

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

2nd Sunday after Epiphany - January 16, 2022

Words of Welcome

How do you define yourself? Maybe a better question is do you know yourself well enough to understand what you have to offer, not just those closest to you, but others as well? Takes some time and join me as I explore this a little more.

Call to Worship

There are many gifts, talents, and abilities given by God.

But there is only one Spirit.

There are a variety of things we can do to serve the Lord.

But it is the same Lord we all serve.

There are many activities we can do to serve God:

teach, sing, clean, preach, play, work...

But all these are activated by God.

There are many manifestations of God's Spirit in the world.

It is impossible to list them all.

To say that one is better than another is foolish.

God gives to each as God chooses.

Thanks be to God!

[Ministry Matters™ | Worship Elements: January 16, 2022](#)

Hymn

We are one in the Spirit

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1. We are One in The Spirit, we are One in the Lord,
we are One in The Spirit, we are One in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity will one day be restored,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.
2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.
3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
we will work with each other, we will work side by side,
and we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.

4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus, who is God's only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.

"We are one in the Spirit" words and music by Peter Scholtes ©1991 The Lorenz Publishing Corporation. All rights reserved. Annual License with podcasting OneLicense.net A-723877

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of light and life,
as the new year unfolds before us,
we begin to feel the sunlight coming back to brighten the winter.
Our spirits grow stronger in the light.
You shine your light into our lives in your Son Jesus.
Your Spirit strengthens us to face whatever this year will hold.
And so we come to praise you
for your light which transforms our days and our lives,
and for your wisdom which enlightens truth for our times.
Shine through us, we pray,
so that we may bear the light of Jesus in this world you love.

**God of all life and our lives,
we gather in worship week by week, seeking your refreshing presence.
But we confess sometimes we are discouraged
by things happening around us.
We don't expect your presence to make a difference for us.
Forgive us when we give up on you and end up feeling unfulfilled.
By your grace, refresh us when we are weary or worried,
and renew our trust in you.**

O God,
your Spirit gives us the gifts we need to hear and understand your holy Word.
Open our ears to hear your truth, and open our hearts to receive an understanding of
how to live that truth as we follow Jesus, your Living Word. Amen.

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Assurance of Forgiveness

God is the giver of MANY gifts.
God is the Creator of the ONE body.
God is slow to anger and quick to forgive.
God helps us to share and honour the gifts of all,
God helps us to heal the wounds and reunite the body.
We are forgiven, loved, and accepted.
Thanks be to God! Alleluia! Amen

~ posted by Rev Gord on his blog, **Worship Offerings**. <http://worshipofferings.blogspot.ca/>

Scripture Reading 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says “Let Jesus be cursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

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

Message – Your Gift for All

According to *USA Today*, on Wednesday, November 23, 1994, a couple named Sandy and Theresa boarded TWA flight 265 in New York to fly to Orlando and see Disney World. Theresa was almost seven months pregnant. Thirty minutes into the flight, Theresa doubled over in pain and began bleeding. Flight attendants announced that they needed a doctor; and a Long Island internist volunteered.

Theresa soon gave birth to a boy. But the baby was in trouble. The umbilical cord was wrapped tightly around his neck, and he wasn't breathing. His face was blue.

Two paramedics rushed forward to help, one of whom specialized in infant respiratory procedures. He asked if anyone had a straw, which he wanted to use to suction fluid from the baby's lungs. The plane did not stock straws, but a flight attendant remembered having a straw left over from a juice box she had brought on board the plane. The paramedic inserted the straw in the baby's lungs as the internist administered CPR. The internist asked for something he could use to tie off the umbilical cord. A passenger offered a shoelace.

Four minutes of terror passed. Then the little baby whimpered and everyone on board cheered and clapped.

The parents gave the little boy the name Matthew. Matthew means “Godsent.” The people on board the plane “were all god-sends” the father said.

