

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

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

17th Sunday after Pentecost – October 2, 2022

Words of Welcome

Who has shaped your life? What has shaped your life? Is faith a part of that shaping? This may be an opportunity to reflect on those things. We begin with a call to worship.

Call to Worship

We come as guests invited to a table;

We come to celebrate with friends and neighbours.

Jesus Christ, our Friend and Saviour, invites us to gather:

We gather with his friends around the world.

Come and worship with hearts full of God's praise and promise.

We worship God in gladness, for God's faithfulness endures forever.

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Hymn

My faith looks up to thee

677

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| 1. My faith looks up to thee
thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine:
now hear me when I pray;
take all my guilt away;
oh let me from this day
be wholly thine. | 2. May thy rich grace impart
strength to my fainting heart;
my zeal inspire;
as thou hast died for me,
oh may my love to thee
pure, warm and changeless be,
a living fire. |
| 3. While life's dark maze I tread,
and griefs around me spread,
be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day,
wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray
from thee aside. | 4. When ends life's transient dream,
when death's cold sullen stream
shall o'er me roll,
blest Saviour, then, in love,
fear and distrust remove;
oh bear me safe above,
a ransomed soul. |

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Prayer of Adoration

Gracious and Generous God,
you spread a banquet table and make room for all to come:
friend and foe, healed and sick, hopeful and hopeless.

You feed our desires with goodness
and fill our longing with steadfast love.

We worship you with grateful praise,
together with all your people, here and everywhere,
who break bread at your table and who share the cup.

We celebrate our life together in Christ
and offer our love and loyalty to you, O God,
Source of all goodness,
through Jesus Christ, who shares our flesh,
and your Holy Spirit who prays within us.

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Prayer of Confession

**God of mercy and mystery,
When you invite us to your table,
you ask us to come with clean hands and open hearts.
You ask us to come in peace,
seeking reconciliation with you and with each other.
In this silence, we hand over to you
the broken relationships, disagreements and disappointments
that keep us from living in your peace.
Free us from the burdens we carry
which we share in this silence.
so that we may be a source of peace in this troubled world:**

God of Hope, amid all the concerns in the world around us, we turn to your Word.
Send your Holy Spirit to still our thoughts and speak your wisdom to us. Fill us with
the humble confidence we meet in Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

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Assurance of Pardon

Hear and believe this good news! Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old
life has gone, new life has begun. Know that you are forgiven. Have the courage to
forgive one another, and be at peace – with God, with your neighbor and with yourself.

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Scripture Reading 2 Timothy 1:1-14

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life
that is in Christ Jesus,² To Timothy, my beloved child:

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³ I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—
when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴Recalling your tears, I
long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a
faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am
sure, lives in you. ⁶For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within
you through the laying on of my hands; ⁷for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice,
but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but
join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, ⁹who saved us
and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own
purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages

began,¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher,¹² and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.¹³ Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.¹⁴ Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

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

Message Rekindle the gift

Campfires are one of my favorite things. Not being an outdoorsy type I am not very good at making a campfire, but I really enjoy them. Ken on the other hand is a bit of a firebug. I also know several people that I would call firebugs. Me, I can just sit around the campfire and enjoy it. Others need to poke and prod it. Good thing too as they tend to the fire and keep it burning.

I have often noticed or watched as Ken has taken a fire that looked like it was pretty much out, and he rakes the coals together fanning them back into a flame, adding some more kindling and logs as he goes. It is rather fascinating to think that it takes so little to begin a fire.

And who of us has not heard of the danger of just a spark that is lifted into the air and lands in a forest with a dry forest bed that, with just the right conditions, becomes the ignitor of a raging fire.

This is the type of imagery that the writer of 2nd Timothy is alluding to when he reminds Timothy to, “rekindle the gift of God that is within you.” The gift is that of grace, faith, love, and hope. And these Timothy received from God, but it was through the faith and actions, the teaching and presence of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice and in that present moment the writer of the letter, that Timothy learned and experienced faith, grace, love, and hope.

On one of her trips to the Netherlands, my mother was given a prayer that her grandmother on her dad’s side had written and held to for what I understand to be years. My great grandmother had at that time prayed for her children, her children’s children, and the generations after that, of which I am one. She prayed that we would know God and live lives of faith. I am the benefactor of generations that have been faithful Christians. Not perfect people but people whose faith was of importance to them.

It is my great sadness that, though bringing my children up in the knowledge and love of God, they themselves have moved away from the love, faith, grace, and hope that has sustained generations of my family. They live good lives, they are good people, but they

do not know intimately what I know to be true of God, Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit. My hope is that one day they will rekindle the faith that was passed down to them and that has been the experience of their ancestors.

And it is truly difficult being a Christian in today's cultural context. It often feels like no one seems to want to hear a message of hope, grace, faith, and love, well at least not a Christian message of hope, grace, faith, and love. We are almost embarrassed to share that part of ourselves for fear of judgement and condemnation from those we work with, live with, are related to, or we call our friends. We may hear them say, or think they might say, we can be friends, just don't bring up your religion.

At first, I felt I had to walk a fine line when our granddaughter was born, I even felt I needed to walk that line when speaking with my adult children and in-law children. Over time I have come to the place where I respect their boundaries, but if they truly want to know who their mother is, and for my grandchild who her grandmother is, if friends truly value my friendship, then they must understand that my faith is the basis for how I live my life. My faith shapes my understanding of the world, it is the lens through which I make decisions. It is not just a part of me, my faith shapes me.

