

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay
<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski
Sixth Sunday of Easter - May 22nd, 2022

Words of Welcome

Peace seems an illusive ideal in our world, but what if peace is something deeper than only the absent of conflict, what if peace is something that is a gift we are given that permeates into our depths. This is a peace that is offered to us in Christ and our focus of this worship service. Please join in the call to worship.

Call to Worship Psalm 67

- ¹ O God be gracious to us and bless us
and make your face to shine upon us,
- ² that your way may be known upon earth,
your saving power among all nations.
- ³ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
- ⁴ Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
**for you judge the peoples with equity
and guide the nations upon earth.**
- ⁵ Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.
- ⁶ The earth has yielded its increase;
God, our God, has blessed us.
- ⁷ **May God continue to bless us;
let all the ends of the earth revere God.**

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Hymn

God is love; come heaven, adoring

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1. God is love: come heaven, adoring;
God is love: come earth, rejoice.
Come creation, voices soaring,
sing exulting with one voice.
God who laid the earth's foundation,
God who spread the heavens above,
God who breathes through all creation—
God is love, eternal love.
2. God is love, whose arms enfolding
all the world in one embrace,
with unfailing grasp are holding
every child of every race,
and when human hearts are breaking
under sorrow's iron rod,
all the sorrow, all the aching
wrings with pain the heart of God.

3. God is love, and though with blindness
sin afflicts all human life,
God's eternal loving kindness
guides us through all earthly strife.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is love: so love forever
o'er the universe must reign.

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Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of promise and purpose,
we greet you this day with thankful hearts.
As flowers unfurl and buds open,
the beauty of your world lifts our spirits in praise.
As children grow and students prepare to graduate,
their energy and enthusiasm encourage us toward your future.
Your world is full of such variety and detail,
we stand in awe of your creative imagination.
Draw close to us in this hour of worship
and show us the promise and purpose in our own lives.
May we unfurl with your gift of new life,
and move into the future, renewed by the energy of your Holy Spirit.

**God of diversity and detail,
the wonders of your creation amaze us.
Yet we confess we often fail to honour its beauty and variety
in the details of our lives.
When voices differ in opinion, we listen to those we agree with.
We fail to honour experience different than our own.
We resist calls to honour the earth as if it were ours for the taking.
Forgive our narrow perspectives.
Open our eyes and our hearts to the pain and perspectives of others,
and renew us all with your healing grace.**

O God, your Word brings light to your people now, just as it did long ago.
Fill us with your Spirit as we listen for your Word.
Open our minds and hearts to receive light to guide us and truth to change us
in the name of Christ, our Risen Lord. Amen.

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Assurance of Forgiveness

Jesus said, "My peace I give to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."
May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Let his forgiveness set you at peace with God and yourself,
and make peace with one another. Amen.

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Scripture Reading John 14:18-29

¹⁸“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.” ²²Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?” ²³Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. ²⁴Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

²⁵“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. ²⁶But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. ²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. ²⁸You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. ²⁹And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.

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

Message Peace I leave with you

These past couple of weeks I have been trying to figure out when to take some vacation time, how much to take, and where to go. I realize that I am tired. It is not that I don't have the joy, desire, and energy to do the work that I am called to do, but more a recognition that rest is needed so I can continue to love and look forward to this work.

It has been a heavy time, coming through a pandemic, adapting to the challenges of ministry in the world the last couple of years, and recently having a major surgery, where the lingering effects of the anesthesia have made my mind a place where thoughts just go off never to return.

I have also had the privilege of being with numerous families over the last few months that are grieving the loss of someone dear to them, and many of them dear to me as well, so my own loss and grief are also present. There is also the excitement and energy of learning new things, planning and leading worship, being part of teams that are leading us to new futures, and the joy of just spending time with people of this congregation, and many others God brings into my life.

What I know I am looking for in a vacation is rest and peace for my body, mind, and spirit. Whenever I take time away, I find a fire pit, with water close by, brings a soothing peace to my mind and soul. I am not an outdoorsy kind of person, but there is something about even having three days of this, of fire and water, can sustain me for months. As I reflect on this, I think it is because in fire and water I feel and experience the power and presence of God. Reminders of this presence throughout the year come in a morning shower, a swim, a candle lit. In the church it is the Christ candle or other candles lit at various services, it is the water of baptism, and at times it has been as we have washed our hands in a service as a way to remember how Christ washed the feet of the disciples at that Last Supper together, and a way to remind everyone that we are to serve and care for others.

We all need times of rest and renewal, many are tired, whether working or retired, parents and children, unemployed or facing illness. Whether grieving or rejoicing, rest and renewal are important as they help us to feel whole, healed, and at peace.

That word *peace* is a big part of the conversation that Jesus has with his disciples in this passage from John 14 and in all the gospels. We often think of peace as lack of conflict, a cessation of war and warring. In a world that sadly is filled with conflict, nation against nation, families pitted against each other, mass shootings, and programing on our most enjoyed devices and streaming services feeding on conflict between friends and competitors, peace feels like an elusive goal. But what if peace was something that is a gift that each of us can experience regardless of circumstances?

