

## St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost - June 11, 2023

### Call to Worship

We come together this day for worship;

**We gather as the children of God's family.**

We seek to form a relationship with God that has the quality of childhood friendships,

**A relationship open and buoyant one unencumbered by ulterior motives and restrictive demands.**

We seek to nurture a curiosity about God that bears the marks of childlike wonder,

**A curiosity bold and intense, one generated by a Spirited desire to know and to grow.**

We seek to build a faith in God that extends the beliefs of the child within us,

**A faith trusting and courageous, a faith developed through personal ponderings and dialogue with others.**

**With joy and gratitude, we join together in worship.**

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### \*Hymn

*All things bright and beautiful*

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#### *Refrain*

All things bright and beautiful,  
all creatures great and small,  
all things wise and wonderful,  
in love God made them all.

1. Each little flower that opens,  
each little bird that sings,  
God made their glowing colors;  
God made their tiny wings.

#### *Refrain*

3. The rocky mountain splendour,  
the haunting curlew's call,  
the great lakes and the prairies,  
the forests in the fall,

#### *Refrain*

2. The cold wind in the winter,  
the pleasant summer sun,  
the ripe fruits in the garden,  
God made them every one.

#### *Refrain*

4. God gave us eyes to see them,  
and lips that we might tell  
how great is God almighty,  
who has made all things well.

#### *Refrain*

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### Prayer of Adoration and Confession

You, O God, are overflowing with love,  
infinite in kindness, incomparable in glory.

You are the source of all good things.

In you, all things work together for good.

Your presence breaks into our lives in many ways  
and you touch us with wonder.

In this time of worship, we offer you thanks with our prayers,  
praise with our hearts, and honor with our lives,  
this day and every day, now and always.

**God of all our journeys, you lead us day by day.  
Sometimes the going is smooth and we follow gladly.  
But sometimes the going gets tough.  
We face obstacles and choices.  
We're unsure which way to turn.  
Forgive us when we hesitate,  
and give us the courage to take a step into your future.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. June 11, 2023. Year A.

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

To all who seek forgiveness through confession of sin and commitment to change,  
God responds with mercy and grace. Ever and always, God welcomes us home to  
live with joy in the world, to look with hope toward time ahead. Glory be to God.

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## **Scripture Reading** Matthew 9: 9-13, 18-26

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth;  
and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he got up and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and  
were sitting with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup>When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his  
disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?' <sup>12</sup>But when he  
heard this, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who  
are sick. <sup>13</sup>Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have  
come to call not the righteous but sinners.'

<sup>18</sup> While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came  
in and knelt before him, saying, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay your  
hand on her, and she will live.' <sup>19</sup>And Jesus got up and followed him, with his  
disciples. <sup>20</sup>Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for  
twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, <sup>21</sup>for she said to  
herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.' <sup>22</sup>Jesus turned, and seeing her  
he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman  
was made well. <sup>23</sup>When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute-players  
and the crowd making a commotion, <sup>24</sup>he said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but  
sleeping.' And they laughed at him. <sup>25</sup>But when the crowd had been put outside, he  
went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. <sup>26</sup>And the report of this spread  
throughout that district.

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

## **Message** Responding, Restoring, Rejoicing!

I parked and as I did so I noted the two men and a woman on the fire escape. As I got out of the car and said good morning, the woman called me over. She is someone who is around the church often. She is not well. Generational trauma has her caught up in a cycle of abuse and addictions. Today though, her prayer was for her daughter. "Please pray for my daughter on Sunday" was her request. "She is missing and they have taken her children." One of the gentlemen with her explained that the children had been taken and they did not know where they were.

Sadly, this and stories like it are the norm for the community members around our church. Addictions, death, missing persons, children removed from parents...all part of the ongoing struggle of a people who live with the outcomes of the residential school system.

Then there are those who are ill that are in need of company and assurance that someone is with them. Often it is when faced with illness that faith comes into play. Maybe faith is a place where hope resides. This can be for those who grew up Christian and for those who know very little about God.

