

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

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

10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – August 6, 2023

### Call to Worship

We gather to affirm the warmth of our faith, giving thanks...

**For the connectedness that forms whenever Christ convenes us,  
for the caring that marks us as a church community.**

We gather to receive the nourishment of our faith, giving thanks...

**For the prayers that strengthen our spirits,  
for the energizing power that Word and sacrament release within us.**

We gather to celebrate the texture of our faith, giving thanks...

**For the human diversity that characterizes us as a family,  
for the multiple ministries that call us into God's service.**

**We give heartfelt thanks for a faith to savor and to share.**

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### Hymn

*All who hunger, gather gladly*

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1. All who hunger, gather gladly;  
holy manna is our bread.  
Come from wilderness and wandering.  
Here, in truth, we will be fed.  
You that yearn for days of fullness,  
all around us in our food.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.
2. All who hunger, never strangers,  
seeker, be a welcome guest.  
Come from restlessness and roaming.  
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.  
We that once were lost and scattered  
in communion's love have stood.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.
3. All who hunger, sing together;  
Jesus Christ is living bread.  
Come from loneliness and longing.  
Here, in peace, we have been led.  
Blest are those who from this table  
live their days in gratitude.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.

"All who hunger, gather gladly," words by Sylvia G. Dunstan ©1991 GIA Publications, Inc.  
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### Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Mysterious and merciful God,  
we praise you for all the ways you offer us abundant life.  
When the sun rises and the earth blooms around us,  
we are thankful for your gift of a new day.  
When evening falls and we find ourselves in a lonely place,

we count on your presence for comfort.

For the times you show us the way and give us guidance, we praise you.

For the healing you offer when we are broken and hurting, we rejoice.

Your grace satisfies us in every situation, and so we worship you

for you are the Source of life and love, comfort and courage day by day by day.

Receive our prayers and praise, O God,

this day and every day, now and always.

**Gracious and merciful God,**

**In Jesus you show us the way of compassion and forgiveness,**

**yet we neglect the suffering of others.**

**We blame and judge each other**

**in the moments you call us to act with kindness and mercy.**

**Free us from greed and from grievance.**

**Open our hearts so that we may embody Jesus' teachings**

**and walk in his way. Amen.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 10th Sunday after Pentecost. August 6, 2023. Year A.

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

Out of an abundance of grace, love, and mercy, God forgives you.

Accept the peace that this brings in hope and faith. Amen.

[6th August, 10th Sunday after Pentecost | The Church of Scotland](#)

## **Scripture Reading Matthew 14:13-21**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup>When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' <sup>17</sup>They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' <sup>18</sup>And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

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## **Message Compassion**

When you hear the stories of Jesus do you consider his emotions? Or is Jesus just a character in a story for you who doesn't have much to offer by way of his emotions?

Today's reading begins with, "Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself." (v13) What Jesus had heard was that the man who was a prophet before him, the one who had baptized Jesus, John the Baptizer, had been beheaded at the request of a dancing girl with a spiteful mother and an acquiescent ruler. So, when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from Nazareth, his hometown, where he had also been rejected, because who would listen to a carpenter's son anyway when it came to things of learning regarding God? (Matthew 13:54-58)

Jesus was grieving. Who wouldn't be hurting when those you know and love don't accept you for who you are? When people take offense at you? Then the next thing you have to deal with is the death of someone you care about, someone you have a connection with. Jesus was fully human while being at the same time fully God's son. Being fully human meant and means that he had emotions. Jesus could be hurt. He could grieve. It is in part why we can trust Jesus with all that we bring to him. He gets it, and because of that, we can trust that God gets it.

In the story, Jesus goes away from everyone to be by himself, to work through the emotions but more so to be with God. He went to a deserted place. It was his practice to go and pray. But, by this time in Jesus ministry, the crowds have heard too much, maybe seen too much and they follow Jesus on foot from the towns. Jesus saw the great crowd. He saw their brokenness and he had compassion for them. Jesus had compassion for them. With all that he was dealing with he could see the need of others and turned to healing their sick.

Rejection, grief, compassion. Jesus felt things. All this is to say that if you only understand God to be judgmental and angry, unchangeable and aloof, then you need to spend some time with Jesus. Jesus is God with us. God made flesh, and Jesus knew pain, loss, hurt, and loved people anyway – had compassion for all within the great crowd that was before him that day.

The people have hung around so long that the dinner hour is fast approaching and likely people's bellies are beginning to rumble, that is if they were not hungry already. This was a crowd of people who would not have known abundance when it comes to food. It is difficult for many of us to understand true hunger. We get a little rumble in our tummy and we can reach for food or go through a drive thru. Food is as available to us whenever we want it. We eat until we are full most every day. On the other hand, this was a people whose pantries would not be overflowing, there was no restaurant nearby and even if there had been they would not have been able to afford to eat there.

The disciples realizing the situation strongly suggest, maybe even command Jesus to send the crowds away, as there is no way there is enough among them to feed everyone. Even if others gave what they might have stashed in their pockets there was no way that, plus five loaves of bread and two fish, would go very far. Out in this deserted place there was no provision for this situation.

