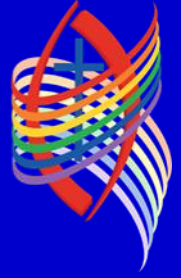




St. Andrew's United Church, North Bay

Reaching Out

a weekly online newsletter for members and friends of the
St. Andrews faith community, shared for the purpose of
bringing peace, hope and comfort during these special times.



May 10th - Fifth Sunday of Easter

A Prayer for all Mothers

Thank you, Lord, that you fill a mother's heart with love,
That you have instilled in her very being the need to protect her children if at all possible,
Thank you for giving her the gift of nurturing her children, of teaching them, of comforting them,
for feeding them and making a safe place for them.
For guiding them to be all that God has created them to be.
Fill every mother with love, wisdom and endurance,
with strength and patience and joy.
Give them ability to forgive again and again.
Enable her to rely on You and call upon You,
because You will give her all she needs.
In Your precious and all powerful name, *Amen*



The Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." To you then who believe, he

is precious; but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner," and "A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall." They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

e-mail contact: reachingout@standrews-northbay.ca

LIVING STONES - A REFLECTION BY REV. JANE HOWE



Like all of you, Elizabeth and I have been waiting out these days of pandemic close to home. Our Provincial government is discouraging travel between regions so much of our planned exploring of this beautiful region has been postponed until a later date. In the meantime, we have been

enjoying re-visiting special places via social media.

We were delighted to see that our friends in Northern Scotland, at the Findhorn Foundation, have been video taping their daily walks, sometimes through the woods on their own property or further afield on the shores of the North Sea or the Findhorn river. These daily broadcasts have become a universal mediation as people from all over the globe tune in to enjoy the Scottish countryside and remember what for many has become a “touching place,” where one feels like the veil between the earthly and the holy is thin and one can almost reach out and touch the hand of God.

According to the Hebrew scriptures Bethel was one such place. After his prophetic dream, Jacob called the place ‘House of God’ (which is what Beth-el means. (El was one of the early names for God). For many generations, it was one of Israel’s holiest shrines. The Ark of the Covenant was kept there, until it was transferred to Jerusalem. Prophets and leaders would go to Bethel, to seek God’s wisdom and instruction.

Ironically, though, for such a holy place, no-one can say with certainty today where Bethel actually was.

Attributions of holiness have been given to many places over the millennia. Stonehenge was once considered holy by its builders – as far as we know. Great cathedrals and churches were considered holy, thin places, because they often contained the bones of great saints.

Where are your ‘thin places’?

Where is that you find that the veil between the physical and spiritual worlds is somehow made thinner? For some, it may be a beautiful landscape – the top of a great hill, perhaps. For others, it will be a place, like a church building, in which hundreds of years of prayer and worship have somehow soaked into the foundations.

Holy places, are central to human faith. Ask a Muslim how he or she feels about Mecca. Ask a Catholic how they feel about St Peter’s in Rome. And yet there is a danger, isn’t there, in investing all our energy into buildings. Anyone who has toured the ruins of great abbey churches around the UK, or sought in vain for the actual site of Bethel, or who has seen the ruins of the Jerusalem Temple should know that faith is not kept alive by holy places alone. They, like all physical things, must pass.

Instead, Jesus points us towards a much greater permanence – towards himself. He is, in Peter’s words – quoting from Psalm 118 – ‘the stone that the builders rejected, who has yet become the cornerstone’. He who existed before all time, through whom all things were made, and through whom all things will find their conclusion – *he, Jesus*, is the ultimate ‘touching place’. By getting to know Jesus, we can begin to touch the outstretched hand of God.

In fact, if we are honest, we know that holy buildings can sometimes get in the way. In the temple of Jerusalem, for example, human priests created a holy of holies – a place in which God was said to actually dwell. It was a place so holy, that the High Priest could only go into it on one day of the year, after elaborate rites of purification. The gospel writers tell us that the curtain of that ‘holy of holies’ was torn down at the death of Jesus. It was not a helpful picture of God. It had to go. Now (as the book of Revelation has it), God’s dwelling place was with people – not locked up in a back corner of a temple.

In fact, you and I are now where God dwells...not in buildings of stone, but in living flesh and blood. We are living stones.

If nothing else our inability to gather in our sacred places (our church buildings) during this pandemic has encouraged us to look beyond them, to the spirit dwelling in the flesh and blood care we share with one another and the Earth.

We are being reminded that the buildings we steward so lovingly are really just shelters from the rain or the snow in which the actual church may gather. Our buildings are not ‘the Church’. At the end of the day, they are only shells.

For, as Peter says, we are “living stones...built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood”. We are the church – not the stones of our church building. ✚

Jane was the Minister at St. Andrew’s for 22 years and retired in May, 2019. We thank her for sharing this reflection and wish her health and happiness for many more years!

