

SERMON – Just a cup of Water – June 28, 2028 – Rev. Whitney Bruno.

Matthew 10:40-42 NRSVUE “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous, and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

Psalms 98:1-4 NRSVUE

A Maskil [Wisdom Song] of Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
I declare that your steadfast love is established forever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
You said, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to my servant David:
‘I will establish your descendants forever
and build your throne for all generations.’ ” *Selah...*
Happy are the people who know the festal shout,
who walk, O Lord, in the light of your countenance;
they exult in your name all day long
and extol your righteousness.
For you are the glory of their strength;
by your favor our horn is exalted.
For our shield belongs to the Lord,
our king to the Holy One of Israel.



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Just A Cup of Water – A Sermon by Rev. Whitney Bruno for Little Current Sheguiandah United Church Pastoral Charge, June 28 2026

Loren Eiseley told a story called "The Star Thrower". It was revised, shortened, and entered culture as ancient wisdom and lore. Here is one retelling...

An older person had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, they saw a human figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As they came closer they saw that it was a young child and the child was not dancing but was reaching down to the sand, picking up a starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.

"Young one," said the old one, "Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?"

"The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in, they will die."

"But young one, do you not realise that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly throw them all in. It doesn't make a difference."

The young one listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying: "It made a difference for that one."

In some versions of this story, the action inspires others to join, and soon all are working together to save the starfish each morning. Good deeds snowball, build up, and inspire more good deeds.

In other versions of the story, the old one walks away. Throwing the starfish back doesn't make a difference in the world... but it does certainly make a difference to the person who offers the kindness, and the one who receives it.

I find myself in a starfish situation rather regularly. Friday I was driving in to town and realized I had a bug passenger in my car. I could slap them - a quick death to a short life. I could leave them. A day or two and the bug would die in the heat of the car, or from old age. I could pull over, roll down my window, and let it out.

I chose the last. A single fly makes no difference in the world - but the bare minimum kindness we show to all our relations is essential and makes all the difference.

The time you slowed to let an animal cross the road.

The time you set out orange slices for butterflies and orisels.

When you didn't remove the milkweed.

When you chose to put your wrapper in your pocket instead of the ground.

When you walked - just that short distance - instead of driving.

It made no difference and yet it made all the difference.

Kindness inspires kindness. God has built our world to be one of relationships. Whether you call it gestalt, like German theologians, or energy, like modern New Age mystics - or you call it spirit like many Christians - or you call it culture - whatever you call it - what we put out into the universe in our daily small ways changes the universe.

If we put out and offer hate, and anger, and cruelty, we find the world around us is hateful, angry, and cruel.

If we put out and offer love, and grace, and kindness, we find the world around us is loving, grace-giving, and kind.

I think that is part of why Covid was so... psychologically different for us. Whoever we are, and whatever we put out, was amplified. If we normally are suspicious people, Covid was a time of intense distrust. If we're normally kind people, it was a time of amazing kindness. If we're normally angry people, Covid was a time of intense anger. Covid was a megaphone - amplifying us to ourselves -- for better or worse.

It amplified our systems too. Little cracks became massive. Politics have never been the same. Little connections became massive. We're networked like never before. Video chatting with relatives is pretty common. Little kindnesses offered became massive. Do you remember the elderly gentleman raising charity money walking his tiny English garden? Do you remember the way people went out of their way to check on neighbours?

I hear in Jesus' words today that what we offer the universe is what we receive. This isn't a pure "do good and good will always happen to you" or that the harm you know is your fault for harm you caused. No, he is saying

that we form our communities and our world. We co-create with God. We also co-recreate. There is entropy and destruction and chaos. There is order and stability and construction. And our little selves, and little actions, have big impacts.

You've heard of the butterfly effect. The idea is that a butterfly flaps her wings in Asia and causes a hurricane in America. One thing leads to another to another to another. Little things have big impacts.

I wonder - who offered Mary a cup of water as she traveled teaching?
Who opened their door to Peter and offered food?

Remember Jesus sent his friends and family out without food, water, or even spare sandals or a bag. We have Christianity today because of the small kindness of strangers who kept these disciples alive and going. We have our faith today because God works through us, with us, to bring about big effects from little things.

You offer just a bit of kindness. And God amplifies it.

You think it is just \$5 to a stranger. God makes it connection, love, life.

You think it is just an hour or two once a month volunteering - and God draws attention to your selflessness and inspires whole new generations to care for their community.

Today you're hearing about starfish - letters to our MP, and soon you'll hear about Manitoulin Family Resources, and Living into Right Relations. These are small - and yet, it is the small God favours. It is the mustard seed. It is Moses with a stutter. It is David, effeminate poet. It is backwater Galilee. It is women whose names history swallowed yet the kindness they showed Jesus lives on and on.

No small kindness is actually small at all. With God, it makes all the difference in the world.

Thank you, each of you, for the countless ways you live out the kindness of God. Thank you, each of you, for the difference you make. Thank you, each of you, for being small but mighty. Amen.