

Call to Worship

God our Creator,
we call You Father, Mother, Author of Life:

Draw us closer to You, O God.

Christ our Savior,
we call You the Son, the Messiah, the One who Saves:

Draw us closer to You, O God.

Holy Spirit,
we call You the Advocate, the Inspirer, Breath and Wind of God:

Draw us closer to You, O God.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty;
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory:

Draw us closer to You, O God.

**Draw us in, Spirit, Christ and Creator,
that we might journey with You more fully and deeply.**

Rev Mindi's [Rev-o-lution](#) blog. [re:Worship: Trinity Sunday \(re-worship.blogspot.com\)](http://re-worship.blogspot.com)

Hymn

Lord, the light of your love is shining

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1. Lord, the light of your love is shining
in the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us.
Set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me; shine on me.

Refrain

*Shine, Jesus, shine;
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow;
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light!*

2. Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance;
by your blood I may enter your brightness.
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me; shine on me.

Refrain

3. As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory;
mirrored here may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me; shine on me.

Refrain

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Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Mysterious God

power behind all we see, grace beyond all we know, love before all we meet,
we cannot comprehend your majesty; we only know your presence in our lives:
you, who knew us before we were born
you, who will cradle us after our last breath...

We cannot encompass your glory, instead we marvel at all the works your hand
has made and we worship and adore you.

It seems too good to be true that you would care for mere mortals like us...
in our messy lives, often caught-up in trivialities, that you would mould us in your
own image, social creatures with a divine spark...

So good, we'd rather not believe: rather not see your image in those around us
crying out for love and companionship, rather not see your wisdom underpinning
creation, groaning at our wanton waste and exploitation.

God above all, help us with our unbelief, our incredulity,
our self-preserving acts which isolate and harm...

Pour mercy into our hearts and souls giving us eyes to see and ears to hear
your gift in every person, every place, every moment;

For your greatness is seen in all the world: may our words and actions be our praise
of you reaching up and out into your Kingdom, made real for us in the person of
Jesus who taught us so much including how to pray:

~ by Rev. Fiona J. Reynolds, Minister, Monifieth Parish Church in Scotland
[re:Worship: Trinity Sunday \(re-worship.blogspot.com\)](http://re:Worship: Trinity Sunday (re-worship.blogspot.com))

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

Assurance of Forgiveness

The Apostle Paul reminds us that from now on we regard no one from a human point of view. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. Everything old has passed

away. See, everything has become new! Thanks be to God that we can all make a new start through God's gift of forgiveness and peace!

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 1st Sunday after Pentecost. June 4, 2023. Year A.

Scripture Readings

❖ Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24

- ¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
- ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
- ³ **You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.**
- ⁴ **Even before a word is on my tongue,
O LORD, you know it completely.**
- ⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ **Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.**
- ⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
- ⁸ **If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**
- ⁹ **If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,**
- ¹⁰ **even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.**
- ¹¹ If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night',
- ¹² **even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**
- ¹³ For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ **I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**
- ¹⁶ **Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.**
- ¹⁷ How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!

How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ **I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.**

²³ **Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.**

²⁴ **See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.**

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❖ 1 John 4:7-16

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ⁹God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

¹³ By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. ¹⁵God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. ¹⁶So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

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Message God's love includes everyone

He came into the world a few days earlier than anticipated. The expectant mother had been admitted to the hospital as a precautionary measure. Dr. Smilie (yes that was his name) had even said to the mother as he left for a few days away, "Don't have this baby while I am gone. I want to deliver the child." But it was 10 o'clock at night and the baby didn't seem to care that the doctor was away for a few days and daddy would need to be roused from his sleep at home in order to quickly get to the hospital. Mom's water had broke and baby was on the way! A few short hours later, the parent's first son was born as daybreak was happening. Dr. Happy, the on call doctor (and yes that was his name) was holding the baby and sharing the news that it was a boy!

Mom and Dad were just pleased that the little one had all his appendages and was healthy given that he had chosen to show up without regard for the circumstances and a little early at that. A couple of years later, a baby girl came with her own story of showing up on her own terms and a dad with a very numb hand that had supported the mom.

She would not let him move it from between the bed and her back until after she given birth to the child. And the final child also entering the world without regard for timing and the fact that the doctor was not going to have time to get there before baby showed up. The delivery room was not going to be used as the child decided that the world needed him now!

And yes, these are partial stories of the births of our three children, but my mom and dad had a story for me and each one of my siblings as each of us entered the world on our own terms. You may recall for yourselves either the birth of children and grandchildren, or the story of your own birth.

I remember speaking to an elderly couple when I first arrived in Thunder Bay. Visiting their home there were pictures all around their living room of great-grandchildren. Their words were that grandchildren were wonderful, but it was in great-grandchildren that you knew that something of you would continue in the world long after one had passed on.

When I think of pregnancy and birthing it is Psalm 139 that for me is so poignant, at verse 13 we hear, “For it was you who formed by inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made...My frame was not hidden from you when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.”

To be fearfully made is not about being fearful or afraid, it is more about being reverently made. One writer said it “encompasses a larger meaning of awe, reverent respect, and honor. It appears in the Hebrew Bible as a synonym for “love” (*’ahab*, Deuteronomy 10:12); “cling to” (*dabaq*, Deuteronomy 10:20); and “serve” (*’abad*, Deuteronomy 6:13; Joshua 24:14).”¹ Think about it, you... everyone of you, is reverently made.

The writer goes on to say, “wonderfully” comes from the verbal root *pala’*, which means to be different, striking, remarkable – outside of the power of human comprehension.”²

I think these are important things to ponder as Canada celebrate Pride month. It is a time to consider the generous, creative, and beautiful diversity of humanity. We live in a time that has come to understand that people are complex, from our cultures, to our skin tones, to our abilities. We have come to understand that human beings are created more on a continuum rather than as polar opposites. It is here that Psalm 139 so beautifully affirms the intimacy of God at work in the forming of each and every individual.

We also live in a time and a world where not everyone is accepting of the diversity of God’s creation, including the diversity of humanity. It is easy for anyone of us to want to hide who we are from ourselves, from others, and from God. We are layered with guilt

¹ [Nancy deClaisé-Walford](#)

[Commentary on Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#). Accessed June 1, 2023

² Ibid.

and expectations, challenges, and desires. But all of this is laid bare before God. The middle of this Psalm speaks to the complexity of being human and the darkness that can be a part of our existence. Still the Psalmist asks, “Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?”

In her commentary on this Psalm, Nancy deClaisse-Walford share the following,

In a book titled Tales of the Hasadim, Martin Buber, an early twentieth-century Jewish philosopher, offered these words concerning the relationship between God and humankind:

Where I wander – You!
Where I ponder – You!
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!

When I am gladdened – You!
When I am saddened – You!
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!

Sky is You, Earth is You!
You above! You below!
In every trend, at every end,
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!³

There is no getting away from God, which can be both beautiful and frightening, even exasperating. When we wish to be unknown, hidden, that just cannot be. The God of love never lets us go. We are always God’s creation, God’s children, and it doesn’t matter how you identify yourself, what you think of yourself, who you are. God shows up. God is present and with us. God’s love includes everyone.

In the reading from 1 John, we hear about the God of love, with the words, “Beloved... [Did you hear that? You are Beloved] ...Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”(v7-8) I encourage you to reflect on that whole scripture throughout the week. There is no defining who God loves, each of us is beloved. Each of us created in love and because of love. This is a love that is about God and comes from God. This is not about the circumstances into which you were born. This is a love that surpasses anything you may have experienced from another human being.

This love is for all. It includes everyone. Still today we consider those who are particularly at risk, hated even by some. Those who do not fit gender moulds we have created. Those who have struggled to love themselves because of the judgement and lack of regard

³ Ibid.

from loved ones and society. Today we choose to love. We chose to bring wholeness and healing to those who have been harmed.

Last year the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada adopted a confession to God and to LGBTQI people.

Hear the preamble on the meaning of Confession as found on the PCC website.

The Meaning of Confession

This confession is addressed to God and to each other in the presence of the whole community of believers. It presupposes the existence of a breach, or a falling short, that runs contrary to God's desire for how people live with and treat each other. It calls the church: to acknowledge harms done; to seek forgiveness from God and those who have been harmed; to stop causing harm; to repent of wrongdoing; and to begin a new journey of reparation, restoration, and reconciliation within the community of believers.

The following is Our Confession, the confession of people of the Presbyterian Church in Canada to God and LGBTQI people

All: Let us pray.

One: In response to the Holy Spirit's action in its midst
The Presbyterian Church in Canada comes before God
in the presence of one another
to confess its sins to God, and to LGBTQI people.
The church has wounded many
through its practices of exclusion and hurtful treatment.
The church seeks your forgiveness, O God,
and the forgiveness of all whom we have harmed.

All: We offer this confession in humility, desiring to go a new way.

One: Creating and Covenanting God,
you created us in your own image.
In Christ, you call us to be a welcoming and nurturing community,
to love one another as Christ has loved us.
Yet we have ostracized and excluded LGBTQI people
from full life within the body of Christ.
We have often turned the courts of the church into places

where those who are not straight or cisgender are attacked, shunned and belittled.

We confess that we have failed to love one another as Christ commanded us and we have disrupted our covenantal relationship with you.

All: For these wrongful and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: The church has enacted policies and adopted customs that have dehumanized and harmed LGBTQI people. In doing so the church has led many people to believe they have to choose between embracing their sexuality and gender identity or being a part of the church.

All: For these wrongful and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: The church has often perpetuated harmful lies that LGBTQI people are dangerous and abusive. The resulting stigma fosters an environment where gifted people are discouraged and excluded from providing leadership in the church. The church's prejudice contributes to hatred and neglect of LGBTQI people making them targets for physical, spiritual and emotional violence.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: The church has no higher calling than to offer the worship that belongs to God. In worship, we find strength and hope for proclaiming God's reign in the world. Yet often our language in worship is not inclusive and renders many people and their families invisible. This makes worship a wounding and alienating experience.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, the church asks forgiveness.

One: The church has been dismissive of and indifferent to LGBTQI people when they have named the harm the church has caused to their mental, physical and spiritual well-being.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: O God of justice and mercy,
you have called us to love and nurture the vulnerable among us,
yet we have not been loving and supportive role models
to young LGBTQI people.
We have failed to listen to their cries for healthy pastoral support.
Our actions have abandoned them to a future
that often includes internalized homophobia, self-loathing, depression,
substance abuse, self-harm, homelessness, and suicide.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness

One: In this church called home,
some LGBTQI people still long
for the love and security of home.
In this church called home,
some of us have witnessed
demeaning conversations and attitudes
that belittle LGBTQI people.
Yet we choose to be silent in the face of such injustices,
becoming complicit in the resulting oppression.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: Creating God,
your creation bears witness
to the vastness of your diversity.
In carrying out the mission entrusted to it,
the church has embraced ideologies and narratives
that have normalized the exclusion
of those it deems different.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: To those of you whom we have harmed
by our unloving and unjust actions,
we confess that we have failed you.
We acknowledge that the church has wounded you deeply.

All: In humility and with sorrow, we ask for your forgiveness.

One: Come Holy Spirit come.
Be present in this time of silence.

(Hold a moment of silence)

One: God of justice and mercy,
we praise you for the presence of the Holy Spirit
prompting us to work
purposefully and compassionately,
to find new and just ways
of living out that larger story
of loving God and neighbour.
Help us to overcome
the pride that covers up wrongdoings,
the indifference that stands in the way of feeling,
and the fear that stalls change.

All: God of justice and mercy, we turn to you.
Only you can help us to do this hard work
of repairing, restoring, reconciling and healing.
Fill us with courage and hope
as we commit to working
for the restoration of your church and
our relationship with one another, and
for the collective flourishing of all people
for your glory.

All: Amen

Invitation to the offering

Today we spoke about Pride, but it is also Trinity Sunday which proclaims the
outpouring of love within God's own being, for God's very nature is love.
May our gifts offer an outpouring of our love for God
and our willingness to put that love into action in God's world.
We gather our gifts together
and present them as an offering of gratitude and praise.

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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>

1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not; thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain

*Great is thy faithfulness;
great is thy faithfulness;
morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in eloquent witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Refrain

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow:
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain

"Great is thy faithfulness," words by Thomas O. Chrisholm and Music by William M. Runyan
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Benediction

May the holy wisdom of God
Guard your ways and guide your paths
May the living truth of God
Enlighten your hearts and open your minds
And may the living Spirit of God
Give you life, and life to the full!

~ Literature & Liturgy. [https://jesusscribbles.wordpress.com/
re:Worship: Trinity Sunday \(re-worship.blogspot.com\)](https://jesusscribbles.wordpress.com/re:Worship:TrinitySunday(re-worship.blogspot.com))