trusted you and so we follow paths that lead to foolish ends. Forgive our mistaken choices and selfish desires. Call us back to your loving presence and teach us again how to follow you. **Amen**

We are a new creation in Christ. Everything old has died and has become new! Thanks be to God that we can all make a new start today and every day.

➤ *O let the power fall on me*

~ Scripture – Genesis 1: 1-2:4a ~

Amanda is the main reader. **April reads the black bold.** Harold reads the blue bold.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.

And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky.

And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. **And God saw that it was good.**

Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so.

The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. **And God saw that it was good.**

And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so.

God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night – and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. **And God saw that it was good.**

And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky."

So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. **And God saw that it was good.**

God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so.

God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. **And God saw that it was good.**

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so.

God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude.

And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

~ Message ~

Peace to you, my family in Christ. I have been wondering what to say to you as we gather at our Lord's Table because I am so distressed about the current state of our world. Then I read the following words in a commentary...

You don't have to have all the answers. But you get to say something. And the rest of us need you to say something. Tell us about this God who is here.

...the pressure to preach the right thing is immense. Take a deep breath. Don't rush... phone a friend... examine yourself before you search for words. Then, begin with love – not the concept of love but the power of love in action.

I love the creation liturgy we just read together and I love that God is so intimately involved with this creation of which we are part – called to honor and care for and embrace and love. God creates and calls it good – very good – and I wish it felt good right now but love in action is a struggle these days. And yet, I know God is here...

Six month or so ago my concerns revolved around climate change and our inability to control our human greed to save our planet – my concerns centered on our fractured relationships with Indigenous people and our sometimes feeble efforts toward reconciliation – my concerns focused on our intentions of inclusivity in our churches as

we affirmed and stood in solidarity trying to be allies with LGBTQI2/Queer folks in our churches and in our communities – my concerns were absorbed with the vulnerability of those in our city and in the world and our failed action to effectively address poverty, hunger, addiction and homelessness.

Twelve weeks ago my concerns, and likely yours, were upended and sent into a tailspin as we were confronted with a pandemic. We became anxious and uncertain and questioning almost overnight. We feared illness for ourselves and others. We anticipated upheaval in our healthcare system and our food security. We isolated, distanced, washed, masked, and generally retreated into family or solitary lifestyles. We adjusted our worship and tried to stay connected. We changed our shopping habits and stopped eating out. We cancelled travel and long anticipated plans. We adapted and thought we were starting to handle it pretty well – things were looking up.

Thirteen days ago a man was killed and it seems that all hell has broken loose. Racial tensions exploded, likely fueled by the stresses of COVID-19 which were physical, emotional, mental, and financial. We are not handling things so well after all. Violence abounds as long festering wounds carelessly patched for decades are exposed. Some even fan the flames with rhetoric and posturing that makes us retch.

I am unsure what to say because everything seems too little or not as eloquent as what is already out there on other posts and in the media. I am unsure how to remain silent because what is going on is wrong. Hate and racism and bullying and hurtfulness are around us all the time even if we believe we are untouched by it – we are not immune. What I know for sure is that there are at least two pandemics at work in the world right now – a virus and viral othering – a disease of the body and a plague of the soul. What can I say that will be helpful and encouraging and challenging and inciting to you?

My first thought is that we ought to read the Psalms because they *bring all of life – its joys and celebrations, its tragedies and laments, the juxtaposing of the wonder of pure praise with the most self-centered preoccupations – into the presence of God. ...to confess our frailty, to lament the tragedies of our lives. ...to acknowledge ourselves in the presence of God – to confess that we are naked and that we are ashamed of our humanity – yet we are not alone.*

For God alone my soul waits in silence, from who comes my hope.

God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

On God rest my deliverance and my honor; my might rock, my refuge is in God.

Trust in God at all times, O people; pour your heart out before God who is our refuge. [Psalm 62: 5-8]

My next thought is that we must do what faithful people have always tried to do – stand up and be counted – question the status quo – insist on justice – reach out to the vulnerable – put action and prayer together each day and try not to count the cost. I am distressed – grieving – angry and filled with despair but I cannot give in to that – we cannot give in to that. We are challenged to rise up and protest with our voices, our prayers, our actions – in whatever way God, who is our hope – calls each one of us.

God is our refuge – our safe place – our creator who call us good. We are all made in the image of God without reference to race or gender or colour or creed – and **God saw everything God had made, and indeed, it was very good.** It is my ongoing prayer that we might eventually rise to the occasion and truly become “good” – the fulfilment of God’s desire in creation. May it be so – Amen.

➤ **Rain down**

49 (*Sing the Journey*)

~ **Gathering at the Lord’s Table** ~

This is the Lord’s Table – a table of companionship with Jesus – all who love him and all who want to love him more.

Anne: **It is the table of sharing with the poor and broken – the table of relationship in which Christ becomes flesh. We come seeking strength and healing. We come seeking unity with Christ.**

Come to this table you who have much faith and you who would like to have more – come you who have been here often and you who have not been for a long time – come you who have tried to follow Jesus and you who have failed. Come.

It is Christ who invites us to meet him here.

Anne: **We remember with thanksgiving the gracious acts of God throughout history and in all creation. We praise our God that we have been invited – to serve one another without pride, to forgive one another as we have been forgiven, to feast together as members of one family.**

Around this table our voices fall silent as we pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon us and upon these gifts of bread and wine. Fill them and fill us with the abundance of Jesus.

~ **Silence** ~

~ **1 Corinthians 11: 23-26** ~

Ruth: I received a tradition from the Lord, which I also handed on to you: on the night on which he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread. After giving thanks, he broke it and said, *“This is my body, which is for you; do this to remember me.”* He did the same thing with the cup, after they had eaten, saying, *“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do this to remember me.”* Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you broadcast the death of the Lord until he comes.

➤ *Here, O our Lord, we see you (verses 1-3)*

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The one who breathed on the first disciples is present for us in this bread.

The one whose Spirit stirred the Church at Pentecost revives us in this cup.

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving these gifts in which God comes to us so that we may come to God.

~ **Sharing Bread and Wine** ~

After consuming the elements in your own space, please cross your arms over your chest as a signal that you are ready to continue. We will wait until everyone is ready.

~ **Prayer** ~

Lord of abundant life, friend of sinners – living word that wakes the dead – we come, praying for ourselves and for others. Living God, renewer of all creation – whose Spirit gives life to everything that breathes and grows – we pray for this earth and for all with whom we share it.

We pray for all who are deprived of simple necessities – for all whose bodies are broken and wasted through lack of food and medicine – for all whose minds are stunted through

lack of education – and all who suffer and die at the hands of others or through the careless use of the earth’s resources.

We pray for home and family life – for the wider communities of which we are a part. We pray for all who struggle with difficult relationships and remember all who care for loved ones in illness or in pain. We pray also for all who know the valley of tears and bereavement.

We pray for the church – congregations and communities in this and other lands – may people of faith give gracious witness to Christ – ever open to the transforming power of the Spirit – living the way of God’s commands on earth and sharing in the worship and joy of heaven. Give peace in our hearts and in our homes – in our nation and in our world.

Loving God, we thank you for the mystery of being joined with Christ in this meal as a community of faith. Grant us the humility and enthusiasm to return again and again to feast together at your table so that we may be continually nourished for the journey. We join in singing our prayer as Jesus taught...

➤ ***Our Father in heaven (The Lord’s Prayer – no repeats)*** **469**

~ ***A Blessing from 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13*** ~

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

➤ ***May the God of hope go with us every day*** **726**

~ **Continuing the Conversation** ~