

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay**  
<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski  
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost - July 3, 2022

## Words of Welcome

At times we are called to do things in our lives that are out of our comfort zones. Our faith is one of those places in which it is expected that we will not be comfortable, but challenged. Today we consider a specific challenge. Join me as we begin with a call to worship.

## Call to Worship

Sing praises to our Lord:  
**who heals us and makes us whole.**

Sing praises to our Lord, faithful children of God:  
**whose joy rises in our lives each and every day.**

Sing praises to our Lord, faithful children of God;  
give thanks to God's holy name:  
**God's Kingdom is near to us; God's peace resides in our hearts.**

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## Hymn

*We've a story to tell to the nations*

765

1. We've a story to tell to the nations  
that shall turn their hearts to the right,  
a story of truth and mercy,  
a story of peace and light,  
a story of peace and light,  
for the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
and the dawning to noonday bright,  
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
the kingdom of love and light.
2. We've a song to be sung to the nations  
that shall lift their hearts to the Lord,  
a song that shall conquer evil  
and shatter the spear and sword,  
and shatter the spear and sword,  
for the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
and the dawning to noonday bright,  
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
the kingdom of love and light

3. We've a message to give to the nations,  
that the Lord who reigneth above  
hath sent us his Son to save us,  
and show us that God is love,  
and show us that God is love,  
for the darkness shall turn to dawning,  
and the dawning to noonday bright,  
and Christ's great kingdom shall come on earth,  
the kingdom of love and light.

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## **Prayers of Adoration and Confession**

God of majesty and mercy,  
in creation you gave us all that we need to live  
and all that we can cherish.  
You came to us in Jesus Christ to show us the face of your love.  
You walk into our lives to meet us in the midst of joy and pain.  
Through the Holy Spirit,  
you speak words of wisdom to help us find our way.  
God in our midst, speak to us today in this time of worship.  
Speak the words we need to hear  
so that we know you still walk with us in Jesus Christ.

**Loving God,  
you send us into the world as ambassadors of your love and peace,  
yet too often we create discord and division.  
We serve our own interests first, ignoring those in need.  
We value our understanding of the world you love,  
and fail to listen to the stories of others.  
Forgive us for such self-centredness.  
Help us to be more faithful disciples of Jesus,  
eager to serve, willing to listen, glad to be of service in his name.**

God of wisdom, as we listen to the scriptures read and interpreted,  
send us your Spirit so that we may hear your Word with new understanding.  
Move within us so that we respond in faithfulness for the sake of Christ, our Living Lord. Amen.

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## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

When we reach in faith, God comes near in love.  
When we strive to serve in Christ's name, God consecrates our efforts.  
When we rely upon the spirit's power, God fills us with a healthy trust.  
Glory be to God.

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## Scripture Reading Luke 10:1-20

<sup>1-2</sup> Later the Master selected seventy and sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he intended to go. He gave them this charge:

“What a huge harvest! And how few the harvest hands. So on your knees; ask the God of the Harvest to send harvest hands.

<sup>3</sup> “On your way! But be careful—this is hazardous work. You’re like lambs in a wolf pack.

<sup>4</sup> “Travel light. Comb and toothbrush and no extra luggage.

“Don’t loiter and make small talk with everyone you meet along the way.

<sup>5-6</sup> “When you enter a home, greet the family, ‘Peace.’ If your greeting is received, then it’s a good place to stay. But if it’s not received, take it back and get out. Don’t impose yourself.

<sup>7</sup> “Stay at one home, taking your meals there, for a worker deserves three square meals. Don’t move from house to house, looking for the best cook in town.

<sup>8-9</sup> “When you enter a town and are received, eat what they set before you, heal anyone who is sick, and tell them, ‘God’s kingdom is right on your doorstep!’

<sup>10-12</sup> “When you enter a town and are not received, go out in the street and say, ‘The only thing we got from you is the dirt on our feet, and we’re giving it back. Did you have any idea that God’s kingdom was right on your doorstep?’ Sodom will have it better on Judgment Day than the town that rejects you.

<sup>13-14</sup> “Doom, Chorazin! Doom, Bethsaida! If Tyre and Sidon had been given half the chances given you, they’d have been on their knees long ago, repenting and crying for mercy. Tyre and Sidon will have it easy on Judgment Day compared to you.

<sup>15</sup> “And you, Capernaum! Do you think you’re about to be promoted to heaven? Think again. You’re on a fast track to hell.