Indeed, God had met the need through people who gave what they had and did what they could. God usually meets needs through people.¹

This is how God works. Each person is given opportunity to use who they are, what they have, their knowledge, vocation, talents, experience, resources financial or otherwise for the good of others. When we don't use all of these pieces of who we are to help others we fall short of what God intends for our lives. It is not that we have to do everything all of the time or even run ourselves short of time, energy, resources, but we are also not to hoard our time, energy, resources, experience, knowledge, or what one might call giftedness.

The Apostle Paul writing this personal letter to the group of Christians in Corinth spends considerable time talking about how everyone has gifts specific to who they are but that not one is bigger or better than another. Rather each gift that the individuals have is to be used for the common good of others.

A couple of things here of note. Firstly, Corinth was a pretty interesting place to start a church. In the ancient world Corinth was a port city and straddled one of the Roman empire's largest and lucrative trade routes. With a population of about 700,000 people, plus the people coming and going, this city was second only to Rome itself in size. It was also a city full of corruption, greed, lust, gambling, and whatever else comes to a place that is open for business, and where money, power, and prestige are the game.

It is to this that Paul came and established one of the largest churches in the 1st century, but over time the influence of the city around them came into the church too. The whole letter to the Corinthians addresses the many difficulties and challenges that the congregation was facing. The scripture we heard read today spoke to some of those challenges and what Paul calls gifts.

Using *The Message*, a paraphrase of the Bible by Eugene Peterson, Paul wrote, "All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful:

wise counsel, clear understanding, simple trust, healing the sick, miraculous acts, proclamation, distinguishing between spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues."² Each of these things was considered a gift, though this was not an exhaustive list. It was meant as a sample of the ways people could and should use what they have been given to help others both in the church and in reaching out to help others in the community.

¹ Larson, Craig Brian. *Leadership Journal. 750 Engaging Illustrations for Preacher, Teachers, and Writers*. Baker Books. Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1993, 1996, 1998. 2002. Page 192.

² [The Message \(MSG\)](#). Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

You see, these people were involved in a game of one-up-manship. Sort of like that game one plays as a kid where one kid says “my dad is stronger than your dad.” A game many of us continue to play as adults as we buy bigger and better things, rise up in a company, or simply like to play up our importance over another, just to show we have value, worth, money, prestige, and often power.

Through a letter that included sarcasm, wit, emotional pleas, long arguments, and frank talk, along with poetry and stories about himself, Paul was attempting to get this group back on a path that was more Christ-like. To stop thinking so much about themselves as individuals, but to take what was individual gifts and use those gifts for the benefit of the whole – the whole church and the whole community in which they lived.

And why would this be important? We can live comfortably without sharing anything with anyone and it doesn’t bother us. So why this?

Well, if you see yourself as a Christian, then to recognize who created you, and who made you who you are is important. It is then that you understand that all that you are, all that you have is not for selfish ambition, for your comfort alone, for your vanity or self-importance in which you see yourself as the king or queen of your castle whether that be your home, business, office, classroom, place at the table, or vehicle you drive.

It doesn’t matter if you were or are a football or hockey player, artist, musician, artisan, politician, business owner, minister, or keeper of the house. It doesn’t matter if you are a teacher, doctor, lawyer, health care worker or front-line worker. Who you are is a gift from God for the common good of others. Again, this does not mean that you devalue yourself and your gift. Should you do that, then you will not recognize that you do have gifts of knowledge, wisdom, time, experience, energy, and talent to share with others.

What Paul might have been saying was get excited that you are a unique and gifted individual. In fact, if you don’t know what you have to offer the world then you should figure that out, regardless of how young or old you are. Most of us only see a limited number of things we have to offer but what if you got really curious and determined to figure out what it is that you are called to bring to the community of faith and to the community in which you live?

Ask questions about what others see in you, what they experience of you, and rather than thinking “that’s not me” ask them or ponder why this is the giftedness they see in you. We are complex people who both can think highly of ourselves and in the same breath cower at our weakness, inexperience, and lack of wisdom and knowledge. We are afraid of intimacy that allows for others to see weakness in us, and when someone does see good in us and expresses it, so often we will say something to distract from those words. Many people have a difficult time just saying “thank you” when someone says something kind or good even when one craves that affirmation.

