

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

5th Sunday of Easter – May 7, 2023

Call to Worship

We are God's household, crafted by the Architect of creation:
our hearts a shelter for the outcast; our hands open to the stranger.

We are God's people, created in the divine image:
to tell others of God's love, to offer mercy as freely as we have received it.

We are God's children, called to give of ourselves:
chosen to serve the lost and lonely, gifted to minister to a hurting world.

[Lectionary Liturgies: Liturgy with communion for May 10, 2020 \(Easter 5 - A\)](#)

Hymn

Come, my Way, my Truth my Life

565

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
such a way as gives us breath,
such a truth as ends all strife,
such a life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
such a light as shows a feast,
such a feast as mends in length,
such a strength as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
such a joy as none can move,
such a love as none can part,
such a heart as joys in love.

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Prayer of Adoration and Confession

O Jesus, you are the Way, the Truth, the Life.

God's way to us, our way to God. God's truth for our world about our lives, God's life, which brings our living alive. Seeing you, listening to you, knowing you, following you joins us to God. We come through you to God, who is to us as a Father and as a Mother, all-loving Creator. Jesus, whichever rutted road we choose to travel in this world, be our way, we pray. Whichever partial version of the truth we choose to accept and voice as our viewpoint, be our truth, we ask. Whichever style of life we choose to live out with our time and money and skills and values, be our life, we pray.

[I Am--The Sayings of Jesus: A festival of hymns | Reformed Worship](#)

Steadfast God,

we confess Jesus as the way, the truth and the life for us, yet we often fail to follow him, too often gone our own way, distorted the truth and led deadly lives. Forgive us for falling short of your purpose for our lives. Give us courage to follow Jesus, who continues to show us the way.

Be our way, our truth, our life, in God. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 5th Sunday of Easter. May 7, 2023. Year A.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Know that, in Christ, you are forgiven.

Accept God's grace and forgiveness this day, and extend it to others for Jesus' sake.

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Scripture Reading John 14:1-14

¹⁻⁴ “Don't let this rattle you. You trust God, don't you? Trust me. There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that weren't so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a room ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get your room ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. And you already know the road I'm taking.”

⁵ Thomas said, “Master, we have no idea where you're going. How do you expect us to know the road?”

⁶⁻⁷ Jesus said, “I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him. You've even seen him!”

⁸ Philip said, “Master, show us the Father; then we'll be content.”

⁹⁻¹⁰ “You've been with me all this time, Philip, and you still don't understand? To see me is to see the Father. So how can you ask, ‘Where is the Father?’ Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you aren't mere words. I don't just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act.

¹¹⁻¹⁴ “Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see—these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing. You can count on it. From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I'll do.

[The Message \(MSG\)](#) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

Message Show us the Father

When my children were born people just said, “Oh that is a Yanishewski!” Well, it turns out that Yanishewski's have a distinctive nose and slender faces. My face was not slender and my nose a very different shape. There was no denying that the children were my husband, Ken's. To know our children's lineage was to know Ken. Now of course they all have very different personalities. They have a little of both of us in them, but they are also created as an individual and both nature and nurture have contributed to who they have become.

As a child myself, I often catch myself thinking, “Oh that was my mother coming out!” or with Ken I will say to him, “That is your father!”, rarely meant in the most endearing way.

Today we heard Jesus making bold claims about his Father, God the Father. When Philip said, “Master, show us the Father, then we’ll be content.” Jesus responds with “To see me is to see the Father...Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you aren’t mere words. I don’t just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act. Believe me: I am in the Father and my Father is in me.”

This goes a lot further than looking or acting alike. This is about an indwelling of the Father and the Son. If you want to know God, look at Jesus. Listen to his words. Follow his actions. The point of Jesus’ life was to reveal God to us; to make God fully known.