ONLINE WORSHIP - THIS SUNDAY - A Couple of Options

This Sunday's service (May 10, 2020) will be found on the **Trinity YouTube channel**. This *YouTube* video is recorded and can be watched at any time. To visit the channel, click on this link: [Trinity United Church YouTube Channel](#). The Sunday service (usually posted by Saturday evening) is a collaborative production by the Trinity United crew, with regular input from St. Andrew's and other united churches in the area.



Click ****HERE**** for this Sunday's worship services led by UCC Moderator Rev. Richard Bott. These services are usually available by Saturday evening.



A MESSAGE FROM TRACY

Hello Friends:

Just a quick note to let you know I have had a small setback and my return to work date is now May 18. It turns out patience is not something I possess. Thank you for your prayers, emails and good wishes. I hope this finds you all well and safe and that you remain hopeful that we will gather again soon as our beloved faith community.

... AND FROM THE ST. ANDREW'S PASTORAL CARE COMMUNITY:

The Pastoral Care Community hopes that all of you are still smiling as we continue to physically distance. We send hugs to Tracy as she continues to recover from her recent surgery. (Not too tightly in case it hurts!)

This time in our lives is very challenging but together we continue to get through it as a caring St. Andrew's community.

Stay safe, we miss you and soon we will be altogether again. Please take care,

Your friends,

The Pastoral Care Committee



A Prayer

May God throw blessings
like pebbles in our way
that we might walk upon them,
gather them up
and carry them with us
wherever we go. *Amen*



Star McGregor and Brian Nelles with two of the donated toiletry kits



Thursday May 7, 2020... Star McGregor reports: Another successful day at our Foodbank. Over 100 once again. We are so grateful for all the continued support with everything from basic food items to homemade masks.

So many patrons also send their thanks and gratitude. A big shout out to our friends at Trinity United for the donation of fresh potatoes and celery!

One member of the St. Andrew's congregation has kindly made up and donated individual toiletry kits with things like shampoo, body wash, toothpaste & toothbrush, wash cloth - and a mask. These are so important these days when hygiene and good health are so closely linked. These kits are very much appreciated by the foodbank clients.

There is still a need at the foodbank for:

- **plastic grocery bags**
- **ziploc bags (all sizes)**
- **canned food of any kind**

If you would like to make food donations to the foodbank, please know that the Church Office Administrator, Star, will be in the building on **Wednesdays and Thursdays (Note the change of days) from 10 am until 2 pm.** We will safely take your non-perishables .

Cash or cheque donation can be made through Star - or donations may be mailed to St. Andrew's, or online donations can be made via the "Donate Now" option (see details below).



Individual toiletry kits (including a mask)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ST. ANDREW'S DURING THIS SPECIAL TIME

1. Become a monthly **PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) member** by downloading a form and mailing it to St. Andrew's. Complete PAR details and forms can be found at: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/give-regularly> . To change your monthly amount, contact the Church Office.
2. Drop off a **cheque** at the Church on **Wednesday** or **Thursday** (from 10 am until 2 pm) - or mail it to St. Andrew's United Church, 399 Cassells Street, North Bay, ON P1B 3Z4
3. Give via the "**Donate Now**" button located to the right, or on our website (<https://standrews-northbay.ca/donate/>) Please note choosing this option allows you to use a credit card however the tax receipt will come from **Canada Helps directly to you by e-mail** and they take a 3% admin fee.



Forence Nightingale: 200 Years of Nursing

By Joyce MacQueen



Florence Nightingale was born on May 12, 1820 – we are now celebrating the 200th anniversary of her birth. She was celebrated in her lifetime for organizing nursing in the Crimean War where she stressed cleanliness and nutrition. She is known in Canada and the United States for the system of training for nurses which she began at St. Thomas's Hospital in London in 1860 and which was copied around the world.

Nightingale would be in her element in this strange COVID struggle we are experiencing. She loved statistics and developed the system of keeping records of morbidity and mortality that form the basis of our records today. She loved the challenge that health care provided.

Nightingale is known as *The Lady with the Lamp* because at night she would walk through the huge military hospital in Scutari, Turkey carrying her lamp. But she was also the lady with the mind, the spirit, and the pen. There are some 20,000 letters that she wrote and 200 publications. Her writings on spirituality and religion are amazing.

When Nightingale was a young girl, and already in her methodical statistical way, she kept a record of the date of her specific prayer requests and discovered that her prayers were not answered. She did not stop praying but decided that prayer was to ask God to make us better people, and to show us how to help those in need. Later in her bible she outlined 5 appropriate subjects of prayer which related to having humility, patience and love. When she was 28 years old, on a ten-day retreat at a convent in Rome, she studied the discipline of contemplative prayer and mediation. We know from her diary that later in life she did pray for specific things – for example for 15,000 pounds for Bosnian refugees. In one note she wrote, “God are you sure you are doing all you can for the Bosnian refugees?”