So get excited, get curious! Age and ability are not a barrier to finding out how God is at work in you and with you. And remember this is not just for your own benefit, not that you can't benefit, but it is for the common good. Human beings are wired for relationship and interaction, our gifts are best used when they build relationship, bring healing and wholeness, opportunity and justice, hope and love to others. This is the work of the church and the work of the church in community.

Being a Christian means to be Christlike in our relationships, our care, compassion, teaching, healing, and so much more. We are not our own, and this is a gift not a hindrance. And we are not alone, the varieties of gifts are from the same Spirit and the varieties of service are from the same Lord, the varieties of activities are from the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. This is Good News! This is amazing and exciting, and for many life-changing.

Live your life in the Spirit of Jesus, as "God sent" people, learning about your gifts, using your gifts to bring Christ's light into the world. Be the good news for others of God's love, forgiveness, redemption, healing, and transforming power in the church, in the community, in the power of the one Spirit, one Lord, one God. Amen.

Prayers of the People

O God,
Jesus brought the joy into lives that needed hope and a new beginning.
We pray for all those who need a new beginning this year:
Individuals trying to make a new start,
Families trying to sort through difficulties,
Groups hoping to accomplish good things for others,
Refugees building new homes in a new land,
Students and teachers beginning a new semester,
Businesses and congregations trying to rebuild in uncertain times.
Show each one how much they matter to you,
and renew their courage and resolve to make a fresh start.

O God,
Jesus changed water into wine
to show us that you can accomplish extraordinary things through ordinary lives.
We pray for all those volunteering their energy and concern
to make a difference for others in this community.
We pray for our elected leaders and for all government workers
trying to manage their responsibilities in such challenging times.
We pray for those working for justice,

raising awareness to problems in society and for the earth itself.
And we pray for one another
and for each good purpose we undertake with new resolve this year.
Give us a glimpse of how our hands become your hands, blessed by the Spirit.

O God,
Jesus faced the suffering around him with compassion,
reaching out to those in pain and grief with healing and hope.
We remember before you those whose lives are wrapped in sorrow or despair,
and those facing tragic death or critical illness...

We remember those rebuilding lives and communities after flooding and storm
and all those burdened by pain or problems that seem to have no end...

Embrace each one with your comfort and courage,
and show us what we can offer to make a difference.

O God in whom we live and move and have our being,
thank you for giving us the courage and commitment we need
to follow Christ in good times and in hard times.
Thank you for the strength we find together as part of your church
and the gifts you give us in each other,
gifts we can rely on as we plan for our ministry and mission
in these ever-changing times.
Help us trust in the promise of your love for us
and energize us with your Spirit
so that we can recognize the opportunities you give us
to live out the grace and mercy we know in Jesus Christ
who taught us to pray together:

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 the offering

God offers us many gifts through the same Spirit
so that, together, we may serve in Jesus' name.
Trust that what you have to give, God will bless in faithfulness and fruitfulness.

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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

We have this ministry

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1. We have this ministry and we are not discouraged;
it is by God's own power that we may live and serve.
Openly we share God's word, speaking truth as we believe,
praying that the shadowed world may healing light receive.
We have this ministry; O God, receive our living.
2. O Christ, the tree of life, our end and our beginning,
we grow to fullest flower when rooted in your love.
Brothers, sisters, clergy, lay, called to service by your grace,
different cultures, different gifts, the young and old a place.
We have this ministry; O God, receive our giving.
3. The yoke of Christ is ours: the whole world is our parish;
we daily take the cross, the burden and the joy.
Bearing hurts of those we serve, wounded,
bruised and bowed with pain,
Holy Spirit, bread and wine, we die and rise again.
We have this ministry; O God, receive our loving.

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Benediction

And now, from the One who is indeed the giver of all good gifts:
go and share what God has given you;
go and proclaim that God's love is here;
go in the power of God's Spirit
to make all things new.

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