

# St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca>

Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

**Transfiguration Sunday February 14, 2021**

## Words of Welcome

Moments of awe and wonder seem to few and far between in our lived experience, but so important to our well-being and understanding of our relationships with others and with creation. So, with hearts and minds open to the possibilities we begin with a call to worship.

## Call to Worship

God said, "Let light shine in the darkness!"

**Lord, shine your light into our lives.**

We see the glory of God in the face of Christ.

**The light of Christ is with us day by day.**

Let us follow the light of Christ together.

**Let us worship God with thanks and praise.**

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## Hymn

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus*

1. O soul, are you weary or troubled?  
no light in the darkness you see?  
There's light for a look at the Saviour,  
and life more abundant and free.

*Refrain*

Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
look full in his wonderful face,  
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
in the light of his glory and grace.

2. Through death into life everlasting  
he passed, and we follow him there;  
o'er us sin no more hath dominion  
For more than conqu'rors we are!

*Refrain*

3. His Word shall not fail you, he promised;  
believe him and all will be well;  
then go to a world that is dying,  
his perfect salvation to tell!

*Refrain*

*Words and Music: public domain*

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God of grace and glory,  
to this worried world, you reveal your presence  
in radiant glory and in gentle whispers,  
on mountain tops and in shadowed valleys,  
in classrooms and hospital beds,  
in homes and churches,  
in the quiet of nature and on busy streets.  
Yours is the presence that pushes past our fear to calm us;  
yours is the love that transforms our doubt with reassurance.  
We come to dwell in your goodness  
and offer you the praise you deserve.

God of mercy and forgiveness,  
we confess that many things keep us from trusting fully in your love.  
We are often distracted by our own desires and disappointments.  
We cling to anger and resentment.  
We fear for the future rather than seek signs of hope. Forgive us.  
Shine your love upon us so that your glory may be seen in us,  
and give us courage to follow Jesus wherever he leads.

Holy One, all wisdom comes from you.  
Guide us now as we hear your scriptures read and interpreted.  
May your Holy Spirit help us understand your Word more fully  
and be transformed to live it out. For we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## Assurance of Pardon

St. John records that God is love and that God's perfect love casts out fear.  
Friends, we are promised that those who abide in love abide in God  
and God abides in them.

Claim God's forgiveness in this Good News:  
God's perfect love abides in you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## Scripture Reading Mark 9:2-9

<sup>2</sup>Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup>and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup>And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup>Then Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." <sup>6</sup>He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup>Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice,

“This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!”<sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

<sup>9</sup>As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

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The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## **Message** Awe and Wonder

I have never been to the Grand Canyon, but I have seen pictures, I have never scaled a mountain, or sailed the sea, but I have seen a sea of flowers in the Netherlands, colours upon colours, like nature's painting. I have sat by fast moving rivers and watched the power of waterfalls where anything that is caught up in the movement has no choice but to follow the course of the water.

I climbed the small hill near the historic site of Dunvegan that gives a grand view of the Peace River below. I have been on the vast and deep Lake Superior, known for its breath-taking beauty and deadly storms. I have stood in the middle of a forest with trees towering over me, the tops waving at the sky as the wind blows.

And I have be in awe of a dark stormy night sky as lighting lit up long bands of darkness and the clap and crash of the sound of thunder was so strong it rumbled the ground below. Nature has a way of making us pay attention, of standing in awe and wonder, even fear and trembling, as it moves and lives and breathes its power and might.

Recalling moments where you stood in awe and wonder may help to place you in a position to feel and know a little of what the disciples were faced with when they witnessed Jesus “transfigured before them...his clothes...dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them” (Mark 9:3).

Moments of awe and wonder are times to pause, to breath in the experience, to take a moment. It is not a time of analysing. We don't analyze the mountain top, or the flowers, or the water, we just listen, watch, feel, and experience. This moment with Jesus was very much a visual spectacle. We are told that it encompassed two other historical and important figures from Israel's past, Moses and Elijah. We are not told how James and John responded to what they were witnessing other than to say they were terrified, but poor Peter felt he had to do something, rather than be in the moment. Maybe it was the terror, maybe it was because he wanted to hold onto the moment and share it with others. It could be that it fit his picture of glory and power and he didn't want to lose it. But he seems to want to take control of the situation and start a building project to contain what was there before him.

We humans are good at building memorials. Memorials give us a place for remembering. But Jesus wasn't ready to be memorialized. At this time Jesus was still in the middle of his work. Peter, James and John, had been given a gift. This gift was to see Jesus as a

fully human being and at the same time fully divine – Holy. They did not understand what they were witnessing in the moment. It was confusing, struck fear into them, and was so unexpected, but experience would stay with them.

