

# St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany - January 23, 2022

## Call to Worship

We come in a variety of shapes and sizes,  
in a range of ages and states of health.

We come as long-time members and a brand new attenders,  
as singles and partners, as families and friends.

We come from many religious backgrounds and ethnic origins,  
from tiny towns and huge cities, from happy homes and turbulent upbringings.

We come with openly expressed needs and hidden hopes,  
with skills used daily in our work and talents yet to be discovered,  
with abundant doubts and with firm fervent faith.

We come together. We come to worship. We come to be the living body of Christ,  
the promising people of God. Welcome.

© Glen E. Rainsley. *Hear Our Prayer: Resource for Worship and Devotions*. United Church Press. Cleveland, Ohio. 1996. P11.

## Hymn

*Where charity and love prevail*

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Where charity and love prevail,<br>there God is ever found;<br>brought here together by Christ's love,<br>by love are we thus bound. | 2. With grateful joy and holy fear,<br>God's charity we learn;<br>let us with heart and mind and soul<br>now love God in return. |
| 3. Forgive we now each other's faults<br>as we our faults confess;<br>and let us love each other well<br>in Christian holiness.         | 4. Let strife among us be unknown;<br>let all contentions cease;<br>be God's the glory that we seek;<br>be our God's holy peace. |
| 5. Let us recall that in our midst<br>dwells God's begotten Son;<br>as members of his body joined,<br>we are in Christ made one.        | 6. No race nor creed can love exclude,<br>if honoured by God's name;<br>our family embraces all<br>whose Father is the same.     |

"Where charity and love prevail," Words: translation, Omer Westendorf © 1960 World Library Publications.  
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## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Creator, Christ and Spirit;  
You are the maker of a better world.  
You are the creator of lasting peace.  
We worship you for the gifts of peace and healing that  
You bring into troubled lives.  
You have shown us the way to work for justice,  
to love friend and enemy alike, to build a better world.

In this time of worship, inspire us to believe our work in your name makes a difference. So may we live to bring glory to you through our commitment to you and the communion we share with so many around the world as your faithful disciples.

**God of grace and unity,  
we confess we can be divisive when you have called us to unity,  
quarrelsome when you call us to seek peace, and critical rather than caring.  
We have grown used to our own ways and cannot imagine you would ask us to  
change even for the sake of the Gospel. Forgive us when we mistake our familiar  
traditions for your truth. Show us how we can witness to your love through  
working and worshipping together.**

Holy One, no wisdom or truth comes apart from you  
and so we seek your guidance as your Word is read and interpreted.  
Send your Holy Spirit to move in and among us  
so that we might better understand your word for us this day,  
and act upon it for the sake of Christ, your Living Word. Amen

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## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

In spite of our individual inadequacies,  
God has called us together to be Christ's Body,  
and each one of us is indispensable.  
God re-members us, giving each of us distinct gifts,  
equipping each of us to provide guidance and accountability for one another,  
that we all may become more faithful followers of Christ.  
We are all greater as one Body than any single member  
of us could be on our own. ~ posted on the United Church of Christ's **Worship Ways Archive**. <http://www.ucc.org/>  
In Christ, we are forgiven members of the body.

## **Scripture Reading 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a**

<sup>12</sup>For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup>For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

<sup>14</sup>Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. <sup>15</sup>If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup>And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. <sup>17</sup>If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup>But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. <sup>19</sup>If all were a single member, where would the

body be? <sup>20</sup>As it is, there are many members, yet one body. <sup>21</sup>The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” <sup>22</sup>On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup>and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; <sup>24</sup>whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, <sup>25</sup>that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. <sup>26</sup>If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

<sup>27</sup>Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. <sup>28</sup>And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? <sup>30</sup>Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But strive for the greater gifts.

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

## **Message – Body Parts**

“What part of the body are you?” This was a question asked in a session I participated just over ten years ago. There was a group of about eight of us and there was an outline of a body...the head, neck, torso, arms, hands, legs, feet...all drawn out on a large piece of paper on the table in front of us.

“What part of the body are you?” Each of us pondered that question for a moment. Some were pretty quick to place their marker while a few others pondered the question deeply. Then this scripture that we just heard read today was shared about the body of Christ. If you are part of the body of Christ where does one place themselves?

Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians spoke about the foot, hand, ear, eye, nose, head, as well as what he called the less honourable parts. I recently read an article about someone wondering if they were a nose hair in the body of Christ. I had never gone there before. However, the more I have thought about this scripture over the years, the more I think that I could have placed myself in various spots on that body. Sometimes I feel like a mouth, not just because of the fact that I preach and I like to talk, but also because sometimes I get a bad taste in my mouth after encountering certain personalities. Other times I feel that maybe I am the nose as I smell the beautiful aroma of people expressing joy and hope. Many times I feel like I am part of the heart as I spend time just listening

to others, although that also makes the ear important. And yes, sometimes I think I might just be a nose hair and nose hairs have a purpose, but it seems so insignificant compared to the other parts of the body. We could go on and it could get colourful in imagery and imagination depending on where we go with it, but you get the drift.

Thing is, we are all part of the body of Christ. We come with different perspectives and experiences, from diverse cultures and ethnicities. Some are affluent, others scraping by. Some are musical, others can't tap a beat or sing in tune. Some are human calculators, others of us count on our fingers. Some can speak three languages and others can only speak one. There are differences in education, life experience, knowledge, wisdom, opportunity, and ability. Yet, Paul does not differentiate. He does not say that the one who has more money, opportunity, knowledge, or whatever is more important than the one who is struggling, has not traveled the world, or has less education. In fact, he emphasises that "God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another." (v24) I am not crazy about the word inferior, as one person is not inferior to another, and that was Paul's point.