As mysterious and distant as God may seem at times, God’s character is revealed in the life of Jesus. You want to know what God thinks about those who are lonely, grieving, or on the margins? Look at how Jesus sought out, went to, or paid attention to those people. A woman looking for healing from years of bleeding, a man grieving the death of his daughter, a woman wanting healing for her daughter, a woman at the well, another accused of adultery. Jesus spent time with those who were struggling. This reveals God to us.

Stories told by Jesus of a lost sheep, a lost coin, a prodigal son, all reveal the importance of each person to God. Thousands fed by Jesus when they might have gone hungry reveals the provision of God. If you want to know God, look to Jesus.

Not only that, if you want to know the depth of God’s love for you, look to the death of Jesus. Minister and teacher, David Lose writes, “Jesus goes to the cross for one reason and one reason only: to show us God, to show us God’s grace and mercy, to show just how much God loves us and how far God will go to communicate that love to us that we might believe and, believing, have life in his name.”¹

As we come together to worship at this time after Easter, it seems odd that we might go back to the days just ahead of the crucifixion to when Jesus has had dinner with his disciples and Judas has walked out and will betray Jesus the next day. But the words Jesus shares, as we hear it in this scripture, he does so knowing what he is about to face and the struggle, grief, and challenge that the disciples will endure. He does it all because of love, God’s love.

Jesus is aware that the story of reconciliation with God, healing, wholeness and transformation for people and the world can only continue if he leaves. Jesus entrusts

¹ Lose, David. [The Hardest Question - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#). Accessed May 4, 2023.

the rest of the story “the greater things” to the disciples then, and now us. The Holy Spirit is sent to be with us. We are not left as orphans (John 14:18). The Holy Spirit, the Advocate, will remind us of all the things that Jesus told and taught the disciples leaving us well and whole. (John 14:25-26) The Holy Spirit continues to teach us about God, as revealed through Jesus in the scriptures.

I would like to touch on a few of the more well-known verses of this scripture that might be able to use a little unpacking. You may have heard this scripture only at funerals. It is comforting to think that Jesus has prepared a room for each of us in heaven, but this scripture speaks more correctly to Jesus preparing abiding places. Abiding in and with Jesus can happen now as well as in some future time of our dying.

Jesus and God the Father abide in one another. We are given that gift of as well. We can abide in God through Jesus. In difficult times, in peaceful times, in uncertain times, an abiding place is ready and prepared for us. This is deeply meaningful when one recognizes that Jesus suffered heartache, abandonment, denial from a friend, betrayal and ultimately death. Jesus, and thus God, knows suffering. There is an abiding place with God for us in our living and in our dying. God is with us.

When Jesus says, “Trust me” (v1) or in another translation, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” (NRSV) He says that as he knows what he is about to face. This statement recognizes that things are going to be really hard to endure. Jesus may have been trembling himself as he said it, with a tear rolling down his cheek, but he too trusted that God would not abandon him and so to see Jesus is to see God, to know Jesus is to know God, and is to know that we will never be abandoned. We may still have to face the struggle, the pain, the terrible losses in our lives, but we can trust Jesus.

There is another verse in this scripture that has been used for harm. Jesus said, “I am the Road, also the Truth, also the Life. No one gets to the Father apart from me.” (v 6) The following may be more familiar to you. “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (NRSV). This language is for Christians. It is insider language. For Christians the way to God is through Jesus. It is how we know God. Jesus is the way to knowing God, the Truth about God, and the Life given to and revealed for us. We are offered abundant, whole, and transformed lives.

This statement is not a comment on how God reveals God’s self to others who are not Christian. We should not presume to know God’s mind. As is written in Isaiah 55:8, “For my thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, say the Lord.” (NRSV) This does not mean that we cannot share our faith and understanding of God with others. It might be just the word of hope that someone needs to hear.

The other verse that has often been misused and misunderstood is that about asking for something in prayer and Jesus will do it. The New Revised Standard translation of the

Bible says, "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it." (John 14:13,14).

