

# St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski

24th Sunday after Pentecost - Remembrance Sunday November 7, 2021

## Words of Welcome

What does it take to notice the people, the life around us? Who do we notice? What draws our attention? Do we even pay attention? Who does God notice? If you would like to ponder those questions this may be a time for that. I invite you to join me in this time of worship and wonder.

## Call to Worship

We gather to praise our God.

**The One who created everything;  
the One who keeps faith with us.**

We gather to follow Jesus.

**Who comes to build justice on the ruins of despair;  
who comes to set us free from our fears.**

We gather to listen to the Holy Spirit.

**Who teaches us to care for the most vulnerable;  
who shows us how to see the forgotten in our midst.**

©2021 Thom M. Shuman. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com> November 7.

## Hymn

*Simply trusting every day*

689

1. Simply trusting every day,  
trusting through a stormy way,  
even when my faith is small,  
trusting Jesus, that is all.

2. Brightly doth his Spirit shine  
into this poor heart of mine;  
while he leads I cannot fall,  
trusting Jesus, that is all.

Refrain

*Refrain*

*Trusting as the moments fly,  
trusting as the days go by,  
trusting him what e'er befall,  
trusting Jesus, that is all.*

3. Singing, if my way be clear,  
praying, if the path be drear,  
if in danger, for him call,  
trusting Jesus, that is all.

Refrain

4. Trusting him while life shall last,  
trusting him till earth be past,  
till within the jasper wall,  
trusting Jesus, that is all.

Refrain

Words: public domain

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of justice and peace,  
We gather at this solemn time of year,  
aware of the costliness of human history.  
In the face of hostility between nations and neighbours,  
you have come to us in Jesus Christ,  
carrying no sword, calling us to serve as peacemakers.  
In this time of worship, renew in us the hope  
that you will turn swords into ploughshares,  
and lead the world you love away from the study of war  
to the promise of peace with justice for all your peoples.

**God of justice and mercy,  
we confess that the world around us is in a mess.  
Countries turn disputes over territory into threats of terror.  
Old enemies stir up conflict within their tribes and nations.  
Threats of violence keep us all on edge.  
We confess we have not learned from past conflicts  
what leads to peace with justice among nations and neighbours.  
Forgive us and lead us in a better way.  
Trusting in your grace, provision, justice and most of all,  
your love for every human being as all are created in your imaginative image.**

O God, as we turn to listen for your Word in scripture, send your Spirit among us.  
Open our ears to your truth. Open our minds to the challenge in your message.  
Move our hearts so that we live out your challenge in the name of Jesus Christ,  
your Word made flesh. Amen.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner.24th Sunday after Pentecost. Remembrance Sunday November 7, 2021. Year B.

## Assurance of Pardon

The good news is that we are made whole; not by our efforts,  
not by any work we have done, not by any word of ours.

**Out of the riches of grace, God pours forgiveness into our lives,  
giving us all we need in Jesus Christ, so we might live in hope and joy.  
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

©2021 Thom M. Shuman. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com> November 7

## Scripture Reading Mark 12:38-44

<sup>38</sup> As he taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, <sup>39</sup>and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! <sup>40</sup>They devour widows' houses and

for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'

<sup>41</sup> He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. <sup>42</sup> A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. <sup>43</sup> Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. <sup>44</sup> For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>

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

## **Message** God Notices

This past week I had been given the opportunity to take daily walks at Crieff Hills, a beautiful place outside of Guelph. As I did so I tried to pay attention to what was around me. Lately it seems I have gone from one project to the next, one Sunday to the next, one sermon to the next, one question or concern to the next. It was time to stop take a look around, and breathe. So I went on walks and *noticed* the leaves rustling, the breeze as it moves past my ears, a squirrel scampering up a tree trunk and birds flitting about. One evening I stopped to listen as flocks of geese gathered noisily, honking their arrival in a valley as the evening sky reflected pinks, blues, and greys.

It was a time to *notice* the flavours and textures of my food as I savoured the daily meals provided, putting my fork down between tasty bites, taking a breath before another delightful fork or spoonful, giving thanks that I have been nourished, instead of quickly getting nutrition in me before I head to the next thing to plan, meeting to go to, or question to answer.

Taking time to notice.

Jesus took time to notice things too.

Throughout the Gospel of Mark Jesus has taken time to hear the questions and desires of others such as brothers James and John who queried about whether or not they could sit one at the left and the other at the right hand of Jesus in his glory. Jesus took time to heal a man at the side of the road who was blind and begging. And now, as he was teaching in the temple, Jesus noticed the scribes who were walking around in long robes, their clothing indicating that they had some prestige, and through their actions and expectations, could be seen wanting to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces. These men got the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets. Jesus noticed them and how they desired to be recognized for their high position. They drew attention to themselves. The scribes wanted to be noticed for how they looked and

for their standing in the community. In the process they missed the ones they were called to notice.

Instead of helping the poor, the widow, the orphan, the stranger among them, Jesus says, “they were devouring widows’ houses.” In other words, rather than noticing the low standing of a widow who had no support and coming along side to be of help, to lift the widows up out of their poverty and pain, the scribes were happy to ignore that and in fact, take advantage of the women in their vulnerable state and circumstances. To make it look better and maybe even make themselves feel better, they would say long prayers, these long prayers meant to appear as a sign of piety.

Jesus calls them on it saying, they will receive the greater condemnation or to say it another way, they will pay for it in the long run.

The scene moves from inside the temple to a position outside the treasury, a spot where one could watch as the crowd put money into the treasury for the temple. Now the fact there was a treasury was not in itself a bad thing; buildings take money, ministry takes resources both human and financial. And there is no historical indication that people felt that, what was referred to as the “temple tax,” was a burden or a problem. The problem lay in what Jesus observed about this particular woman, this widow, in contrast to the long flowing robed scribes.

Jesus watched as many rich people put in large sums of money. One way that a person could tell that someone gave large sums of money was the sound of coins as they dropped in and through the receptacle. It was built in such a way and with materials that the sound resonated. Remember, this is not a time of dollar bills, checks, or e-transfers. The effect was that one could literally hear when someone had put a lot of money in the treasury and would take notice. The sound of two small coins, as left by the widow would have brought no notice. Yet that small amount of money represented the woman’s whole life.

Over years this text has been preached as a way to tell people to be like the widow and give generously, holding her up of an example of faith. And that could be the way to go with this. We don’t know the woman’s motive for putting the money in the treasury rather than keeping it for her own need. It could be she felt compelled to give out of her faith, hoping that God would honour her offering with some blessing. Yet given the context in which Jesus takes notice, scholars are now giving this text another look, wondering whether it was more likely a statement on the need of a widow and the sheer disregard of those who knew the words of the Old Testament and did not move to help her in her time of need.

The book of Deuteronomy speaks multiple times to the responsibility of the community and particularly those in leadership in taking care of the widow, the orphan, or the stranger in their midst.<sup>1</sup> If the scribes had been paying attention, they may have noticed this woman, and rather than allowing her to give her last of everything, they may have instead made sure she had secure lodging and food to eat.

And isn't this as it is today? We have a tendency to hold in high esteem those who have power, wealth, fame, fortune or prestige, those with fine clothing and millions of Instagram or Facebook followers. Given the choice of mingling with people of influence over mingling with those who are relieving themselves in a back alley, well it is pretty easy to guess where our hearts and minds would lead us. This story tells us that Jesus noticed both those who paraded around looking for recognition and the one giving all that was her life.

God notices too. God notices a lot of things. God notices how we react to different people in our lives and notices our struggle. God sees who we come along side, and who we snub. And this is not a judgement, it is a call to pay attention. Who do we notice? Do we know and trust that God sees us in our challenges and in our desire to also hold some kind of power? Our desire to be control over things or people? These are human tendencies.

And yet, as follower of Christ we are held accountable for taking notice of the lives of those who have even less then ourselves. And yup, that is scary. We are afraid of people we don't know and even more so, people whose lives we can't get our minds wrapped around. But Jesus was all about justice and provision for those we would ignore, those who are taken advantage of, those who are ill, hungry, impoverished. and even those in prison.

As we sit in our sanctuaries, warm home, place of work or learning, it is easy to pretend we do not see those who are struggling. It is easier to turn away than to look into the face of one we don't understand and prefer to judge.

Jesus noticed the scribe, and Jesus noticed the widow. God notices even now and it is our turn to take notice.

