

Carol's Reflection – Oct 10

Happy Thanksgiving to you. I'm standing in the sanctuary of Transcona Memorial United church, where the signs of Thanksgiving are all around. First of all, there is the banner over my shoulder that says ***Blessings from Above***. It's the Thanksgiving banner that was created years ago to symbolize the abundance of the harvest. There's a cornucopia overflowing with fruits and vegetables and bright, colored leaves to remind us that the season of fall and harvest here in Manitoba, but there are also other signs for which Thanksgiving is the right word. There's the sign of the UCW ***Side by Side*** founded in 1962 in this congregation. I think that means that next year there's a big anniversary to be had. And there's the sign of the Honour Roll of Trancona Memorial United church people who we will honour again on November 11th, as we remember lives given in service of country.

As I record this, it's quite loud in the church. When I arrived this morning, there were trucks in the back parking lot of the church, they were unloading cases and cases of food that had been gathered and donated to the Transcona Food Bank. It was a single business that wanted to make a difference in the lives of those who were still hungry or struggling to know how to make 'Thanksgiving' right. And so truckloads of food arrived for this. We give thanks. But Thanksgiving is also a time to turn our attention to the scriptures and to think about what is it in our faith for which we are truly thankful. When I think about this, I think about the whole of the Bible and the stories that we have. And I think about what is the purpose of those stories.

And I think stories stand side by side with us in our lives. Next weekend is the Messy Church Canadian conference it's called Messy Connections. And we are seeing it as a way of reconciliation and how Messy Church can be a part of making the world a better place. As part of that, we have some indigenous leadership that is going to come and tell stories. We're opening with Susie McPherson Derendy telling us how to make a story stick.

And the Conference is open to everyone it's free, but registration is through Eventbrite. And so if you want to come and be a part of that, you are welcome to come and join in and be a part of those sessions. Not only are we going to hear Susie talk about the story stick, we have David Zachary, who's going to do soapstone carving with us.

And if you want to do that, you need a bar of ivory soap and a butter knife and a nail file. And you'll be carving an Inukshuk along with David and the rest of us as a symbol of we have been here. The Inuit Inukshuk story is about leaving a sign that someone has been before us. And this is a safe place and path to be on. We're also going to make bannock and Andrea Gallagher-Courteau is going to tell us the story of Turtle Island. She was part of the leadership of vacation Bible school here at TMUC, a number of years ago, and she is going to come and be a part of the Messy Church Canadian conference, helping us to hear yet another creation story, because stories of the Bible and stories of the community can stand together and we can walk together one with the other.

That's one of the things that we learn in our own scriptures, the story we have today is of Jesus hearing the question of the rich person who says, what do I do to inherit eternal life? And in conversation, they review the commandments and the person says I've done those all my life. And Jesus loves them, loves them. And then out of that, love calls them that little bit further and says, if you've done all of those things, then there's still more to do it. Doesn't discount what has already been done, but out of love calls forward more. And what is the more, the more is to go and to sell and to give and to come and to follow. Go sell, give, come, follow are words that we will hear again and again, in the scriptures, in all different stories, stories about how we follow God's call, how we follow God's call to let the scriptures come to life in us so that we realize that there is nothing that can really own us and nothing that we really need to own so much as love.

It's out of love that Jesus calls and it's out of love that we are called to live. And when we live in love, when we live in God's love, then we are called to let the story of our lives and the story of our faith live with care and respect with other stories. And then when all of those stories are told, when all of those stories are safely gathered in, then we are building God's kingdom. Then we are building a world in which we can have peace. Then we are building a world in which we can have hope for. That's what it is to live in love. It's to live in care and respect of the stories of others it's to give generously of ourselves and all that we have it's to give and live and love. And if we can do all of those things, then we can find a path to reconciliation.

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If we can do all of those things, then next week, when it is world food, Sunday, we will recognize that the world is indeed a small village and we do care for one another. And then it will be time for All Saints Sunday, when we recognize the sainthood of all who have gone before us and ourselves, and we recognize again and again, story after story, after story, after story, and we let them all come to life for, if we do that, if we do that, then all things are possible with God. All things are possible with God when we learn to truly love one another.

So let us be people of faith and let's be people of the story and let's walk together and hear the stories together. Let's sing together. Let's be people of God together knowing that there are blessings all around on Thanksgiving and always happy Thanksgiving. I look forward to seeing you again. God bless.

