

Thursday in the Seventeenth Week after Pentecost October 1, 2020

In the walking through the hills of Galilee at the time when the fields were being prepared for the harvest, Jesus continues to teach about a generous and loving Creator. Religious scholars and authorities in worshipping communities come out to find out what Jesus is saying and doing.

Read Luke 6:1-11. What catches my attention in this gospel reading?

Some seek out Jesus to learn. Others come to listen and watch with a very different agenda. It is good to be able to discern who is open to learning and who is invested in maintaining their positions of power and privilege. In the gospel of Luke, two incidents become teaching moments for Jesus. Each of these learning opportunities happen on a Sabbath. In the first instance, Jesus and his disciples walk through the fields of ripening grain. The disciples are hungry so they take the full heads of grain into their hands and rub their hands together. In this motion, the grains of wheat are separated from the chaff so that the inedible parts are blown away by the wind and the effects of gravity. Instead of placing these plump grains under the weight of a grinding stone in order to make flour, the disciples eat the raw grains in order to fill their stomachs and gain the nourishment which their bodies need at that time. In the Torah, provision is made for the widows and orphans as well as the strangers in the land to feed themselves at harvest time. In the Promised Land, each family among each tribe of Israel and Judah is given a portion of the land to tend for 49 years until the time of the Jubilee. Each plot of land was given as a gift from Creator who led them through the wilderness to freedom. All that this land and its waters provided was given to sustain the Hebrew Peoples so each family and tribe needed to practice effective stewardship and hospitality. In the second instance, Jesus meets a man with a withered hand. This affliction made his right hand useless so he had to learn how to do what he could with his left hand and he needed those around him to practice hospitality since he could not work and contribute to the health and well-being of his family and community as a fully able-bodied member. Jesus provides teaching moments for his disciples and tests the religious scholars and authorities who come to listen and watch.

In the first instance, the disciples take the edge off their hunger for that part of their journey. When confronted by the scholars and religious authorities, Jesus reminds them of another story of faith. David and his companions who are defending the nation from enemies who seek to conquer them and make them slaves were hungry. David, his warriors, and those who accompanied them entered the Temple violating the Law and then caused further desecration by eating the sacred loaves prepared for only the Priests of the Temple. David and his companions were hungry and needed to have strength to do battle with the enemies threatening to do grievous harm to their families and friends. In this instance, Jesus points out that the One whom Creator sends has ultimate authority over what happens on the Sabbath, saying, **“The Human One is Lord of the Sabbath!” Luke 6:5.** In the second instance, Jesus poses a question for all to consider, saying, **“Is it legal on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy life?” Luke 6:10.** Then Jesus makes his point in a very dramatic fashion. Jesus commands the man with the withered right hand to stretch it out. When he does as Jesus tells him, something truly awesome takes place. His withered right hand is made whole. The man can contribute to his family and community in ways in which he was never able to do previously.

Read Luke 6:1-11. What is God saying to us?

In the distribution of Orange Shirts to support survivors of residential schools, youth at Trinity Anglican Church in Aurora and All Saints Church in King City wore them and participated in learning circles about the impact of these federally established and church operated institutions. Members from Trinity as well as from the Lutheran and Anglican Mission of the Bruce Peninsula wore them on September 30 to let others in the community know that Indigenous Peoples need to be honoured. By purchasing these Orange Shirts, Rotarians provided \$2.50 to Indigenous Sport and Wellness Ontario and \$2.50 to Good Minds First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Books on the territories of Six Nations in Ontario.

In 2013, Phyllis (Jack) Webstad was inspired to share her story of her first day of residential school at St. Joseph's Mission Residential School in central British Columbia near Williams Lake in 1973. In preparation for this first day of school, her maternal grandmother took her shopping. At the age of 6 years, she was very excited by the brilliance of an orange blouse with some lace down the front. However, like other Indigenous children and youth on the first day of residential school, this gift was taken away from her and another shirt was provided by the residential school. From 1831 to 1996, Indigenous children and youth experienced far worse but received the same message. The gifts of her family and her Indigenous People were diminished and she was made to feel shame for her cultural and spiritual heritage.

At Trinity in Aurora, the youth recounted their current experiences in their various schools about what they had been taught about Indigenous Peoples. Some teachers utilized the curricula which had been prepared in consultation with Indigenous Peoples as recommended in the Calls to Action #62 and #63 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). However, these youth pointed out that they had learned more about the history of Indigenous Peoples and issues facing Indigenous Peoples from coast to coast to coast through their extended family and their Church. One member of the Youth Group also drew on her knowledge and experiences gained from the Youth to Youth trip to the Yukon in 2018 where she met other Indigenous Anglicans at Whitehorse as well as Gwitchin youth from the Anglican community of Old Crow.

At All Saints in King City, youth participated in virtual learning opportunities in order to honour the resilience of Indigenous Peoples in surviving policies and practices of cultural genocide.

At the Parish of Lloydtown, the Reverend Tina Coulon from Toronto Urban Native Ministries spoke during worship in their church on the September 27, 2020 to honour the Reverend Sheilagh Ashworth and her efforts to educate folk of all ages about the history of Indigenous Peoples in caring for Creator's gift of Turtle Island, to join with land and water protectors from coast to coast to coast, and the need to support Indigenous communities in obtaining safe, clean water in their homes. The Schomberg Country Virtual Run was very successful and their celebration can be viewed on October 4 at 7 pm on the Parish of Lloydtown website, with Indigenous Grandmother Mim Harder providing leadership in prayer.

At the Lutheran and Anglican Mission of the Bruce Peninsula, members continued to pray for Indigenous Peoples and their leaders in their respective communities in overcoming inequities and thriving through the ongoing work of Creator, the Human One, and the Great Spirit.

Read Luke 6:1-11. What is God asking us to be and do?

Talk to children and youth about what they are learning about the history of Indigenous Peoples and their efforts to create strong, healthy communities. Connect with Indigenous Peoples who live nearby and find out how Covid-19 is impacting their families and communities? Learn about the many ways in which Indigenous children and youth are caring for Mother Earth for the future of the next generation.

David Franks