Maybe it is age, maybe it is maturing in faith, maybe it is that I just don't care so much anymore what people think of me. It may be that I am just secure in who I am that I find I speak more freely about my faith. I don't force anyone to believe as I do, but I value the Christian faith enough to no longer hide my stories of faith and how it shapes my life. It is hard to start a fire of faith in anyone if there has been no kindling placed in their lives to begin with, if they have not heard stories of faith from anyone.

We do not have to be ashamed that we are Christians. When our lives are lived in the example of Christ, when we love and give the gift of grace and hope to others, then we have nothing to be ashamed of. Yes, many harmful things have been done in the name of religion. The National Day of Truth and Reconciliation has a lot to do with the harm done by the government with the help of churches to Indigenous children in residential schools. The harm done to families whose children were taken from their homes. Centuries of conflict around the globe has often been in the name of one faith or another. Even what has happened with the convoluted manner of politics and faith south of our borders is concerning, but none of this is the example that Christ gave us.

If we are truly living out our faith as followers of Christ and Christ's example of healing and teaching that leads to giving others, especially those we consider vulnerable, a lease on life, care for their concerns and needs, advocates for justice for those who have little money, power, or prestige, then we have nothing to be ashamed of. If nothing else, if more of us were living into this type of faith it might change the negative and challenging stereotypes that Christians have been given.

What many people who know little about our faith fail to realize is that those of us who go to church know that we need to be here because we are in need of forgiveness, grace, hope, and love. We are in the church and part of this faith, not because we think we have it right, but because we know that our faith brings strength, wisdom, grace, love, and hope to our own lives, which we can then in turn give to others, freely and without judgement that which has been given to us.

Some of us have been given this gift, taught about this gift through generations of families, others are learning it from us because they never received such teaching, grace, love, and hope from those who came before them. Those who learn of it may receive this gift through attending church, but many more only experience the gift through our loving and attentive presence in their lives.

You and I have been entrusted with this treasure with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us. It is our privilege, our honour, and the expectation that we will not squander this gift but share it as freely as God in Christ has shared it with us. So, if your faith has failed you, maybe it is shaky or afraid, maybe it has been shown to you as judgement, know today that this gift of faith, hope, love, and grace, is one that is to be life-giving for you and those whose lives encounter yours. It is a fire that starts with an ember and is kindled into a powerful blaze of love.

God has not given “us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.” (v7) This power is only to be used as love and grace poured out in our lives and the lives of others. Do not be ashamed, share that which has been entrusted to you, and rekindle the gift of God that is within you.

And this we live in Christ, with Christ, and through Christ. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of grace and God of glory,
you care for the whole earth;
even now you are reconciling all things to yourself.
We thank you for the ancient grace
given in Christ Jesus before the ages began.
As age has succeeded age to this present day
your grace is with us still.
We rely on your power for all things.

We bring before you now the cares of the world.
We pray for people enduring the devastation of war
and oppression from enemies.
We pray for cities and for public life
that has suffered destruction and ruin.
Bring restoration, we pray,
and an end to conflicts that divide and destroy.

We pray for nations and peoples undergoing turmoil and struggle.
Return us to your ways of justice and truth.
Give us compassionate hearts and resolute spirits
as we work to repair community and offer solace
where now there is no resting place.

God of tender mercy,
you hear the cries of the one who is suffering,
of the one trying to recover,
of the one who has been hurt by another,
of one at risk in a complex and impersonal system.
Enfold each one in your steadfast love.
Take special care of those who do not, or cannot, cry out,
but wait quietly in hope.

Give voice to those who should not wait quietly;
empower them with strength and support all around:
the powerless one who suffers abuse;
the person who is lonely, with no one to help;
the one who wanders homeless among us, unnoticed;
the one carrying an old burden, a silent grief, or an unvoiced fear.
With the gift of life given in the soaring light of your gospel
abolish the daily death they bear,

We pray for your church, so in need of healing and reconciliation.
Rekindle in us the sincere faith of Christ
and make us willing and faithful servants.
In unmerited grace, in startling new mercy,
you chose to call us not servants, but friends.
You have opened to us a place at your table of grace.
We would be good stewards of your grace
and glad of the company you call us to keep around your table,
which is larger than we have yet imagined.
In gratitude for the bread and cup you share,
we will honor you by sharing our bread with others,
by offering without reserve the cup you bless.

Great is your faithfulness; **O God, we hope in you.**
In the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we pray as he taught...

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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 celebrate God's generosity to us in Christ and in creation. We present our offering in gratitude for all God has given. 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

I know not why such wondrous grace

683

1. I know not why such wondrous grace
to me God has made known;
nor why, unworthy as I am,
Christ claimed me for his own,
but I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that Christ is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.
2. I know not why this saving faith
to me God did impart,
nor how believing in the word
brought peace into my heart,
but I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that Christ is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.
3. I know not how the Spirit moves,
convincing me of sin,
revealing Jesus through the word,
creating faith in him,
but I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that Christ is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.

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Benediction

Go from here to serve God, your strength renewed and your faith reassured,
for you are part of Christ's body embracing the world in his name.

And may that God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit,
and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen