

# St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay – Liturgy

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

Third Sunday in Lent - March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Words of Welcome

Transitions in life are a given, how we manage them is another story. Come join me as we begin this conversation with the call to worship.

## Call to Worship Psalm 104:1-3

<sup>1</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul.

O LORD my God, you are very great.

**You are clothed with honour and majesty,**

<sup>2</sup> **wrapped in light as with a garment.**

You stretch out the heavens like a tent,

<sup>3</sup> **you set the beams of your chambers on the waters,**

you make the clouds your chariot,

**you ride on the wings of the wind,**

Copyright © 1995 The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Used by permission of the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Scripture text adapted or reprinted from the New Revised Standard Version bible, Copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used with permission. All rights reserved

## Hymn

*He leadeth me*

650

1. He leadeth me: oh blessed thought!  
oh words with heavenly comfort fraught!  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

### *Refrain*

*He leadeth me! He leadeth me! By his own hand he leadeth me!  
A faithful follower I would be, for 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.*

2. Sometimes 'mid scenes of deepest gloom,  
sometimes where Eden's flowers bloom, by waters still,  
o'er troubled sea, still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

### *Refrain*

3. Lord, I would clasp they hand in mine,  
nor ever murmur nor repine,  
content, whatever lot I see,  
since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

### *Refrain*

4. And when my task on earth is done,  
when by thy grace the victory's won,  
e'en death's cold wave I will not flee,  
since God through Jordan leadeth me.

### *Refrain*

Words and music: public domain

## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God, our Creator and Sustainer,  
in you we live and move and have our being.  
In your depths we find meaning; in your heights we find light and joy.  
You are the source of peace and hope for all who turn to you.  
You alone have been our help and our guide;  
you give us strength and courage when we face challenges.  
In you we find rest and welcome along the way.  
We praise you, O God, for your steadfast love.  
Draw near to us once more in this time of worship.  
Reveal your purposes for us and prepare us for the days ahead  
so that our lives may witness to your mercy and grace as we follow Jesus.

**God of grace and mercy,  
We confess that our thoughts are so often not your thoughts;  
our way are rarely your ways.  
Our tempers are short and we fail to act with kindness.  
Our confidence is weak and we treat others without respect.  
Our faith falters and we lose track of you.  
Forgive the many ways we fail you, and inspire us to follow you more  
faithfully, through the one whose life brought forgiveness and hope to all.**

O God, we turn to the Scripture to seek your wisdom and your truth.  
Send your Holy Spirit to open our minds and hearts to receive your Word for our  
lives and our times. Equip us to follow Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

©The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. The Third Sunday in Lent. March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Year C.

## Assurance of Forgiveness

Here these words of assurance,  
God's love fills us with the longing for peace.  
Jesus' words and actions lead us in love's direction.  
The Spirit's power permits us to accomplish what love envisions.  
The realization of peace enters this world by the grace and power of God.

© Glen E. Rainsley. *Hear Our Prayer: Resource for Worship and Devotions*. United Church Press. Cleveland, Ohio. 1996. P98.

## Scripture Reading Deuteronomy 4:1-24

<sup>4</sup>So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. <sup>2</sup>You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you. <sup>3</sup>You have seen for yourselves what the LORD did with regard to the Baal of Peor—how the LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, <sup>4</sup>while those of you who held fast to the LORD your God are all alive today.

<sup>5</sup> See, just as the LORD my God has charged me, I now teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. <sup>6</sup> You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!’ <sup>7</sup> For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup> And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

<sup>9</sup> But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children’s children— <sup>10</sup> how you once stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, ‘Assemble the people for me, and I will let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me as long as they live on the earth, and may teach their children to do so’; <sup>11</sup> you approached and stood at the foot of the mountain while the mountain was blazing up to the very heavens, shrouded in dark clouds. <sup>12</sup> Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice. <sup>13</sup> He declared to you his covenant, which he charged you to observe, that is, the ten commandments; and he wrote them on two stone tablets. <sup>14</sup> And the LORD charged me at that time to teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to cross into and occupy.

<sup>15</sup> Since you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely, <sup>16</sup> so that you do not act corruptly by making an idol for yourselves, in the form of any figure—the likeness of male or female, <sup>17</sup> the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, <sup>18</sup> the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. <sup>19</sup> And when you look up to the heavens and see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, do not be led astray and bow down to them and serve them, things that the LORD your God has allotted to all the peoples everywhere under heaven. <sup>20</sup> But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron-smelter, out of Egypt, to become a people of his very own possession, as you are now.

