



Wildwood
**Mennonite
Church**

"Story Shaping Story"

Wildwood Mennonite Church // June 27, 2021

Worship Leader: Kara W // Music Leader: Josephine K

Sermon: Patrick Preheim, Co-Pastor, Nutana Park Mennonite Church

Welcome to Wildwood!

Good Morning and welcome to wildwood! I imagine many of us are joining the service from the lake or out in the garden. I hope that you feel God's presence during this service, wherever you may be. This morning our sermon will be courtesy of Patrick Preheim from Nutana Mennonite.

Please join me for the call to worship.

Call to Worship // Voices Together #851

Leader: Jesus call us
to praise and prayer,
to song and silence

People: Jesus call us to worship.

Leader: Jesus call us
to hearing and healing,
to service and solidarity;

People: Jesus calls us to love.

Leader: Jesus calls us
to advocacy and action,
to protest and provision;

People: Jesus call us to justice.

Leader: We hear the call of Christ

All: *We Worship together with joy.*

Peace Candle

The sermon we will be hearing today was recorded on June 6, shortly after 215 burials were found at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, which Patrick mentions in his sermon. This week we heard from Cowessess First Nation here in Saskatchewan of the discovery of over 750 unmarked graves at the cemetery associated with the Marieval Indian Residential School, which ran from 1899 to 1997. The Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde released a statement via twitter where he called the news "...absolutely tragic, but not surprising." I know that this story will become a familiar occurrence over the next few months and years, as more GPR studies are conducted at the sites of former residential schools. As I light

the peace candle today, I pray that we will not allow ourselves to become numb to these stories, that we will continue to listen, to learn, and to acknowledge the deep and enduring trauma caused by the residential school system.

I encourage you to listen to the full statement made by Chief Delorme of Cowessess First Nation where he explains in full the impact of the Marieval Residential School. Here are a few of his words, "All we ask of those of you listening is that you stand by us as we heal, and we get stronger....we are not asking for pity but we are asking for understanding. We need time to heal and this country must stand by us.

It is the pain of the school for many that is triggering. I ask you to open your mind, that this country needs to have truth and reconciliation. There are going to be many more stories in the future, and this is Cowessess moment of our truth. "

As we listen to the music for meditation I invite you to say your own prayers for truth and reconciliation.

Music for Meditation // [Let Me Follow](#) // Son Lux

Sharing Time


Not hearing from one another in person through the Sharing Time is a significant loss for many of us. Sharing items can be emailed to the church office or the pastors to be shared with the congregation. If you're able, join us for our Sunday Morning Zoom gatherings, or check your email for the sharing items from last Sunday. Or maybe now would be a good time to pause your reading to call someone from church or elsewhere that you haven't heard from this week.

Congregational Prayer¹ // Eileen Klaassen

Thank you God for everything under us;
for these chairs on which we sit,
for this church's firm foundation,
for the soil with its burrowing animals and insects,
for the rock down under that, layered by the sea in ancient times,
for the water that flows in subterranean channels far beneath us,
and for the miles upon miles of bedrock,
(unknown and unexplored by all but you),
all the way down to the living heat of our planet,
the molten rock deep in the heart of the earth.

Thank you God for everything above us;
for this solid roof which shelters us,





for the wind swirling and birds soaring skyward,
for the airplanes and clouds high above,
for the upper atmosphere and the stratosphere,
for satellites orbiting, for meteors whizzing,
for the moon and the planets of our solar system,
for asteroids and comets and supernovae and black holes,
for galaxy upon galaxy stretching away into the vastness of space.
The wide span of your work is a mystery we cannot fathom.
You are above us, you are beneath us, God of creation!

Thank you, God, for everything you have given us...

And now we pause in silence as you hear our confessions and concerns:

[silence]

Thank you that even though we are so small in the scheme of things,
you hear our prayers, you answer our prayers.
Bless our church, and help us to be people who point others to you,
help us to be a faithful part of your big picture. Amen.

¹ <https://carolpenner.typepad.com/leadinginworship/2019/08/big-picture-congregational-prayer.html>

Song // [Jericho](#) // Andrew Ripp

Children's Story // [Click here for video storytime with Rick E!](#)

This week's story is [The Memory Coat](#) by Elvira Woodruff with illustrations by Michael Dooling.

Scripture // *The Inclusive Bible Translation*

Matthew 1:1-17

This is the family record of Jesus the Christ, descendant of David, descendant of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac; Isaac begot Jacob; Jacob begot Judah and his sisters and brothers; Tamar and Judah begot Perez and Zerah; Perez begot Hezron; Hezron begot Ram; Ram begot Amminadab; Amminadab begot Nahshon; Nahshon begot Salmon; Rahab and Salmon begot Boaz; Ruth and Boaz begot Obed; Obed begot Jesse; and Jesse begot David, the ruler.