<sup>16</sup> “The one who listens to you, listens to me. The one who rejects you, rejects me. And rejecting me is the same as rejecting God, who sent me.”

<sup>17</sup> The seventy came back triumphant. “Master, even the demons danced to your tune!”

<sup>18-20</sup> Jesus said, “I know. I saw Satan fall, a bolt of lightning out of the sky. See what I’ve given you? Safe passage as you walk on snakes and scorpions, and protection from every assault of the Enemy. No one can put a hand on you. All the same, the great triumph is not in your authority over evil, but in God’s authority over you and presence with you. Not what you do for God but what God does for you—that’s the agenda for rejoicing.”

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

## Message

Have you ever prepared for something that you knew would be exciting, interesting, even life changing, but there was also fear and trepidation to go along with all of that?

I think of the first time I left home to go to college. I was barely eighteen and headed to Red Deer, eight hours away from my parents by car. This was a time before cell phones and I would be making the trip alone. I knew no one in Red Deer, was feeling pretty intimidated by the responsibilities I would be taking on as I was going to live on my own in an apartment and going into a program of music that I barely felt qualified to participate in.

It was an exciting time, but being a somewhat timid teenager, I was also overwhelmed by how quickly and drastically my life was changing. I will be the first to admit that I messed up a few times. I made new friends, but also had to learn to negotiate how to be in relationship with these people who knew nothing of where I grew up, nor I them. I remember when my rent cheque bounced. It wasn't because I didn't have the money to put in the bank, but rather because I had neglected to make sure it got in the bank on time. All of it was a learning. It was exciting. I was stretching and growing in who I was, but it also came with hazards of loneliness, mistakes, and many fears.

I could relate stories throughout my life that have been both exciting and unnerving to say the least and I am hopeful that you too have been able to recall something similar, whether it be going away for post-secondary education, starting a new job, moving, beginning a family, or...fill in the blank.

It is into this kind of situation that Jesus sent seventy of his followers to every town and place that he intended to go in the days, weeks, and months to come. These must have been exciting times and yet, what a daunting, even fearful task to be asked to take on.

The men and women were asked to travel light and get going. There was a sense of urgency about what they were to do. They were doing the prep work, or setting the ground work for what was to come. Not sure if any of you had picked up on this story before, I know it has not been one that I turn to for instruction, but there is importance in the task and that is something to pay attention to. As followers of the Christian faith, we too should be doing this prep work, this ground work for Jesus to be introduced into people's lives. And we don't need to carry a burdensome load with us. As we will see, it is very much about hospitality.

Those sent out in Jesus' time brought peace with them. They offered that peace to any and every home that they entered. They were sent to bring peace, to teach, to heal, and to announce that the kingdom of God was near to every person. It was so near that it was on their doorsteps if they choose to accept it.

This was what those sent out offered to others, but the hospitality was reciprocated in homes when the seventy were welcomed. It was over meals, in conversations, the nearness of God was embodied in the moments of shared hospitality. This was not a forced hospitality. If people were not welcomed, they were to turn and walk away. The scripture reading in this regard sounds unforgiving, hostile even, but this was to underscore the importance of the mission. I hear the words, "your mission, should you

choose to accept it..." and we always know that the Mission Impossible team is up for the danger, the challenge, and the excitement.

Sometime it feels like what God is calling us to do is an impossible mission especially in the climate of a post Christian world, where things no longer move with the rhythms of the church, where Sunday is no longer a sacred day of rest. Money and what money buys have more bearing on a person's motivations and choices than growing in faith and sharing the love of God with others. Having said that, this was what these first people faced who went out to share with others the peace and healing of God's kingdom. Our circumstances are not that different in that the world does not know about God and the love of God and we are being called out to share it, to let others know that the kingdom of God is near.

Given what kingdoms, power, and colonization has done in the name of the Christian faith does pose challenges. What we see happening south of our borders and even within Canada in the name of God is also challenging. Actions on the part of many Christians, well-meaning Christians, loving Christians, has been to bring the peace of God and force it on everyone rather than doing what Jesus said to do, just leave if you are not heard or welcomed. Shake the dust of the town off your feet and go to where the message of grace and peace will be welcomed. Our work is to introduce people to God's love, God's idea of hospitality, where conversations are had, meals shared, healing of body, mind, and spirit are part of the work.