I don't think I can say it better than pastor and teacher David Lose who wrote,

I think God is inviting us to look around and see each other, those in our community we know and those we don't. And I mean really see each other – the pain of those who are discriminated against because of their ethnicity, the desolation of those who cannot find work and have been abandoned to fend

---

<sup>1</sup> Deuteronomy 10:18, 14:28-29; 24:17; 27:19

for themselves, the despair of those who have given up on finding work and have lost hope, the anguish of those who have been exploited by sex traffickers. God is inviting us to see them, to care for them, and to advocate for a system that does not leave anyone behind.<sup>2</sup>

He then continues to say that we might go out this week, not only aware that God sees our struggles and cares, but also God believes in us enough to make a difference with the charge to go out “looking for where God is already at work and *join God’s efforts* to see those in distress, help them find comfort and relief, and work for a more just world.”<sup>3</sup>

God notices. God sees and calls out oppression, inviting us to be part of the redeeming work that is the way of Christ. For most of us there will be no prestige, no recognition, no reward, other than to know that we get to participate in God’s work of reconciliation and restoration of people to themselves, to others, and to a God. Thank be to God for this challenge, this awareness, and hope. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

God of all the ages past, hope of years to come:

We gather in this season of remembrance,  
grateful that you hold each one of us in your memory and your mystery,  
now and for all the time to come.

Today, we remember all those who have served to uphold justice and freedom  
in the wars of the last century,  
in conflicts of our own generation,  
and in peacekeeping and relief efforts around the world.

Especially we pray for those who have died in this service  
and for those who carry scars on body and soul, having returned from conflict.

We remember their courage  
and we pray for their families who still ache for lives surrendered at a great cost.

O God, we remember before you the victims of conflict,  
hiding in forgotten corners of the world, longing for safety and peace.  
Especially we pray for people in Afghanistan who fear for their lives and their future.

We remember victims of violence in our own country,  
still fearful and uncertain about what the future holds for them.  
Give us the courage to speak out for their protection and recovery.

---

<sup>2</sup> Lose, David. <http://www.davidlose.net/2015/11/pentecost-24-b-surprisingly-good-news/>  
Accessed November 4, 2021.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

O God, we remember those around us who struggle to remember day by day; those who must cope with the fear of forgetting those who matter most to them, and those who face the fear of being forgotten. Help us remember to reach out in comfort and support so that no one is forgotten.

O God, we remember those around us who carry on under the burden of sad and hard memories; those weighed down by grief, disappointment, anger, pain and loss. Inspire us to offer a listening ear and an understanding heart whenever we can.

God of all the ages past, hope of years to come, help us to remember you day by day. Keep us prepared to shine the light of your gospel into the dark corners of the world so that hope is renewed, and need is exposed for the sake of Jesus, who taught us to pray together, saying:

### **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**

The scriptures today speak of paying attention, of taking notice. In this season of remembrance, we look to remember how our gifts make a difference for ministry of work and worship. Let us be inspired as we lift to God our offering.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 24th Sunday after Pentecost. Remembrance Sunday November 7, 2021. Year B.

As we are people from different churches and places following this service. I encourage each of you to present your offering to God this day to your church community.

If you consider St. Andrew's your church, regardless of where you live, would like to learn more about St. Andrew's, get involved in our ministry and work, 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 or to connect with me.

## Hymn

### *O When the Saints go Marching in*

1. O when the saints go marching in,  
O when the saints go marching in,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching in.
2. O when the trumpets sound their call,  
O when the trumpets sound their call,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching in.
3. O when the sun begins to shine,  
O when the sun begins to shine,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the sun begins to shine. O when the new world is revealed,  
O when the new world is revealed,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the new world is revealed.
4. O when they crown Him Lord of all,  
O when they crown Him Lord of all,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When they crown Him Lord of all.
5. O when they sing the Saviour's praise,  
O when they sing the Saviour's praise,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When they sing the Saviour's praise.
6. O when the saints go marching in,  
O when the saints go marching in,  
O Lord, I want to be in that number,  
When the saints go marching in.

## Benediction

Go out into the world with courage,  
trusting God to supply your every need.

*1 Kgs. 17:16;*

*Mark 12:44*

May the abundant goodness of God,  
the generous mercy of Christ,  
and the sustaining power of the Spirit  
be with us today and every day  
until the coming of God's joyous reign.

Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2 © 2015 Westminster John Knox Press. P245.