



SHINING WATERS
REGIONAL COUNCIL
The United Church of Canada



Environmental Sunday & Camping Sunday Resources

Introduction

I am not going to lie, Environmental Sunday and Camping Sunday were two Sundays I was very much looking forward to for 2020.



Environmental Sunday was supposed to be the premier of our play #FridaysfortheFuture on which I had spent the last several months working with the youth and children at Metropolitan United Church. As excited as I am, I realized that maybe it was okay this year to hold off on the presentation of a new play – because we are seeing the effect humans have had on the earth as a result of social distancing and staying home. We are hearing good news stories of animals returning to areas they previously were not in and the environmental effects of human traffic being diminished in certain places. So instead, this year, I have written *I'm with Her*, a monologue play that one of the youth in your community could record or perform from their own computer or phone or any device for you on Sunday morning. I've made the role genderless on purpose – now anyone can play the part.

Camping Sunday at Grace United Church in Barrie has always been a big deal. It is the one Sunday when everyone leaves the comfort of the sanctuary and camps out in the Memorial Hall as Susan gathers them around a make shift camp fire to engage in intergenerational worship. I was trying to figure out how to build a worship resource for camping Sunday when we are being asked to stay indoors, so instead of encouraging everyone to 'Get Out!' I've written a resource based on the theme 'Stay In!', which is inspired by the story of the road to Emmaus where Jesus is only recognized by his followers once they are inside and seated around the table together. Sometimes, we don't see what we have in front of us, and how lucky we are to live, play and explore in a place like Ontario. We have a great big world out there we are all missing, and hopefully, once we are able to go and explore it – we will appreciate, value and nurture all that world has to offer us.

Peace and Respect,

Jeffrey Dale

April 19th – Environmental Sunday

Call to Worship, Rev. Roberta Howey

Single Voice

Called by Earth and Sky, by Sea and Mountain
To centre ourselves into the Heart of Creation.
To appreciate the Mystery,
And remember that we are not alone.
This is God's world.



Two or More Voices

Called by Earth and Sky, by Sea and Mountain
To centre ourselves into the Heart of Creation.
To appreciate the Mystery,
And remember that we are not alone.
This is God's world.

Opening Prayer, Rev. Roberta Howey

Eternal Creator of all,
We gather here in spirit to praise your work.
We sing our hopes to your mountains
We pray our concerns to your ocean depths
From every distant star to nearby ant
We cannot keep from singing.
Call us to be connected with all that you have loved into being,
As friends, stewards, neighbours, and witnesses to the Mystery of Life.
Amen.

Hymn – *This is God's Wondrous World, 296 VU*

Scripture – *John 20: 19 – 31*

Reflection – Monologue Play: I'm With Her.

A young person is looking into the camera, and setting up and preparing for what they want to say. Behind them is an ordinary, privileged middle class bedroom. They are a bit distraught, but excited as they makes sure everything is just right.

Youth. Hi Everyone! Hi.. whoever is listening. So it's me! I'm here at home. Socially distancing, like everyone else I guess, right? As you can tell we aren't at City Hall today. I know, it's sad. I guess, it's kinda like not many of you have been there with me, right? Ha.ha. There's just been a few of us dedicated down there most Fridays, and before this even happened there was just me

for a few weeks. My mom this morning when we woke up said to me, “At least something good will come out of this social distancing”... I just looked at her.. I knew what was coming, “I won’t have to write another note explaining why you weren’t at school, again, on a Friday afternoon.” Sometimes, folks, I just feel like she doesn’t get it.

My minister before we went into isolation stopped me on the way out of church and he said, “So Victoria, still fighting the good fight?” I looked up at him and went, “Yep!” He gets it. If he doesn’t have to go to the nursing home he shows up. When we had the big rally in the square he advertised it at church.. that was pretty cool. But then again, I am always kinda like, well of course he did. You just gotta read the Bible, you’ll see people all over it that care about the earth, or creation, or whatever they call it.