Also, it is something to point out that as Jesus speaks these words about and of peace he has been dining with his followers. Judas Iscariot has already walked away and is headed off to betray Jesus, Peter's denial about knowing Jesus has been predicted, and Jesus is well aware that the next hours and days will be filled with feelings of despair, abandonment, pain, and ultimately death. And yet, Jesus speaks words of peace. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid." (v27)

Pastor and teacher David Lose writes about the peace that Christ offers, For Christians, this peace "testifies to a sense of wholeness, even rightness, of and in one's very being. It's a sense of harmony with those persons and things around us. Peace connotes a sense of contentment, but even more fulfillment, a sense that in this moment one is basking in God's pleasure."¹

In this scripture Jesus also speaks about the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in Jesus' name. This Advocate will teach the disciples everything, and remind them of all that Jesus had said to them. It is the Holy Spirit that worked in and through the disciples to give us the stories in scripture to teach and guide us. It is the Advocate

¹ Lose, David. [Easter 6 C: Peace the World Cannot Give | ...In the Meantime \(davidlose.net\)](https://davidlose.net). Accessed May 20, 2022

that continues to work in and through every follower of Christ to continue that teaching and through the scriptures remind us of what Jesus said and taught.

It was also the Holy Spirit, the Advocate that brought the peace of Christ, the peace of God to those same followers in the days after Jesus' resurrection and ascension. That peace continues on in us.

We are given the gift of peace, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7). It is a peace that can enter a hospital room when all hope seems lost. It is peace when bombs are reining down. It is peace when families are torn apart. It is peace that does not exist in the absence of conflict, but is present despite the struggles, troubles, and challenges we face. It is not that we let the world go by without doing our part to heal the world, but this peace is present despite the realities.

As Christians when peace is present in us, by our very presence we can be the peace of Christ for others. They may not even realize what it is, but your presence, your love for God and for them, can bring a peace that is beyond understanding in the midst of grief, trials, pain, and undeniable suffering. It means taking the circumstances and the people and placing them in God's hands, doing what we can to alleviate suffering, but knowing that there are limits to our ability to fix situations, and trusting God to be present always and anyway.

So again I say to you the words Jesus had for you, for your loved ones, and for the world, as I say them may them penetrate deep into your mind, your heart, your very being. Hear the words as a promise from the God of love. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid." (v27)

Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid. What ever you face today, in the days to come, as you bring a child into the world and as you face the end of life, each moment of your life and that of those you love, as we watch the unfolding horror of war in the Ukraine, are angered by yet another shooting of innocents, walk past the homeless on our streets, or deal with the strife in our homes, work places, families, do what you can to alleviate the pain and suffering, take on your responsibilities, but trust that at the end of the day, in every moment of the day, you are not alone, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate is with you, and the peace of Christ is present in and through it all. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Lord, our God,

The earth and all its peoples belong to you.

As we come before you in prayer, we are painfully aware that the earth itself is at risk, from the ways your people live on it, and the conflicts we provoke among each other. We seek your healing and hope this day, for the earth and all its creatures, and for your people of every nation.

God of healing and hope,

we pray for peace with justice to emerge in war torn lands,
and in every place of conflict where power struggles put innocents at risk.
We name before you the people and places on our hearts today:

Send your Spirit of wisdom and compassion to break open the hearts of leaders to
work with each other to protect the innocent and restore order for the wellbeing of all.
May your ways of truth and justice prevail in every heart and in every land.

God of healing and hope,
We pray for Presbyterian World Service and Development and its partners,
and all groups offering aid and renewal in places where disaster and conflict have
left people at risk. Support those who have lost homes, families and livelihoods to
find courage to go on and open hearts of those in safety to share with those in need.

God of healing and hope,
we know that this land we call home faces conflict and pain, and that communities
are divided by deep disagreements. We pray for healing and understanding to
deepen between Indigenous people and those who settled this land with no thought
for those who already called it home. Protect those who face racist attitudes and
actions in daily life, and restore dignity and hope to those who have suffered injustice
in a system that benefitted others. Open our eyes to the creativity and courage in
communities that feel unfamiliar to us, and open our hearts to build new relationships
with each other so we grow closer as neighbours and friends.

God of healing and hope,
We pray for the renewal of your creation and for the protection of species at risk.
By your Spirit, teach us to change our ways when they are harmful to the earth,
and inspire our ingenuity to find solutions to problems that seem so vast.

God of healing and hope,
We pray for those who know sickness or pain, for all who live in grief, loneliness or
anxiety, and all who find these uncertain times overwhelming in any way. In silence,
we remember before you those for whom we have special concern this day:

By your Spirit, surround each one with strength and love,
and equip us to offer support for those whose lives are woven into ours.

God of healing and hope,
Jesus walks with us day by day to see us through every challenge,
and so we claim the healing and hope he offers 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 the offering

God has created a world of great diversity, full of wonder and potential.
We honour God's gifts to us in Christ and in each other
as we present our offering in support of God's purposes in the world.

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If you 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>.

Hymn

Make me a channel of your peace

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1. Make me a channel of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me bring your love;
where there is injury, your healing power,
and where there's doubt, true faith in you.
2. Make me a channel of your peace:
where there's despair in life let me bring hope;
where there is darkness, only light,
and where there's sadness, ever joy.
3. O Spirit, grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love with all my soul.
4. Make me a channel of your peace:
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving to all that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

"Make me a channel of your peace," words by Sebastian Temple
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Benediction

May the God we serve pour grace and blessing into our lives!
May the face of God shine light upon us!
May we celebrate God's love and justice in such a way
that everyone around will come to know God,
and will experience God's grace, peace, and blessing for themselves.
God go with you as you go into community to love and serve the Lord.

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