And then there is the despair of those who have experienced deep loss. The loss of a child or partner, the loss of a cherished and dear one. The fear and unknowns of a future in which one finds themselves in the pit of grief and loneliness, a hole so large that your chest feels as if it is a crater or a void that cannot be filled.

People are looking for hope, for someone to respond or to respond to the presence of someone. People hope to be restored in relationships, health, wellness, and when that happens all involved rejoice.

The scripture you heard today seems to be of three unrelated events with people at very different junctures of their lives. Similar to the examples I have shared. In the scripture we hear of a man sitting minding his own business at a tax booth, another man pleading for life to be restored to his lifeless daughter, and a woman who has been hemorrhaging for twelve years. Each scene as different as it can be from the other, but the common thread is Jesus.

In the case of Matthew, the tax collector, Jesus sees him and says, "Follow me." We don't know all of the background of this story. It may be that Matthew knew about Jesus and he was ready for the call. It could be that in Jesus he saw a new hope, a different future, even if he could not know what that future might be. In this case, Matthew responded to Jesus' call and followed, but not only that, he threw a party, where Jesus dined with others just like Matthew, sinners and tax collectors. It is a time for rejoicing and inviting. It is time to be in community. And the disciples that have been called thus far are questioned by the Pharisees as they ask, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (v11)

Now it would be easy to judge the Pharisees and think that they are not being God's people. But how many of us would wonder the same thing given the circumstances. Why

hang out with ungodly people? It is like you are dragging God's good name through the mud. But Jesus comes responding to needs and restoring people to wholeness and community. That is what he does.

The question itself is not a problem. At this time in our church's history we are practicing asking "why?" in any number of circumstances. Why do we worship as we do? Why do we do things as we do? It is not so that we get rid of everything, but it is so that we can articulate a particular way of being and doing as valuable and continue doing it or maybe look at changing what has become common practice in our relationships with one another and in community.

In the next vignette, a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before Jesus saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." (v18) Responding is part of the relationship with Jesus, it is a first step. In this case the man responds to what he knows of Jesus and taking a risk, likely out of desperation, he goes to Jesus. Jesus too responds, by going to the child, restoring her life and restoring her to her father. The risk is that approaching Jesus is dangerous. The rulers of the synagogue hold him in suspicion as do the Roman authorities. Still the life of his daughter is worth the risk for the leader.

What is not so evident, given the time we live in, is that children were mere possessions. They had no rights and privileges. Many children died young and girls were considered lower than boys. The fact that this story is about a child, about a girl, and that Jesus responds to that is breaking more barriers and speaks loudly to the value of the life of this child and all children.

Though we are not told of the father and family's reaction to the life-giving action of Jesus we can imagine, given the risk taken, and the decision of Jesus to respond, that there was rejoicing in the home. Certainly, report of this resurrection experience spread throughout the district. (v26).

As Jesus is dining and dealing with the questions of the Pharisees, then giving attention to the ruler of the synagogue, getting up to leave to go to his home, another person in need, a woman whose bleeding causes her to be unclean, well, she in desperate faith said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." (v21) One must understand that her bleeding separated her from community. Her bleeding made it so no one could touch her without becoming unclean as well, and there were religious laws about such things, so who would risk it.

And women were chattel; possessions a little ahead of children on the societal ladder rung. Men certainly did not stop to talk to a woman or heed their need and not in public. The woman responded to Jesus' presence in hope of healing, and Jesus responded to her seed of faith with the words, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed.

Again, though there is no party, you can bet the freedom the woman experiences is life changing and she is doing a happy dance even if only she knows it.

I also love the connection between Jesus calling the woman, “daughter” and the fact that he is on his way to restore another’s daughter. People to this day do not realize the impact Christianity has had on empowering women. In churches where women are still not given full rights to be in positions of decision making and preaching, looking at the value Jesus placed on women in his life and ministry, compared to the society in which he lived, could provide the church and the world with a different perspective.