Some have taken this to mean that if you ask for Mercedes, then Jesus will grant it. Or if you asked for God to take away the cancer, the disability, or the empty bank account, Jesus will do it. Life's realities can be difficult and of course we can ask for God to help us with things, but I think that how we heard the scripture earlier can be helpful. In The Message, by Eugene Peterson we hear, "From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it. Whatever you request in this way, I'll do."

And that takes us back to where we started. If you want to know God the Father, then look at Jesus. If you want to know how to pray, look to Jesus. There is no mystery there. Jesus loved, fed, and spent time with those who had need. He was with those who had questions and those who were outcast, those who were grieving, and even those who turned their backs on him. Jesus showed up. God's shows up in our lives.

Pray and trust that your prayers are heard and answered. Live in the abiding place of peace through Christ even when it seems that there should be no peace in your heart, mind, and/or body. Christ is risen. The one we worship and adore, the one we trust with our very lives, is not dead. He is alive and once again sits at the right hand of the Father. With them the Holy Spirit has come to teach, to be the very presence of God with us in our own time.

Christ is with us; God is with us. As God abides in the Son and the Son in God, God abides in and with us in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you want to know God, get to know his Son Jesus as revealed in scriptures and in the continuing presence and work of the Spirit.

You know Jesus and so you also know God and have seen God. Ask God to be with you in and through all of your life and the lives of others. Remember, whatever you request along the lines of who Jesus is and what Jesus did and continues to do, Jesus will do.

I speak to you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Holy One, God with us,

We give you thanks for the promises Jesus gave to all his followers, that in him we see your face. He has shown us the face of your mercy and compassion so we thank you for understanding us better than we know ourselves. He has shown us the face of your peace and justice so we thank you for calling us to make a difference in the world for his sake.

Holy One, In Christ, you show us the Way that leads through paths of service. We pray for those who feel lost or alone, those who live with anxiety or doubt their own value, and all who cannot imagine a purpose for themselves.

God of the Way, lead those who are struggling to find the hope you offer through the assurance of your love.

Holy One, In Christ, you show us the Truth that is revealed costly love. In these days when lies are easily disguised, we pray for those who have put their faith in false hope and flimsy promises, those deceived by empty promises from the power hungry, and any misled by conspiracy theories that circulate each day:

God of the Truth, reveal the shallowness of things that distract or mislead us and give us courage to stand for truth, even when it is unpopular.

Holy One, In Christ, you show us the Life that overcomes death through your resurrecting power. We pray for those facing illness or grief, any who live with deep sadness, depression or despair, and those whose lives are diminished by discrimination in action or attitude.

God of Life,
Support all those who are suffering and make your justice known in our land.

Holy One,
Challenge us to find renewed purpose in following in the footsteps of Christ so that in our living and loving, your kingdom of justice and love is revealed; for we pray the words he taught us, saying:

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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

Christ our Lord does more than invite us. He prepares a place for all who commit their way to him, and comes to take us to himself, so where he is, we may be also.

We do not make ourselves one with Christ. Christ does that work.

So we offer our gifts with thanks and praise.

[Discipleship Ministries | Fifth Sunday of Easter — Order of Worship \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](https://umcdiscipleship.org)

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

God of grace and God of glory

490

1. God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
crown thine ancient church's story;
bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the facing of this hour,
for the facing of this hour.
2. Lo! The hosts of evil round us,
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us,
free our hearts to love and praise.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage
for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.
3. Cure thy children's warring madness,
bend our pride to they control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.
4. Set our feet on lofty places;
gird our lives that they may be
armoured with all Christ-like graces,
pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor thee,
that we fail not them nor thee!
5. Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the search for thy salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving thee whom we adore,
serving thee whom we adore.

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Benediction (based on John 14:1-4)

Don't let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God, and in God's son, Jesus Christ,
who is the way, the truth and the life,
and through whom we come to know the Father.

And may the blessing of God,
the grace of Jesus Christ,
and the presence of the Holy Spirit
go with you as you leave this place.

[re:Worship: Easter 5 Year A \(re-worship.blogspot.com\)](http://re:Worship: Easter 5 Year A (re-worship.blogspot.com))