There is no hierarchy in the body of Christ. All parts are necessary regardless of how we humans might want to view things. All parts...all people are necessary. We might spend some time on this. In using this metaphor of the body, Paul is illustrating just how important every Christian is to the body, regardless of ability, power, struggle, or accomplishment. There is an absolute connectedness in our being the church and we are not the church without each part. This goes for our congregation but also for the church worldwide, something to consider in this Week designated world wide for the Prayer for Christian Unity.

Now, if this passage is familiar to you then there is nothing that I can say that is really new, it is truly just as plain as Paul writes, we are interconnected, we are diverse, we are dependant on one another, and we are only the church both in our community and in the world when we value all of what each of us brings. Sometimes we don't even know what we bring to the body of Christ, but we can trust that even when we can't see it, others may be able to.

For the last few weeks our household has been watching the Emmy award winning series *Ted Lasso*. Now, despite the very colourful language that permeates nearly every scene, the premise of the story line could also be an example of what Paul is trying to teach in and through his letter. The story is about an American college football coach finding himself coaching football in the fictional English football club AFC Richmond, remembering that what they call football we think of as soccer.

Each character in the story from Coach Lasso, to Rebecca, the owner of the franchise, to each individual football player and supporting staff, as well as the fans, become part of the whole community or body. The whole is interconnected. Each is necessary or there is no team and no reason to play. All the characters come with challenges and with gifts, but without each person, there is not team. And when one of them is hurting it affects others. What is beautifully woven into the story is how they come together to support one another in their joy and in their pain.

Paul wrote in the letter, "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it." (v26) This is how it is in the story of the AFC Richmond football club and how it is in the church. It is also why we have such an important role to play in the healing of our community. When one hurts we all hurt.

When the Ukraine is being threatened it affects each of us. When there are people losing their way, and worse, dying because of an opioid crisis, we all grieve and suffer. When a sister church is struggling for any reason all of us struggle.

If we are turning our backs on others or on ourselves, then the strength of our resources, the strength of our community, the strength of our hope and love is lost to them. If we come together and find ways in which we can strengthen our community then we are truly the church in the world.

None of this should be news to you. If it is, then may it open your heart and mind to how important your presence is in the church. The church is fully the body of Christ in the world when each unique person participates in the whole of the work that we are called to.

We are one body with many members. We are many members in one body. With your gifts, together with each others gifts, we can truly make a difference. Let's not be afraid to find out what we have to offer as individuals and as a church. Discover, be curious, be courageous and trust that you are a much-needed part of the body of Christ. You matter, and what we can do together matters. May our unity be our strength in a way that brings light, life, and love to people, to creation, and to our world.

One in the Spirit, one body in Christ, and a community of witness to the love of God for all. 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,

in churches and communities,

in cultures and nations.

We give you thanks for the rich gifts of arts and culture,  
of home life and community celebration  
which bring meaning and encouragement to our lives.  
Help us contribute our gifts  
to the traditions and imagination that sustain the best of our common life  
from one generation to the next.

God of mercy and forgiveness,  
You call us to live together in peace and unity.  
In this Week of Prayer for Christian unity,  
we pray that your Spirit will create understanding and co-operation  
among all who bear Christ's name.  
Help us share our gifts with each other  
so that churches within our community may flourish  
and our common mission will find new energy after months of challenge.  
Lead us to reach out to those of other faiths and of no faith  
so that, together, we may be a blessing in the world you love.

God of healing and hope,  
We pray for our neighbourhoods and our nation.  
Where people are divided and bitterness turns into resentment,  
show us how to work for reconciliation.  
Inspire our leaders at every level of community life  
to work together for the care of the most vulnerable  
and to restore the goodness of our common life  
as we recover from the effects of these months of pandemic.  
Make us generous citizens and careful stewards  
of the land you entrust to us together.

God of justice and mercy,  
We pray for the world you love, the world Christ died to redeem,  
so deeply divided by religious and political animosities,  
by ancient bitterness and current conflict.  
Encourage world leaders to work for peace and understanding,  
especially in places torn by violence,  
and areas still struggling with the effects of the pandemic,  
by poverty, hunger and the effects of natural disasters.  
May the hope Jesus embodies encourage us all to work for positive change.

God of courage and comfort,  
We remember those of our congregation and community  
in need of your special attention today....

Use us as agents of your healing and hope  
as we offer ourselves in Jesus' name in the words he taught us to pray

## 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

The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are part of one body, each of us and all of us. The gifts we offer in Jesus' name are all needed, each of them and all of them.

Together, the body of Christ accomplishes many things through the gifts we share.

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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

*One bread, one body*

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### *Refrain*

One bread, one body, one Lord of all,  
one cup of blessing which we bless,  
and we, though many throughout the earth,  
we are one body in this one Lord.

1. Gentil or Jew, servant or free, woman or man, no more. *Refrain*
2. Many the gifts, many the works, one in the Lord of all. *Refrain*
3. Grain for the field, scattered and grown, gathered to one, for all. *Refrain*
4. Fruit of the vine, gathered and crushed, poured out and blest for all. *Refrain*

"One bread, one body," Words: John B. Foley; v4 Judee Archer Green. Music: John B. Foley  
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## Benediction

Go and be the body of Christ  
Serve God through who you are  
Love others remembering they too are the body  
Go and be the church in the world

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