

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

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

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost - August 21, 2022

Words of Welcome

We like rules and order. We like to know what to anticipate, how things will unfold. Even those who are more spontaneous or rebellious can appreciate some order and expectation in their lives. God too likes order and understanding. Through God's commandments there is an understanding that it brings life to individuals and community. Still, is there room in our lives for living in the moment, for seizing the moment? God is there too.

As we consider these things, we begin with a call to worship.

Call to Worship

God has placed God's hand on you for healing and restoration.

Praise God who lavishes such love on us.

God has called you to special service and witness.

Praise God who encourages us to use our gifts to help others.

Let us rejoice and praise God!

Let our hearts and lives reflect God's mighty love.

[Ministry Matters™ | Worship Connection: August 21, 2022](#)

*Hymn

This is the day

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1. This is the day,
this is the day that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made.
We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it,
and be glad in it.
This is the day that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.
2. Open to us,
open to us the gates of God,
the gates of God;
we will go in, we will go in and praise the Lord,
and praise the Lord.
Open to us the gates of God;
we will go in and praise the Lord.
Open to us, open to us the gates of God.

3. You are our God,
you are our God; we will praise your name,
we will praise your name;
we will give thanks, we will give thanks for your faithfulness,
for your faithfulness.
You are our God; we will praise your name;
we will give thanks for your faithfulness.
You are our God, you are our God; we will praise your name.

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Prayers of Adoration and Confession

O God, our strength and refuge,
We come together to worship you and praise your loving kindness.
In your presence, we rest from what distracts us,
to focus on your truth and goodness.
You call us to live in relationship with you.
Through the love of Jesus Christ, you repair our lives.
Through the power of your Spirit, you engage us to serve you in the world.
Receive our prayers and our praise this day,
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, revive our hope and our energy
and make us ready to answer your call.

**O God, our judge and our hope,
we confess we often turn away from your truth,
and ignore your call to do justice.
Forgive us when we say one thing in worship
but do another in the ways we live.
Forgive us when we ignore how others are treated
and think only of ourselves.
Let your judgment awaken us and your mercy refresh us.**

Lord Jesus, you taught in synagogues and on hillsides, bringing healing and wisdom to those who listened. By the Holy Spirit, teach us through the words of Scripture, and bring us your healing and wisdom. Amen.

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Assurance of Forgiveness

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Believe the good news of the Gospel. In Christ, God has offered us mercy and love. Receive God's forgiveness this day and share it with each other for Christ's sake.

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Scripture Reading Luke 13:10-17

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. ¹¹ And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent

over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' ¹³When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day.' ¹⁵But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? ¹⁶And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?' ¹⁷When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

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

Message Now is the Time

I knocked and then walked into the room. It was the first time I would meet this woman. A veteran of WWII living at Sunnybrook Veteran's Center in Toronto, she now sat in a wheel chair. She was bent forward, her face toward the ground. I introduced myself expecting that she would sit up to greet me. She never did. She was unable to. Her body was rigidly and permanently in this position.

She turned her head to the side as she responded to my "hello." I will call her Maddy to protect her identity. Maddy, was a wonderful woman. Our conversations were animated. She studied scripture and was part of a Bible Study group. She loved walks outdoors in her wheel chair and was cheerful and friendly. We never looked one another in the eye. It was not possible to do it. At times I would get down on my knees so that we could interact at the same level when I visited. She didn't complain about her condition or anything else. She was interested in others, was compassionate, and content.

Her life hadn't started this way. She had served in WWII with a strong and healthy body, but as the years went by her body changed, and now here she was, not able to look up as she once did at the night sky or see clouds floating across a clear blue sky. Her view of the world coming just a 180 degree from side to side with the view of the floor or ground the resting place for her eyes as she sat in her wheel chair.

In this life, Maddy never experienced healing in her body, and I often think of her when I read the scripture about the woman who had spent eighteen of her years in that position of being bent over. We have few details about the woman. We don't know, if like Maddy, her body had slowly succumbed to the position due to failing health or illness. We don't know how old she was. All we know is that on this particular day she was headed to the synagogue to worship, to learn, and to pray. It was a sabbath day after all. Not unusual behaviour for a person of the Jewish faith. As normal as it is for you to come to church.

We come to church, not expecting to experience some life changing event, but rather to worship, learn, and pray, just as the woman in the story did, so long ago. She did not approach Jesus. She may not have even known who he was, but he knew her. Jesus recognized her as a woman who was suffering and saw her as a daughter of Abraham, meaning she was a child of God. He chose to make a difference in her world in that moment by healing her body. First, he said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment. And "When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God." (v12-13).

She praised God. It was the only thing she could think to do. It was the only appropriate response to the incredible change in her life. But not everyone praised God. The Synagogue leader chastised her and anyone else who might be thinking about getting healed that day saying, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." Can you imagine?! A life changing experience that was witnessed by so many others and the response of the one in charge was, do you have to do that today? You might note he did not chastise Jesus.

And it's not like the leader got it all wrong. There was a command to rest on the seventh day. It was sacred. That command gave rest to everyone – slave or free. It was a recognition that the earth and all that is in it needs rest. The leader was protecting the law and the tradition. There was a place for saving the life of someone in trouble even on a sabbath, but this woman had been in this condition for eighteen years. Could she not have waited another day? Still, this may have been the only time Jesus would encounter this woman. If he did not heal her now, then when?

Jesus decided that now was the time. This was the time to heal, the time to set free a woman who had been in bondage for years.

In May, St. Andrew's had communion to celebrate the church's anniversary. A community member, one who sat on the steps of the church happened in for worship that day. He sat at the back, was visibly inebriated, and praised God throughout the service. As the communion part of the service ended and a hymn was being sung, he came forward to the communion table. I came toward him and he asked for a blessing. People watched in shock and wonder. Some were afraid for my safety, others wondered what we would do with this guy who obviously didn't understand how church operates.

He wanted to kneel for the blessing. I told him he didn't have to kneel before me, but he insisted that he kneel and be blessed. I have to say, that I didn't know quite what was going to happen, but as the congregation watched and sang, the man knelt, with the aid of Sheila our caretaker, and I said a blessing over him. Whatever he experienced in that moment was all from God. I was only the person who said the words and shared love.

When thinking of this experience and what happened in the story of the Jesus healing the crippled woman, I wonder how often we are more like the synagogue leader than the healer that Jesus was. Now I am not suggesting that any of us may have the healing power of Jesus in us, but we are all capable of showing compassion to others in a way

that heals their spirit and brings light to their living. Yet how often do we judge whether or not someone did things in the appropriate manner, at the right time, or in the right place.

It is certainly more comfortable when we know what to expect in worship, at work, on the street, in our homes. Even when things are not great, we are more content with what we know than what we don't know. At least we know what to expect. But Jesus is unpredictable. God is unpredictable and will break into the world at unexpected times and places, with people we did not expect God to be working through or with.

When someone comes to worship with us that is not like us, doesn't know the spoken and unspoken "rules" and disrupts our comfort how do we respond? Is it with judgement or with grace? Do we even come to worship expecting that God will show up?

There are some things that we might ponder from this story today, though there is much more that could be gleaned, but for this moment...one is, do we expect God to show up at church, in our homes, in our lives, and in the lives of others? Are we open to seeing God at work at anytime or are there just certain times that we are looking for God and would be okay with God doing God's thing of healing and restoring people's lives, maybe even our own life?

And if we are putting parameters on God, even for good reason, like law and order that can help all to flourish in safety and community, can we open ourselves up to moments when God comes in and says, "Now is the time".

The Holy Spirit is at work among us at all times. My prayer is that especially when we worship, we might know God with us. May we open ourselves up to the stranger or friend in our midst whether at worship, at home, at work, and at play, that needs to know that now is the time. Now is the time that God is going to do something amazing, life giving, even life changing. May our response be one of praising God.

Look for God at work, for God present with you and others, for now is the time. Praise the Lord. In Christ, with Christ, and through Christ. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Lord God, Loving God, gather us into your presence as we pray.
Silence our hearts and minds in these moments
so that we may listen for the movement of your Holy Spirit
who prays within us through our sighs too deep for words:

O God, we lay before you our thanks and our concerns
as we remember those who have come to our attention
through conversations or chance encounters this week.
We offer gratitude for moments of joy and goodness,
and remembered pleasures stirred by your Spirit;

We remember all those whose situations are very close to our hearts today,

those facing stress or sorrow, those challenged by pain or illness,
those making a new beginning or searching for a new path.

We remember the things in the news lately that concern us deeply:
the stress on the environment and worries about its future,
the pressures on those who have lost jobs or cannot find work,
the pain of those who meet discrimination or hatred in daily life,
tensions among nations who threaten each other

And we remember one another and needs known and unknown
in this community, our communities.

Bless us as we make a new beginning together as summer turns to autumn.

Show us the paths of ministry you are opening before us.

We believe you hear our prayers and will be faithful to answer according to your will,
so together we offer the prayer Jesus has given 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

With gratitude for the healing and hope that Jesus offers, let us present our offering to God. May our gifts help to share that healing and hope throughout God's world in Christ's name.

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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>

*Hymn

When Jesus the healer passed through Galilee

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1. When Jesus the healer passed through Galilee,
Heal us, heal us today!
the deaf came to hear and the blind came to see.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!
2. A paralyzed man was let down through a roof.
Heal us, heal us today!
His sins were forgiven, his walking the proof.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!

3. The death of his daughter caused Jairus to weep.
Heal us, heal us today!
The Lord took her hand, and he raised her from sleep.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!
4. When blind Bartimaeus cried out to the Lord,
Heal us, heal us today!
his faith made him whole and his sight was restored.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!
5. The lepers were healed and the demons cast out.
Heal us, heal us today!
A bent woman straightened to laugh and to shout.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!
6. The twelve were commissioned and sent out in twos
Heal us, heal us today!
to make the sick whole and to spread the good news.
Heal us, Lord Jesus!
7. There's still so much sickness and suffering today.
Heal us, heal us today!
We gather together for healing, and pray:
Heal us, Lord Jesus!

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Benediction

Send us out Loving God – our hope and trust from our youth –
that we would not shame, but recognise the dignity of all Your children,
that we would incline our ear and listen for Your call,
that our actions may be just and compassionate.
May our lives be lived in continual praise of You.

[August 21st, 11th Sunday after Pentecost | The Church of Scotland](#)