<sup>21</sup> The LORD was angry with me because of you, and he vowed that I should not cross the Jordan and that I should not enter the good land that the LORD your God is giving for your possession. <sup>22</sup> For I am going to die in this land without crossing over the Jordan, but you are going to cross over to take possession of that good land. <sup>23</sup> So be careful not to forget the covenant that the LORD your God made with you, and not to make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything that the LORD your God has forbidden you. <sup>24</sup> For the LORD your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God.

*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 Managing Transitions

I am a real scaredy cat when it come to travel. I love traveling but I always go into it with fear and trepidation. Recently our daughter suggested that we go on a vacation to New York this summer with her, her husband, and our granddaughter. As she noted there are advantages to taking grandparents on vacation when your daughter is six years old.

It didn't take us long to book the trip, but I shared with her how much it pleased me to be going with them, because I am pretty afraid of new experiences even when I know they will be exciting and good. I like it that our son-in-law has been to New York before and he will be able to be somewhat of a guide for us.

I remember my first trip on the subway in Toronto to the University. A trip I would make hundreds of times in the next three years, but that first trip on my own I will not forget. Janelle, my daughter, had taken a trial run with me, but on that first time by myself, I had all the directions as to which train to take written down. I held on to that tightly. Still, especially on my way home, I found myself getting off the train walking to where I could get cell reception underground, and calling Janelle to make sure that I was still headed the right way and on the right train.

It does not help that I am severely directionally challenged, but I knew that if I was going to experience what I truly wanted to do in life then I would have to face the fear and get on with it. Wish those were the only two examples, but I could draw from a storehouse of moments that I was afraid.

When I think of that fear and reflect on it, I believe there are a number of factors that play into it, but much of it revolves around identity. The biggest piece might be the fear of being lost in a crowd, just plain old lost, or that I might lose something of myself in the experience.

Unknowns impact us when we endeavor to step away from what is comfortable and familiar. Not knowing the people, the directions, the way, can all make us fearful. Rachel Bouwkamp, who prepared the outline for this series on transitions writes, "Life transitions are challenging because they force us to let go of the familiar and face an unknown future with feelings of vulnerability or even helplessness."<sup>1</sup>

The scripture reading was a story of Moses revisiting some very important information, and delivering it in the form of an inspiring speech, as the Israelites prepare to make their way into what would be their promised land. These words in particular are very much centered on the law of God and are referred to in various ways by Moses in these 24 verses as statues and ordinances, commandments, entire law, and covenant. He spends a lot of time conveying to the people just how important these were, but how

---

<sup>1</sup> Bouwkamp, Rachel. [Reformed Worship 143 © March 2022](#) Worship Ministries of the Christian Reformed Church.

would this help them as they crossed the border from their forty years of wandering the desert to transitioning to the land of Canaan? Why are these things important?

Rather than seeing the commandments as a way to earn salvation, the law for the Israelites was very much intertwined with their identity. They had a God who was so near that they could call to him, one who cared enough about their well-being, their living, that God covenanted with them, created a formal agreement with them, similar to a treaty. I heard that a definition of treaty is “how we agree to treat each other.” For God the law was a guide for how people would be in relationship with God and with one another...how they would treat each other.

The identity of the people was linked to those commandments, not because they restricted their lives, but rather because those statutes and ordinances gave meaning and purpose to all that they did and why they did it.

At this moment in their history the people were going through a major transition and they knew they were going to do it without their leader Moses. Without the one person who had stood in the very presence of God, the one who had come down from the mountain carrying two stone tablets with the law written on them. The people were leaving what was familiar, what was known, what had become comfortable, to cross into unknown territory, with a new person at the helm and it was scary.

What Moses was doing when he spoke to them about paying attention to the statutes and ordinances, to remembering them, teaching them, passing the understanding on from one generation to the next, was to position the people in the trust, love, grace, hope, and joy of God. They were to remember their history with God, and not only that, but to look forward to where they were being led, where they were going, because they did not go alone.

No matter where they were they could find their identity in the one who had covenanted with them, who had set out how they would treat each other and their relationship with the God who wanted to protect and love them. This is true for us as well as Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, “Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets, I have come not to abolish but to fulfil.”

As they were positioning themselves for this transition, moving from their wandering ways to a place they could call home, they were told by Moses how to manage their fear, the unknowns, the moving away from their comfort zones. It was by firmly placing themselves in the observance, teaching, learning, and watching of how they lived in relationship with everyone, including those who they would encounter on the way, that would enable them to manage this transition.