I was trying to figure out what this week’s theme should be, you know, how each week we say this week we are going to do hook for the oceans or how the week before we had to shut everything down it was honk for our health! That seems a little real now, doesn’t it? I was thinking, maybe this week’s theme could be – sometimes I worry we won’t ever get it wrong. That’s right, your resident let’s protect for future generations is often scared that we aren’t going to have anything to protect for the future. Like, when I first heard about this coronavirus, I am not going to lie, I was like – well, this is the end, but here we are, a month of being inside and we’ve still got a planet out there, still waiting for us to care about it.

I read online somewhere that goats were taking over a community in England. Goats! Can you believe it? Apparently they are wild goats that often hide away from people, but because everyone in the community is asked to stay inside the goats are coming into town. I also read that just after a little while of quarantining there are parts of China where the smog is going away. This sure beats having to talk about wildfires and pipelines doesn’t it? I sometimes hope that there are more stories like this – like wouldn’t it be great to see moose walking right on down Yonge Street??! Or how about hearing about how bald eagles are returning to places they once inhabited. Did you know that bald eagles used to be all over southern Ontario before they were endangered? Now they aren’t, you can thank that ban on DDT, but I won’t get political today.

Instead, I just want to share with you that with some good news, I still doubt a little. My dad the other morning, while we were eating breakfast said, “I can’t wait until this is all over and we just go on a vacation anywhere we want. Fly anywhere!” So, he’s still not getting it. But, you know, maybe for some people they’ll realize that sitting in traffic for hours on the 400 just isn’t worth it and they can work from home more. Or how about how everyone is realizing there’s a world outside their door. I mean, come on, I see more people walking down by the waterfront than I did when we were told to stay home. It’s like now everyone realized, “Hey! There’s a world out there!”

I made a sign today, I don’t know if you can see it. But, here, I’ll show you, it says, “I’m with Her!” And it’s got a big globe in the middle of it. I tried to put some animals on it, but you and I both know, drawing isn’t what I’m good at. I thought, if you want to, put in the comment section, in whatever language you can speak, write your own favourite slogan!

Oh, and it's ok, you know, to doubt sometimes, or a lot, it's kinda a crazy time out there right now, and I am never sure what's going to happen or be told to us next, so it's okay to be doubting, cause if the bald eagle has taught us anything its with a little bit of change, lots of education and the people in power caring – the world can be a pretty great place.

See you next week – maybe our theme will be “Her and Us – In it to win it!”

Hymn: *River Running in You and Me, 163 MV*

Prayer's of the People (*potential response in bold*), **Rev. Roberta Howey**

Blessed Mother,

We cannot ignore the realities that we face.

We have hurt You, and Your children, through our greed and apathy.

We ask that you continue to guide us through mending the world.

We pray for all who are victims of the Climate Crisis-

Refugees of forest fires, drought and famine

Monsoons and floods that have destroyed communities

Hurricanes that get stronger, summers that get hotter, and winters that are more treacherous each year.

Blessed Mother, in your love, hear our prayer.

Blessed Father,

We have witnessed the impact of our actions on plants and animals everywhere.

We ask for continued guidance as we both recognize the loss and prepare a response.

We pray for all of Your Creation that has been lost.

Animals and plants gone extinct due to over-hunting and poaching,

Loss of habitat or food source,

From a lack of consideration, of understanding, and compassion,

Blessed Father, in your love, hear our prayer.

Eternal Parent,

We also witness that we are called to repair what has been broken.

We pray for every activist, politician, scientist, and all those working to stop the effects of climate change.

We pray for a generation that is learning from birth the importance of sustainability, from elders and teachers.

We pray for the awakening of a new reality that we can attain;

Humans become friends with the rest of Creation once more.

Blessed Parent, in your love, hear our prayer.

Amen.

April 26th, 2020 – STAY IN: Camping Sunday

Prep work: For this Sunday, we are going to encourage you to get your community of faith to create their best fort around their cameras. Ask them to harken back to those days of sheets and pillows, when they'd turn a living room upside down, and create something cozy where they can participate in worship with their own little tent around them!

Call to Worship

Bold, the congregation or a second voice.

We are all gathered in separate spaces,
but are one people!

We are all gathered in our own little places of comfort,
but are one people!

We are all wishing we could find our way into the great outdoors,
but know we must stay inside!

We are all hoping for the day when the sun can bronze our faces again,
but know we must stay inside!

We are all looking toward the day when we will be together,
hugging long hugs and laughing big laughs,

We are all grateful, for the people who are working hard during this time, and the Creator cares for us,
so that there will come a time, when we will be out but for now – Stay In!

Opening Prayer

Creator,

We think of the expansive sky before us, and pause in wonder.

We consider the blaze of the sun, and smile in the warmth.

We understand the squishiness of the grass between our toes, and giggle in delight.

We cherish the breeze that blows around us, as we smile with reverence.

We know, O Gaia,

We need to spend this time away from your creation,

In order to truly celebrate it's awesomeness.

So instead, we will sing to ourselves of the smells of campfires,

We will tell the stories around the blaze once more,

And we will struggle with our tents, yet again.

Amen.

Hymn: *It Only Takes A Spark (Pass It On)*, 289 VU

Scripture: *Luke 24: 13 – 35*

Game, Reflection and Break Out – *What Do I Look Like?*

Choose three people in the congregation that are on the Zoom platform and ask them to turn off their cameras when it is their turn. Then, in the chat box, have everyone write as much as they can about the person's looks that they can remember (glasses, hair colour, clothing, etc.) And then get each person to turn their camera back on and see what people got right and what they didn't get right.

Then, after playing the game, reflect on the notion of what we can remember in this life, but also what we can miss – and how sometimes we need clues.

Remind the congregation after the game of the scripture story, In the scripture today, Jesus was revealed at a very divine moment – the breaking of the bread, which reminds us of communion itself.

In break out groups ask the congregation to share about something that, since they have been asked to stay isolated, they have realized they now miss, and took for granted.

For example, I have realize just how much I miss the opportunity of spending time in the Muskokas in the various seasons. I know I will be traveling up there again soon, but for now, I will miss my time there with friends, and I hope they are staying safe up there.

After everyone has come back from their break out sessions, invite them into the song *One More Step Along the World I Go*.

Hymn – *One More Step Along the World I Go, 639 VU*

Prayers of the People

God of the Great Cosmos,

On a day like today it may feel as though our universe is small,
it may feel as though we are struggling to know what the world out there was like,
help us to remind ourselves that we are an intricate part of creation,
and by staying home – we are doing our part in the healing of creation.

God of the Camp Site,

Help us this day to understand our sense of space,
we are fortunate, Oh God, to be in the comfort of our homes this day,
there are others we know, who carry their homes with them wherever they go.
Let us see the privilege that we live with, and work harder to understand justice.

God of the Tent,

You who provide shelter in your loving arms,
help us to provide shelter from the pains of life this day,

as we remind ourselves of the gratefulness that we hold for the front line workers in hospitals, the amazing work of the people in grocery stores, the trades, and other front line workers who have been deemed essential,
May we shout in great thanksgiving for their leadership.

God of the campfire,

You who blaze with all of life's possibilities,
help us to hold close the ones we most dearly care for,
our friends and families, the ones we gather with singing out-of-tune songs we know and love,
Sharing stories of giant fish and tall tales,
Encourage us to hold these memories and know we will make new ones soon.

God of the sleeping bag,

You who after a weary day we snuggle into,
hold us close during this time, and help us to remind ourselves of our own work that is needed.
Let us see that we are in need of prayers and care this day too.

Amen.