Bathsheba—who had been the wife of Uriah—and David begot Solomon; Solomon begot Rehoboam; Rehoboam begot Abijah; Abijah begot Asa; Asa begot Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat begot Joram; Joram begot Uzziah; Uzziah begot Jotham; Jotham begot Ahaz; Ahaz begot Hezekiah; Hezekiah begot Manasseh; Manasseh begot Amon; Amon

begot Josiah; Josiah begot Jeconiah and his sisters and brothers at the time of the Babylonian captivity.

After the Babylonian captivity, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel; Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel; Zerubbabel begot Abiud; Abiud begot Eliakim; Eliakim begot Azor; Azor begot Zadok; Zadok begot Achim; Achim begot Eliud; Eliud begot Eleazar; Eleazar begot Matthan; Matthan begot Jacob; Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary. And from her Jesus was born.

Thus there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen generations from David to the Babylonian captivity, and fourteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to the Messiah.

**Sermon // “Story Shaping Story” // Patrick Preheim, Co-Pastor, Nutana Park Mennonite Church
(If you’d rather watch than read, [click here for the video version on youtube](#))**


James, great job on the scripture reading. Remind me to double your wage for the day. I have never asked a congregational member to read a genealogy for a scripture text. The pay grade of volunteer worship leaders just doesn’t warrant that kind insensitivity. And yet here I have requested that James slog through these very Jewish and Semitic names during a worship service. Why torment poor James in this way?? In his preface to Matthew’s Gospel Eugene Peterson writes,

The story of Jesus doesn’t begin with Jesus. God had been at work for a long time. Salvation, which is the main business of Jesus, is an old business. Jesus is the coming together in final form of themes and energies and movements that had been set in motion before the foundation of the world.

Matthew opens the New Testament by setting the local story of Jesus in its world historical context. He makes sure that as we read his account of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, we see the connections with everything that has gone before... Better yet, Matthew tells the story in such a way that not only is everything previous to us completed in Jesus; we are completed in Jesus. Every day we wake up in the middle of something that is already going on, that has been going on for a long time: genealogy and geology, history and culture, the cosmos—God. We are neither accidental nor incidental to the story. We get orientation, briefing, background, reassurance... all the parts of our lives—work, family, friends, memories, dreams—[are] also completed in Jesus.¹

The genealogy of Jesus, and Eugene Peterson’s reflection on this introduction to Matthew’s gospel, sets the foundations for our summer series on the theme of Spiritual Guides. Susanne and I thought it would be wonderful to hear from people of the congregation on this topic. Some might have an Ahaz who has been a spiritual guide, and I would guess more than few





have a Salmon, a Tamar, a mother Mary who have shaped us or otherwise contributed to our spiritual formation. Matthew was very intentional in beginning with a genealogy of people who shaped who Jesus would become by virtue of the family tree. The author was careful to make these notes. Maybe it behooves us all to do the same.


The genealogies of the bible invite us to remember those people, places and events which have formed us into the spiritual people we are today. To this end we have asked a number of people from the congregation to share about someone whose faith has influenced them or guided them on their spiritual journey. This could be a well-known figure from Christian history or the present, a theologian or author, or a friend or family member, living or dead, whose faith has been an influence. Story telling is always wonderful, so it looks to be a good summer for worship at Nutana Park Mennonite.

Today, I am mindful however, of the events from the past several weeks in which mass graves of indigenous children have been recovered on the site of a residential school. Residential schools took from many indigenous children the opportunity to learn from their elders. Too many indigenous parents were deprived an opportunity to pass on the wisdom and traditions of the family. Too many generations have suffered. Too many stories have not been permitted to shape stories. I am proud and grateful to be a Canadian, and I grieve the attitude and theology and manner in which genealogies were destroyed for the peoples who preceded settler peoples. In some way, the scripture of the day may be helpful for us to navigate the trauma and tumult of these weeks.

It is important to recognize the story behind the story of those in the genealogy of Jesus and consider why the author of the Matthew's gospel included them. The term which Peterson translates as "family tree" actually has more to it than that. It is a family tree, but literally translated it is a genealogy. Why is this important? Linguistically the author is using a Greek language term for the ancestry of Jesus which harkens back to the first book of the Hebrew bible, which in Greek is Genesis. In Jesus begins a new testament in which Jew and non-Jew (Greeks) are acknowledged and welcomed into the family of God. It is a new beginning with new creations and new story lines.²

An expression of this new beginning are the wonderful women included in the genealogy. A traditional Jewish historian might include names like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, and maybe Deborah. Instead we find "Tamar, Rahab, the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba), and Ruth" in addition to the mother of Jesus. Including women would have been surprising in itself, but less so if the women who made the cut were...respectable matriarchs...Matthew includes...women, at least two of them Gentiles, whose backgrounds and actions in some respects might be better left as skeletons in the family closet!" Why??

"Matthew intended his readers to see these women as positive examples of the surprising ways God works in history. These women showed strong and aggressive faith despite their social powerlessness. Matthew elsewhere shows an affinity for portraying women who



demonstrate bold initiative; for example, the Canaanite woman (15:21ff) and the woman who touches the fringe of Jesus' cloak (9:22). Three of the...women he includes in his genealogy are woman of just such courageous action! Tamar claims her rights when Judah neglects them (Gen 38); Rahab recognizes the power of the Hebrew God and so protects the scouts (Josh 2); Ruth, following Naomi's advice, moves Boaz to action (Ruth 3).


