

Both seed and Fruit

Harvest Thanksgiving 2024 + St. Andrew's Kelowna
Joel 2:21-27; Psalm 126; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Matthew 6:25-33

+ ++

Happy Harvest Thanksgiving! Today is a marvellous day and its also marvellously full as we celebrate both the gifts of the land and the gift of Adam and Anna's baptism; as we celebrate seeds that have come to full maturity and harvest and seeds of faith that are just beginning, as we celebrate the faithful growing of so many things, all of which are the fruit of Christ's life and love. I am so grateful to celebrate all of these things with you before moving to Vancouver.

Our Gospel reading this morning is the middle part of the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon is a beautiful series of teachings that describe for us what seeking the Kingdom of God looks like. This sermon begins with the Beatitudes and continues into to teachings on prayer, wealth, forgiveness and love, possessions, all of which is summed up by the last verse of our reading this morning: seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.

Jesus asks those listening to consider the birds, the lilies, to look to and learn from God's creation about how to be Kingdom seekers. This an art we have been practicing over the last four years as we have looked to The Gift Farm-Garden as a living metaphor of Kingdom seeking. We have looked and learned so much: learning how to grow as disciples and leaders from companion planting and soil amending; that Kingdom seeking is not about ownership but shared responsibility; that even when it comes to cut worms and wildfires we do not have enemies but rather partners in the art of growing; that *God* will cultivate the church into what God needs it to be if we listen and respond; that as we feed others God will feed us too in the most unexpected ways, like amaranth seeds. This year the grain was winnowed by Carrie and backed into communion wafers by Soren for Eucharist today. At the heart of it all we have learned what this gospel readings teaches: don't worry but seek first the Kingdom and when you do what is needed will be given, it will comes as gift. And when we put the Kingdom at the center of our mission during Covid, the Farm-Garden came as gift and continues, as just that so so many in our wider community.

And the Gray also came to us as gift and continues to be just that. Adam and Anna it has been a gift to work with you in baptismal preparation over these last weeks. From counting all 19 crosses inside and outside of St. Andrew's, to naming and rescuing a spider the night when we learned the baptismal vow about creation, to learning that the sacramental symbols of baptism - water, oil, light - and the Eucharistic ones of bread and wine, all show us what it means to be part of God's family; they all speak of a new way of living, of God's promised, new creation in Christ, making us part of Christ's own pattern of death and resurrection, of self-offering and new life.

And this new way of being and living into which Jesus calls you today Adam and Anna, this new way into which we are all growing, is both the seed and fruit of the Kingdom. If we want to know and see the Kingdom of God, we must begin to live it. It is only as we become the seeds that we will discover the fruit. It is in seeking the Kingdom that we will find it, it is only as we live with deep trust into the new life that Jesus' call us, that God will reveal a bit more of the Kingdom that is waiting to come in fullness through the Spirit. And so today we are honouring both this seed and fruit by having Adam and Anna take their baptismal vows in words more appropriate to them and their Godparents take the baptismal vows in adult language on their behalf, the vows that Adam and Anna are growing into and will make on their own when they are Confirmed.

So do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the Lord has done great things! declares the prophet Joel. Great things in Christ, great things in the goodness of the land, great things in Anna and Adam, great things in this place which we celebrate, give thanks for, and offer all as a sign of God's Kingdom

Amen.