Jesus responded to people and people responded to Jesus. Lives were restored, people impacted, and it did not matter if it was a tax collector who ate with sinners and was a sinner himself, a ruler and leader, a child, or a woman in need of hope and help. Being in relationship with Jesus changes things, restores people and communities to the hope of God for the world. A world where the most vulnerable and the outcast, the rich and powerful, all know the love of God and the restoring touch of the Jesus.

In our time that love and restoration is given to us in the power of the Holy Spirit and it is for us to be the touch that changes individual lives and the community, maybe even providing a ripple effect into the broader world.

And each time a life is changed we rejoice! We respond, we restore, we rejoice! If we are not impacting lives, lives of those who are struggling with poverty, illness, homelessness, hunger, impacting the lives of those making wrong choices, grieving, and providing a space in our hearts and lives for them, then we are missing out on the call on the church and on us as individuals to be the touch of Jesus, the love of God, and the witness to the hope of being restored to relationship with God and others.

We are people who are called to respond, restore, and rejoice. In Christ, with Christ and through Christ. May we do it boldly, even if it with some fear and trepidation, yet trusting that God’s got this and we rejoice in the opportunity to be God’s people in the world.

## **Prayers of the People**

God of our past and our future,  
We come before you with grateful hearts,  
trusting that you walk with us through all the times of our lives.  
You create a future for us,  
calling each of us to use our individual abilities and opportunities  
to make a difference.  
Thank you that we all have a place and a purpose in your world.  
Guide all who are graduating this year to listen for your call  
and find their true path.

Hear us now as we pray for the world in its deep and diverse needs:

We pray today for those who face danger and despair in these times:  
We remember before you those living with hunger,

and all those caught up in unrest and violence beyond their control.

We pray for all those working to relieve suffering in these lives  
and bring justice and peace.

We pray for all those facing fear or frustration,  
wrestling with sorrow or discouragement in any area of their lives:

For those who live with illness or pain....

For those bearing up with chronic conditions or disability....

For those who know the grief and change of bereavement....

And we pray for all those who work to bring healing and comfort  
and agencies which offer support and care to those who suffer.

We pray for all who feel helpless or hopeless in this present time:

For those around us facing unemployment, struggling to make ends meet...

For those caught up in the pain of misunderstanding or broken relationships...

And for those working through situations of conflict at home or at work...

We pray for all who offer guidance and support in the midst of such difficulties  
and for those who have skills in reconciliation or mediation.

God of healing and hope,

Guide our congregation to engage each day with faithfulness.

Where we need correction, show us a new way;

where we need love and encouragement, inspire to us.

Unite us as we travel into the future you are creating for us as followers of Jesus,  
as we pray the words he taught us:

## 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, who knows our needs and our wants,  
gives us all we have and invites us to give in gratitude and joy  
so that we can bless others as we have been blessed.

Let us worship God through our offerings, in thankfulness and love.

*Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year A, Volume 2 © 2014 Westminster John Knox Press*

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>

1. Praise the Lord with the sound of trumpet,  
praise the Lord with the harp and lute,  
praise the Lord with the gentle-sounding flute.  
Praise the Lord in the field and forest,  
praise the Lord in the city square,  
praise the Lord anytime and anywhere.  
Praise the Lord in the wind and sunshine,  
praise the Lord in the dark of night,  
praise the Lord in the rain or snow or in the morning light.  
Praise the Lord in the deepest valley,  
praise the Lord on the highest hill,  
praise the Lord; never let your voice be still.
2. Praise the Lord with the crashing cymbal,  
praise the Lord with the pipe and string,  
praise the Lord with the joyful songs you sing.  
Praise the Lord on a weekday morning,  
praise the Lord on a Sunday noon,  
praise the Lord by the light of sun or moon.  
Praise the Lord in the time of sorrow,  
praise the Lord in the time of joy,  
praise the Lord every moment;  
nothing let your praise destroy.  
Praise the Lord in the peace and quiet,  
praise the Lord in your work and play,  
praise the Lord everywhere in every way.

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## **Benediction**

Go in faith into whatever the week ahead may hold,  
sure that Christ walks with you.  
And may the God who made us,  
the Christ who mends us,  
and the Spirit who gives us life  
bring you joy and peace, now and always.

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