Nightingale's bible, the *King James' Version*, had every other page blank so that she could record her own comments and quote from other sources. These comments were usually written in English, but also often in German because the leading theologians were German, and sometimes in French, Greek, Latin, Italian, and rarely in Hebrew. Her comments often reflect three themes:

- (1) her sense of being personally called by God to work in nursing and the health field, which she dated as May 7, 1844 and commemorated every year.
- (2) her sense of being afflicted. She suffered acute Crimean fever during the war and chronic versions of that (including depression) for the rest of her life. She also felt persecuted by those who did not support her humanitarian causes. She listed specific dates when she suffered particularly.
- (3) her experience that God defended the afflicted and gave them peace. She wrote, “Jesus Christ intends *His* peace for us . . . It is peace indeed to have accepted for our only portion that His will should be done . . . in us & for us & by us, for ever!”

Joyce MacQueen
© May 2020



Joyce MacQueen and her husband, Rev. Gailand MacQueen (above photo) both share an interest in Florence Nightingale's religious philosophy and its significance in modern nursing. We thank Joyce for sharing this story of a remarkable woman and an inspiring spiritual journey - a very fitting way to commemorate the 200th birthday anniversary of “The Lady with the Lamp.”

WHAT IS THE NORTH BAY AND AREA MISSION CLUSTER ?

All North Bay presbytery committees were disbanded when the United Church changed its structures. However the Mission Committee of the North Bay Presbytery chose not to give up on its mandate of joining congregations and pastoral charges together to do the wider work of mission - and the former Mission Committee morphed into the **Mission Cluster**.

The *Mission Cluster* is more informal than the presbytery.

There is not always a member from each pastoral charge, but there is contact person in each pastoral charge to relay what is happening in mission. The three major foci are outlined on the first newsheet (below). Meetings are held monthly, and the **Mission Matters !!** newsheet will be circulated on a semi-regular basis - perhaps one more issue before the end of June.

The two *Mission Cluster* contact persons for St. Andrew's are Judi Brewer and Jim Sinclair.

Kay Heuer



Mission Matters !!

*A newsheet connecting the North Bay & Area Mission Cluster
with United Church people of faith
Issue #1 – May 2020*

GREETINGS ... The North Bay & Area UC Mission Cluster believe that “participating in God’s mission is to bring new life, health and healing to all of creation—to people, the earth, and to other institutions and social structures.” (D.Marshall, EXCHANGE, 1997)

We have chosen 3 areas for study & action: Systemic Racism, including reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples; the Climate Crisis; and Mental Health and Wellness. In this first issue of “Mission Matters,” our focus is solidarity with the Wet’suwet’en.

– Teresa Jones, on behalf of the Cluster

WHY WET’SUWET’EN SOLIDARITY

MATTERS! ... Only two months ago, here in the North Bay area, many of us rallied in support of the hereditary chiefs of the Wet’suwet’en First Nation. They are resisting the Coastal GasLink pipeline, just as many of us, for years, resisted the Energy East pipeline. More solidarity events were planned, with the support of this Mission Cluster (along with many other regional and national faith groups) when a pandemic intervened.

Why would we do this? The Wet’suwet’en themselves are not of one mind: many elected chiefs support the pipeline while the hereditary chiefs are firmly against it. Furthermore, the currently disputed pipeline is on the other side of the country.

It is because of our faith. The United Church of Canada has twice told our Indigenous brothers and sisters that we are sorry. We apologized for being blind to their spirituality in 1986; and we apologized for the Indian Residential Schools in 1998. Both times we admitted that we had been wrong. In the first case, we did not understand or cherish their deep respect for the sacredness of Mother Earth. In the second, we colluded with the federal government’s efforts to assimilate Indigenous children; in effect, to sever the connection to their land that makes them passionately defend it.

But we have repented. Publicly. Twice. Repentance means turning around. So we wrote the promise “to live with respect in Creation” into our creed, we paid compensation for the residential schools, and we began to work on healing from our arrogance by studying and listening.

Our public presence at solidarity events flows from that repentance. We now understand that we are obligated to stand with the Wet’suwet’en when they defend the Morice River against a pipeline, just as we defended Trout Lake. We also understand more clearly that we are all treaty people. The treaty in question here is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which demands “free, prior and informed consent” in matters affecting them. The UCC has both approved this declaration, and agreed to integrate it into the fabric of our being. The Wet’suwet’en have not consented to the CGL pipeline; in fact, they need time to come to consensus as a nation before any decision about it can be made. We support their right to take the time they require.

There is one more crucial piece to the history we share with the Wet’suwet’en and other First Nations. These recent wide-spread solidarity events ended when a pandemic drove us into the safety of our homes. In some church-run residential schools, Indigenous children died from a much earlier epidemic, tuberculosis. They were taken from their homes and did not return. We — as Christians — cannot be silent while Coastal GasLink continues to send construction workers from other parts of Canada and the world, into Wet’suwet’en territory. In a pandemic, it risks the health of all concerned. We live in Northern Ontario, far away. But we are members of the United Church of Canada. We have to listen and learn and speak up. Because we have promised — twice — that we would do better. ✚

– Donna Sinclair, North Bay

For more information and suggestions for action, check out the resource-filled tool kit at:
<https://unistoten.camp/supportertoolkit2020/>