

Thursday in the Sixth Week after Pentecost July 16, 2020

Jesus prepares his followers for what will happen over the course of the next two days. After a very full day of teaching, Jesus visits a household of someone who sought healing and whose skin had been made clear as a visible sign of the compassion of Creator and the authority which Creator had given Jesus to make people whole. At the table, a woman approaches with a very beautiful jar of alabaster filled with very expensive perfume. In the gospel of Matthew, this woman anoints the head of Jesus, pouring the oil over his hair and his face. The room is filled with the fragrance. Her gift is extravagant. Oil drips from his hair, his face, off his beard, down his shoulders, over his arms, and onto his garments.

Read Matthew 26: 1-16. What catches my attention in this gospel reading?

The woman anoints Jesus like the psalmist describes as appropriate for a mighty king chosen by Creator at the beginning of his reign.

How do his closest followers react? These disciples get into an uproar. They are angry. Jesus just finished teaching about the need for his followers to provide food for the hungry, to make clean water available to the thirsty, to show hospitality to the stranger in their midst, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, and to connect with those in prison. His closest followers heard their Teacher and demanded that everyone now put what was taught into practice. Without being aware of the power which they wielded due to their gender, their social standing among those who gathered to eat with Jesus, their opportunities given to them by financial institutions in Jerusalem, and their power in the political landscape, the closest followers missed the key to what Jesus was communicating. Jesus stops the angry outburst with a question and a statement, **“Why do you make trouble for the woman? She has done a good thing for me.” Matthew 26:10.** Those closest followers still do not see and hear as Jesus sees and hears.

It amazes me when people do not acknowledge that a gift given to someone special but make judgment and reject not only the gift but the giver of the gift.

For me, the search for a special gift for a certain someone becomes a very creative activity. The constraints of time, financial limitations, and availability of goods do not evoke tremendous amounts of stress. I look and listen as I search. The gift will present itself. The gift will speak to me. A unique connection will happen. Sometimes, the gift comes to me far ahead of the event so I have to set the gift aside and hope that I remember where it is hidden until the day in which it needs to be found again and then given to that special person. For me, each gift communicates much more about the person who receives the gift than about the giver of the gift.

The woman recognizes the extravagance of the gift which Jesus will give to the world in the twinkling of an eye. What is two days in the history of creation? The woman honours Jesus for who he is and what he is willing to do for all the Peoples of Mother Earth.

Jesus points out to his closest followers that there will be lots of opportunities in every generation to feed the hungry, to make clean water available to the thirsty, to welcome the newcomer to the circle, to provide clothing for those who need it, to show compassion to the sick in the time of their need, and to look for the Creator in those who have been locked away. In the retelling of the last days of Jesus in his earthly life, this story about the extravagant generosity of this unknown woman and the acceptance of this gift by Jesus is told again and again.

Judas got the message and went to those who believed that they could stop what Creator was doing in their time and in that part of the world.

Read Matthew 26: 1-16. What is God communicating to us in this gospel passage?

Among worshipping communities, a practice has arisen to acknowledge the land where we live and meet together to honour Creator and be renewed in the many ways in which we show others the importance of Creator in our lives.

At Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora, we acknowledge that at the watershed with rivers flowing north to what is known as Lake Simcoe and rivers flowing south to what is known as Lake Ontario, the traditional territories of the Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe overlapped. The Wendat Confederacy lived in villages between what is known as Georgian Bay in the west, as the Minesing Swamp in the southwest, as Lake Simcoe in the south, as Lake Couchiching to the east, and as the shores of Georgian Bay to the north. The Wendat grew corn and traded with the Anishinaabe Peoples all around them for furs and game meat. The Haudenosaunee Confederacy lived south of the Great Lakes in what is known as northern New York State, particularly around what is known as the Finger Lakes. The Wendat and Haudenosaunee shared the same Iroquoian language but spoke different dialects. The Mississaugas Peoples originally came from the north shores of Georgian Bay but migrated to become a number of related Anishinaabe Peoples speaking an Algonkian language from the southeast corner of what is known as Georgian Bay down to the north shores of what is known as Lake Ontario towards what is known as the northern parts of the Niagara area. These Mississaugas became known as the Alderville First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, Scugog Island First Nation, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. The Wendat became allies with the French who lived between what is known as Montreal and Quebec City. The Haudenosaunee became allies with the Dutch and then the English. As a result, the Wendat and Haudenosaunee were drawn into the European conflict between France and England. When the Wendat were defeated by the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat decided to migrate to live near Quebec City to benefit from their French allies. After the Wendat left their traditional territories, Anishinaabe Peoples migrated to occupy what is known as Christian Island to become the Chippewas of Beausoleil, what is known as Georgina Island to become the Chippewas of Georgina Island, and land around the waterway between what is known as Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching to become the Chippewas of Rama. When some of the Haudenosaunee fought with the British and other Haudenosaunee fought with the American Colonies during the War of Independence, those who were allied to the British needed to migrate north afterwards to live near the St. Lawrence as well as on lands granted to their soldiers by the Crown near what is known as the Bay of Quinte and lands along what is known as the Grand River. In a Treaty, the Mississaugas of the Credit sold their traditional territories so that what was known as the City of York could be established between what is known as the Rouge River in Durham Region in the east to what is known as the Humber River to the west. The Mississaugas of the Credit moved west of what is known as the Humber River. Later as Settlers occupied the land to farm, the Haudenosaunee gave the Mississauga's of the Credit some land on their grant of land near Six Nations near what is known as Brantford. As in the War of Independence, Haudenosaunee cousins fought and killed each other in the War of 1812.

The City of Toronto acknowledges the role the Mississaugas of the Credit as well as other Indigenous Peoples have cared for the land and waters for thousands of years before first contact with Europeans. After a smudging ceremony, the Mayor of Newmarket John Taylor unveiled a plaque in June 2020 in

order to acknowledge that the Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Anishinaabe Peoples cared for the land and waters and shared these with Settlers. In the construction of a major roadway in York Region, the remains of a longhouse was discovered dating back to the 1200's. As the closest neighbours, Chief Donna Big Canoe from the Chippewas of Georgina Island expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Town of Newmarket in reaching out to be inclusive and build connections for the future.

In the Lutheran and Anglican Mission of the Bruce Peninsula, we acknowledge that we worship Creator on the traditional territories of the Saugeen Ojibwa Nation which stretched from the islands at the tip of the peninsula down the west coast of Lake Huron to what is known as Goderich and down the east coast of Georgian Bay to the edge of what is known as the Niagara Escarpment at Collingwood along with the land in between these shorelines within what is known as the Saugeen River watershed. The Wyandotte Wendat were welcomed by the Saugeen Ojibwa Nation and shared the land near what is known as the Collingwood area. The outcome of the American War of Independence resulted in migrations north from around what is known as Lake Erie. The Saugeen Ojibwa Nation were allied with the Odawa and Pottawatomi to form the Three Fires Confederacy. After the War of 1812, some Indigenous Peoples from south of the Great Lakes migrated to the traditional territories of the Saugeen Ojibwa Nations, Manitoulin Island, and the north shore of Georgian Bay. In the Saugeen Tract Agreement (Crown Treaty 45 1/2 with Sir Francis Bond Head representing Upper Canada signed on Manitoulin Island in August 1836, the Saugeen Peninsula was to be protected for the use of the Saugeen First Nation and the Chippewas of Nawash while the lands south of what is known now as Highway 21 between Southampton and Owen Sound was set aside for settlement by Europeans. When Settlers took up land on the Saugeen Peninsula, further Treaties were made to further limit the lands set aside for these Anishinaabe Peoples. However, issues are before the courts currently to resolve differences between the Saugeen Ojibwa Nation and Settlers, including federal, provincial, and municipal governments.

For Indigenous Peoples, the land and waters are gifts from Creator which need to be honoured and protected for generations to come. Indigenous Peoples have been generous in sharing Creator's land and waters with Settlers.

Read Matthew 26:1-16. What does God call us to be and do in this passage?

Learn about the spiritual practices of Indigenous Peoples in giving thanks to Creator for all that Creator generously has given as gifts to Human Beings. Creator continues to communicate in so many ways that each Human Being is special and that our needs are being met by unique gifts. Learn about the how Indigenous Peoples are working to protect the lands and waters where we live and meet for worship. Let us acknowledge the Ancestors of those who have cared for these lands and waters for thousands of years before Settlers arrived. Let us encourage our elected representatives to honour the sacred trust to care for these lands and waters too.