In the ancient world, women were often forced to employ manipulative, behind-the-scenes tactics because society accorded them little influence through accepted public channels...Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth use cunning, a sort of unconventional wisdom to wring justice from unjust events. Matthew's message is that God uses those on society's sidelines to advance the plan of salvation. Faithful actions, not inherited political or religious status, or habit, place one in the Saviour's family tree...By acting in ways that challenged the expectations of their times, these women advanced God's plan. The genealogy implies that with ancestors like this, Jesus will too. With a Saviour like Jesus, we can" as well.³

This sets the context to consider the spiritual genealogy which has shaped who we are and who we are becoming. Consider for just a brief moment those people, events, landscapes, or books which have been formative for you. Consider them. [a brief time of quiet]. My guess is that a few strong women, significant men, a deportation or two, time among the hanging gardens Babylon have been scrolling through the minds and hearts of those listening. This is, I think, something which the author of Matthew would be hoping for as the gospel opens in this fashion. And like Peterson noted, the story of Jesus merges with our stories. As we tell of those building blocks upon which we have been founded we, in effect, give testimony to the cornerstone of our spiritual lives which is none other than Jesus Christ. An article in a recent *Canadian Mennonite* touches on this business of spiritual guides.

Aaron Epp collected testimonies from fourteen Mennonites on the books that have or are impacting them today. I offer his introductory comments and three of the fourteen contributions. "As part of *Canadian Mennonite's* biannual Focus on Books & Resources section, the magazine spoke with 14 people about the novels, poetry collections and non-fiction works that have impacted them...

Wesley Montgomery, 13 *Grade 8 student at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.* "My favourite book is *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. The main character, Starr, is Black, and she witnesses her best friend get shot by a white police officer. It's really relevant to what is happening in the world now. I learned that you never know what somebody's going through. No matter what's happening in your life, you have to treat people with respect."

Jean Lefever, 78 *Church librarian at Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton.* "I've just recently read *Peace by Chocolate: The Hadhad Family's Remarkable Journey from Syria to Canada* by Jon Tattie. It's about a Syrian family that was sponsored by a group in Antigonish, N.S.... It's a remarkable story of how these newcomers were able to start a chocolatier called Peace by Chocolate with the help of the community."



Doug Klassen, 54 *Executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada, Winnipeg.* “One book that has really rocked my world in the last five or seven years or so is *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* by René Girard. He was featured on CBC Radio’s Ideas program, and it just blew my mind. The book they referenced a lot in that series was *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World*. It’s helped me understand three things: the uniqueness of Jesus and the gospels, the uniqueness of how conflict works in the world, and how Jesus resolves that. It’s been key for me.”⁴

My second example comes from an ecumenical friend of mine with whom I meet now and then. I offer an excerpt from a conversation we have had. As a context Richard’s father was a Jew living in Europe in the mid 20th century.

Despite [my father’s] struggles and loss during the 2nd WW, he somehow never resented Germans, only Nazis. How in such stark circumstances does one successfully distinguish between one and the other? I remember in my youth, he having German business associates that he comfortably spoke to in German. We would be out for dinner...in Regina and he would cross the dining room and graciously greet these German business men. He would greet them and their families in German. I never understood this care and concern. I want to believe there was more at play than just good business relations.

Richard’s father found it very difficult to accept his son’s affirmation of Christianity. And yet, Richard says, he made clear that I was his son and would always be his son. Richard has lived this attitude in his professional life, his family life and his religious life. We are shaped by the people in our lives.

We are shaped spiritually by the living and the dead. We have been spiritually shaped by the books we have read. We are shaped by the experiences out of which we have come and with which we continue to live. I do not know what the spiritual genealogy would look like for most us, but I would guess it would be interesting. It will, in fact, be not only interesting but edifying. Amen

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs: Navpress,, 1993), p. 9.

² Alyce M. McKenzie, *Matthew: Interpretation Bible Studies* (Louisville, KY: Geneva Press, 1998), p.9

³ *Ibid*, pp 10-11.

⁴ Aaron Epp, “Recommended Reads” in *Canadian Mennonite* (April 7: Volume 25 Issue 8), p. 3.

Offering Prayer

Even if we cannot donate in person, there are ways to support the church and the programs that our church supports.

*We offer our gifts to you, Lord,
with grateful, cheerful hearts.*

*Thank you that you meet our needs on the journey,
providing what we need when we need it.*

*Trusting you, we can share what we have with others,
and we do this joyfully, together, today,
in Jesus` name, Amen.*

-Carol Penner

Sending Song // [How Great Thou Art](#) // Celtic Worship ft. Steph Macleod // Voices Together #436

Benediction // Voices Together #1060

May the blessing of the God
Of Sarah and Hagar,
The blessing of the child
Born of Mary
And the blessing of the Spirit
Who broods over us
Be with you all.
Amen.