Though in the moment Jesus ordered them not to tell any one about what they had seen, he did add the part about, tell no one *until* after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. And that is what we are given in the scripture, the story, the witness, the awe and wonder, even the fear and trembling of the moment after the fact. The disciples recall it in their writing for those who would come after them as witnesses to Jesus' life, death and resurrection, for the purpose of bringing new life and new hope to others.

You can bet they knew they would sound a little off when they told this story. Who was going to believe them? But it was part of what had formed them, given them the resolve to continue in the work Jesus had for them in that moment and in the years to come. It was their hope that it would bring some sense of that awe and wonder, fear and trembling to the rest of us when we consider Jesus. Jesus had come in the form of a child, helpless and fragile, needy, just as we are, still this moment, and the resurrection, there would be glimpses of the glory, the power, the awesomeness of God, and Jesus as the Son of God.

Today, may be an opportunity to just gaze at the landscape, listen for the breath of God, feel the power of the Holy Spirit. There is always a time for questions and we should question, but this moment is one to ponder, pause, wonder at the one we call our Lord and Saviour. To give thanks that we can question, but we don't need to have all the answers. It is a moment of witness and a time to consider the ways that God has shown Godself to you in your life and in the lives of those you know.

Then, like the Jesus, Peter, James and John, we come away from that moment to roll up our selves and get back to the work of bringing God's kingdom here on earth through acts of love, kindness, grace, forgiveness, and justice. Unlike the disciples we get to tell anyone and everyone who will listen what we have seen, and heard, and believe about God.

On this day, may you be blessed with awe and wonder. Amen

### **Prayers of the People**

God of life, God of love:

You created us and set us in relationship with each other—  
in families and neighbourhoods, communities and countries, cultures and nations.

We give you thanks for all the supportive relationships  
which bring meaning and encouragement to our lives,  
and have meant so much in times of isolation.

Help us contribute what we can to sustain the wellbeing of our community  
for all who call it home. God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

God of our faith and our future,

there are so many pressures on homes and families today.  
Draw near to those who are struggling in economic difficulty  
and those burdened by the challenges to health and happiness this winter.  
Work with parents and children, married partners, and next-door neighbours  
who face conflict their relationships to create solutions that express mutual respect  
and resolve tension. Help our congregation support families, whatever their size or  
situation, as well as people living on their own, to know your love.  
God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

God of mercy and forgiveness,  
You call us to live together in peace and unity.  
We pray for our neighbourhoods and our nation. Where people are divided and  
bitterness turns into resentment, show us how to work for reconciliation.  
As the pandemic stretches on, we pray for all those whose skill and dedication is  
needed to support our common life. Wherever we can, may we offer words of  
encouragement and appreciation so others know how much they matter to you and  
to us all. God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Today we give thanks for our church family  
and for the years of worship and witness offered here.  
So much has changed for us over these past few months  
and we pray you will bless our leaders  
who have to think carefully and creatively so congregational life continues.

We remember those in need of your special attention today... *(Hold a silence)*  
Guide us all with your wisdom and insight so we find ways to reach out to each other  
in support and friendship. Open our eyes to opportunities to reach out beyond our  
own fellowship as agents of your healing and hope for we offer ourselves to you in  
Jesus' name in the words he taught us to pray:

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## **Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

## **Invitation to make an offering**

St. Valentine's Day reminds us of the transforming power love has in many lives. Gifts we offer to God from the heart also transform lives. An offering expresses your love for God and God's love for the world in Christ Jesus.

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If you would like to learn more about St. Andrew's, get involved in our ministry, or make a donation toward the life and ministry of St. Andrew's Presbyterian, in Thunder Bay visit our website at <http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> for more information and to connect with me.

## Hymn

*Lord, the light of your love is shining*

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1. Lord, the light of your love is shining  
in the midst of the darkness, shining;  
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us.  
Set us free by the truth you now bring us.  
Shine on me; shine on me.  
  
Refrain  
Shine, Jesus, shine;  
fill this land with the Father's glory;  
blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow;  
flood the nations with grace and mercy;  
send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light!
2. Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into your radiance;  
by your blood I may enter your brightness.  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.  
Shine on me; shine on me.  
  
Refrain
3. As we gaze on your kingly brightness,  
so our faces display your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory;  
mirrored here may our lives tell your story.  
Shine on me; shine on me.

Refrain

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## Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you  
and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you  
and give you peace. Amen.

- Based on Numbers 6:24-26