Moses says to them they will be an example for all nations, where nations will declare “Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!” (v6). Their God is close to them and has made a treaty with them. The treaty though is not just God doing for them, but their part is to remember God, to remember these statutes and ordinances, to take

care and watch themselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that their eyes have seen nor to let them slip from their mind.

Yes, God is powerful, and as it says in the last verse, a jealous God, but that is because God is loving and longs to be in relationship with people. The very simplistic example of this would be how a parent sets boundaries and rules for a child, not to harm or limit, but to protect and teach. It is within the boundaries set by our parents and the boundaries and teaching of God that we learn about who we are.

Transitions, the emotions and the physical events that go with that, can be managed when we know who we are and that we do not go into anything new without God with us. It is for you to recognize the transitions in your life and to choose how to manage them, but be assured that if you keep Christ at the center, listening for the Holy Spirit to guide, and trusting God's presence, you will not lose yourself in it. As our congregation moves from who we are now to a New Beginning, we will do the same.

Thanks be to God for the promises, the love, and the hope to move through transitions with grace and steadfast trust. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

God of Hope,

When the world is confusing and frustrating,  
you bring light and hope.

We give you thanks for lessons learned, for changes of heart,  
for fresh discoveries made, and new paths followed,  
even during these months of pandemic.

We pray this day for those who are confused or afraid.  
for those who feel anger or despair.

O God, give us hope in our time.

**Turn our hearts to you.**

God of Peace,

there is so much conflict, hostility, and antagonism  
around us and within us.

Personal relationships are often tense; the world community at odds.

We pray for understanding to prevail  
in relationships at home and at work,  
in our community and our country.

And we pray for diplomacy to end conflict and threat among nations

*especially holding before you the Ukraine and its people*

O God, give us peace in these times.

**Turn our hearts to you.**

God of Joy,  
we give you thanks for moments of joy and celebration in our lives,  
for small pleasures given and received through times of isolation.  
We remember those who feel left out or bitter,  
those who are anxious or in distress.  
We pray for those who face loss and hardship in these uncertain times,  
and all who know sorrow and suffering,  
naming before you those on our hearts this day.

O God, give us joy in our time.

**Turn our hearts to you.**

God of community and compassion,  
we thank you for your steadfast presence  
in the face of all that brings uncertainty and worry these days.  
Bless our congregation and every church that is struggling;  
inspire us to consider renewed ministry and mission  
after months of restricted gatherings.  
Reawaken our love for one another  
and our desire to worship and serve together in Jesus' name.  
Sustain leaders who feel exhausted by the challenges they've faced  
and renew our stewardship with gratitude for your love.

O God, give us strength in our service.

**Turn our hearts to you.**

God of grace,  
Receive these prayers and the unspoken prayers of our hearts.  
Deepen our trust in you for the days ahead,  
for we offer ourselves as Jesus' friends and followers in the words he taught us:

### **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 is gracious and will use what seems to be small change in the treasury of this world to make great changes in the lives of people. By the power of God love our gifts are magnified. So, we present our gifts with grateful hearts and with spirits growing in generosity.

Adapted from © Glen E. Rainsley. *Hear Our Prayer: Resource for Worship and Devotions*.  
United Church Press. Cleveland, Ohio. 1996. P140.

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.

## Hymn

### *Lord of all power*

626

1. Lord of all power, I give you my will,  
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.  
Your bondage is freedom,  
your service is song,  
and, held in your keeping,  
my weakness is strong.
2. Lord of all wisdom, I give you my mind,  
rich truth that surpasses our knowledge to find.  
What eye has not seen  
and what ear has not heard  
is taught by your Spirit  
and shines from your word.
3. Lord of all bounty, I give you my heart;  
I praise and adore you for all you impart:  
your love to inspire me,  
your counsel to guide,  
your presence to cheer me,  
whatever betide.
4. Lord of all being, I give you my all.  
If e'er I disown you, I stumble and fall;  
but, sworn in glad service  
your word to obey  
I walk in your freedom  
to the end of the way.

"Lord of all power" Words by Jack C. Winslow © Mrs J. Tyrell.

All rights reserved. Annual License with podcasting OneLicense.net A-723877

## Benediction

Let go the fears that hinder trust,  
the hesitations that stifle hope,  
the denials that block forgiveness.  
Open yourself to grace and growth.  
Let God form faith within you. Amen.

© Glen E. Rainsley. *Hear Our Prayer: Resource for Worship and Devotions*. United Church Press. Cleveland, Ohio. 1996. P179.