How God deals with the rejection of the message of grace is not our concern. We rejoice in the healing, welcoming, loving work of the Spirit. Yet we can rejoice when we see God at work through us, but as Luke writes, "The great triumph is not in your authority over evil, but in God's authority over you and presence with you. Not what you do for God but what God does for you – that the agenda for rejoicing." (v20).

So there is urgency to share the message of grace in the world and you don't need to look far to see when the grace is needed, in shelters for homeless and those who are beaten down, in homes where families are estranged or angry, in the halls of power where decisions are made that affect all, but impact most those who have little power to defend or challenge decisions. God's grace is to be shared on the streets, in line ups at airports and drive throughs.

We have the privilege of bringing Good News of forgiveness, peace, joy, and love to those who may not know it. Each time you walk out your door, or even when you enter back into your home, you have the privileged and opportunity to change someone's world because you share in hospitality that is reciprocal. This is not about us bringing something to the table and others have nothing to offer. It is about sharing the stories of Jesus and message of God's love, but it is also about receiving the good others bring to our encounters and into our lives.

Jesus sent people out and they returned back to him. Their stories and experiences would have included things that went wrong, the times that they were rejected, but also

the amazing experiences of how God's kingdom, that kingdom of love, grace, and hospitality was received and how hospitality was reciprocated, how healing happened, and there was rejoicing.

We know that this is hazardous work. We will be as vulnerable as sheep in a wolf pack, but the reward of witnessing the life changing work of God in people and communities far exceeds the challenges.

May God's peace go with you and with us in community as we go out from the safety of this time of worship and share with others the news that God's kingdom is near to them, with the love of Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit, and God's grace going with us. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

Creator God, source of all life and each life,  
we come to you in prayer this day,  
grateful that your world is full of wonder and possibility,  
but also in desperate need of your reconciling love.  
We pray for the many different peoples of this world,  
divided as we are into many nations, clans, cultures, and spiritual traditions.  
Help us understand those differences more fully,  
and honour the good things that bind us together despite differences.  
Bless both our diversity and our unity as those who belong to you.

Loving God, source of truth and wisdom,  
in the world we are confronted by powers and authorities.  
Help us recognize their potential for both good and evil,  
and act wisely and faithfully to discern whom to trust and when to act.  
When we see injustice or recognize falsehood,  
give us the courage to speak up in Christ's name.  
Open our eyes to our own weakness and bias,  
and speak to us through the example of Jesus, our Lord.

Compassionate God,  
the world is filled with violence and hatred, costing innocent lives.  
We sometimes feel powerless to do anything about it.  
Today our hearts ache for those who live amid brutal conflict,  
for those have died through violence,  
and for those who suffer the many effects of trauma.

We pray for those who have lost their homes through conflict  
and fled their countries just to survive.  
Open hearts and homes to welcome those who flee  
and protect those who stay amid conflict to offer care,  
living in many places threatened in the world these days.

All-knowing God,  
you see into our hearts and know the heartaches we carry.  
We pray for those living with illness and pain,  
for those who mourn the loss of someone or something dear,  
and for all those struggling with anxiety or despair in these challenging times.

Wise and welcoming God,  
give us the grace to live out our faith among family and friends,  
with acquaintances and strangers.  
Help us to trust your guidance in all situations  
as we pray the words Jesus taught us:

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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

We are grateful for a faith in which practicing generosity is an indication of wisdom, making peace is a mark of power, and serving others is a sign of freedom. We express our faith through the way that we live and through these offering that we give.

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If you consider St. Andrew's your church, 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

*Who's goin' to tell the story*

761

1. Who's goin' to tell the story? You and I!  
Tell of the Lord's great glory? You and I!  
Who's goin' to let the whole world know?  
Help his disciples grow and multiply? You and I!
2. Who's goin' to bring the kingdom? You and I!  
Who's goin' to spread the gospel? You and I!  
Who's goin' to do the kindly deed?  
Comfort the one in need and help supply? You and I!
3. Jesus came to bring us good news,  
sent to earth by God above!  
And the good news that he brought us  
is the word of love!

4. Who's goin' to feed the hungry? You and I!  
Care for the sick and lonely? You and I!  
Who's goin' to let the whole world see  
people can live in harmony? Let's try! You and I!

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## **Benediction**

Let us never grow weary of doing what is right!

**We will go to seek justice for all of God's children.**

Let us not grow weary of leading others to the kingdom!

**We will go to follow Jesus' example of gathering all into grace.**

Let us not grow weary of speaking of hope and peace.

**We will go to sow the Spirit's seed of life and hope.**

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