Jesus does not say to them, “You are right.” Rather he says to the disciples, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” (v16) Then he takes the loaves and fish and orders the crowds to sit down on the grass. Not sure if everyone at the back could hear him or even see him. Some were likely just doing what everyone else was doing and wondering what was going on up there. Still, Jesus took the loaves and fishes and looking up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces.” (v19-20).

I am not here to explain to you the one miracle that has been described in all four gospels. Each account with its own perspective. I cannot explain a miracle. What I can tell you is that Jesus worked with what was there. In a place that seemed devoid of resources, in Jesus...who looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds...those present had enough. They had enough and there were leftovers.

There in a wilderness place, where food was scarce and the workers few, where the need appeared greater than could be addressed. Jesus made something happen. What you may have missed is that Jesus did not give them the miracle, he gave them blessed and broken food, and it was as the disciples moved through the crowd that somehow there was enough and more. The disciples played a role in this work. Jesus had said to them earlier, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” (v16) And he didn't waver from that.

It can make one wonder what is possible in our lives, in the life of the church. Just when we think we have given all we can, when there is nothing more to do, when we are ready to give up, that is when Jesus, when God, enters into the unexpected, into what seems to be a “not possible moment” and there is abundance. It may not be about physical food, though one cannot ignore the great cry and need for the basics of life by so many in our community, country and world. Feeding people, housing people, making sure that they have clothing is about human dignity and we are all called to participate in that.

God entering into the unexpected and seemingly impossible moments is about trust, faith, provision, and the compassion of a loving God who cares deeply for the wellbeing of all. Not just those who happen to have made a living for themselves, but God who cares about the wellbeing of all so that all are filled, physically and emotionally, surrounded by caring and compassionate community.

This is about God's capacity, not our limitations. So often we are tempted to think that there is not enough, that we are not enough. When I was approached by the Interim-Moderator of St Andrew's back in 2013 about considering coming to this congregation, I thought to myself, I am not enough to take this on. This big building in the city's downtown core, with all that brings. A congregation that had only had male ministers and seasoned longstanding ministers at that. And here I was a new graduate who would be very different from what had been the legacy of this church. What did I have to offer? I felt

very inadequate. A wise supervisor was working with me at the time at Sunnybrook Health Center and the day before I was to board the plane to do an interview here and preach at Lakeview on a Sunday morning so that the Search Committee could hear me, the supervisor looked at me and knowing my concerns said, "Joyce, you are enough."

Without those words going through my head throughout the process I don't believe I would have come to St. Andrew's here in Thunder Bay. This was not the ministry I thought I was equipped to do. Thing is, I came to realize and to know that this is God's ministry, not mine. I have my part to play, but each of you did and does too! Together we are called to God's work in the world.

It comes down to a few things, but one is discerning what can happen from God's perspective. We can never dream as big as God can do. Everything needed is present whether in the church or in our own lives. There is an abundance in the loaves and fish.

Though the crowd may not have truly comprehended what they were a part of...though the disciples may not have truly understood what was going on...all experienced abundance, they experienced Jesus' compassion and God's power.

Trust that what you have to offer is enough and when given in faith, whether it be time, energy, knowledge, talents, and more, God can take that, can take you, and particularly when brought together with the time, energy, knowledge, talents and more of what others offer, an abundance of care, compassion, resources and transformation can come from that.

I think of the hymn, Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. This is one of the stories that tells of Jesus love and compassion who, as God made flesh, is the story of God's love and compassion.

May our lives reflect that love and compassion, along with offering what we have to give of ourselves and from our lives, so that God's abundance flows from us to the world. In the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

O God, we give you thanks for your goodness  
in the changing times of our lives.  
For every occasion you have surprised us with a blessing,  
we give you thanks  
in the pressures of this present moment,  
we are grateful for the strength and courage we find,  
knowing you are right beside us.  
Give us wisdom and patience  
to face a future filled with many questions and challenges.  
Help us trust in your goodness  
even when we wrestle with what comes next.

Aware of our own needs and the great need around us,  
we remember Christ's compassion  
and offer our prayers for the world, seeking your guidance  
so that we may do our part to share comfort, healing, and hope.

We pray for those who are hungry or homeless in these challenging times,  
and all those feeling the stress of rising prices.

Give those with more resources the confidence to share generously.

We pray for those who have lost everything in wild fire or flooding this year,  
and for growers facing drought, shortage of workers and uncertain markets.

Guide the leaders in our communities and our nation  
as they face these complicated problems.

Give them wisdom and courage to work together  
to make decisions for the wellbeing of the most vulnerable.

We pray for all who are sick or in pain, those waiting for diagnosis or treatment,  
and all who face chronic health challenges.

Equip those who offer health care to manage the demands they face  
to provide care in timely ways.

Bring healing in body, mind, and spirit to all who struggle.

We pray for those who offer hospitality to others this summer  
in their homes and workplaces, in their churches and communities.

Keep us alert to the needs of visitors and strangers  
and open our hearts so that your goodness will touch those we meet.

Lord Jesus Christ, you walk with us through all the days of challenge and  
celebration.

Draw near to all who face unexpected sorrow this summer  
and join with those who celebrate happy occasions, too.

Be our Bread for the journey to sustain us and encourage us,  
whatever the days ahead holds for us.

And so we pray together the words you 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**

**On our own what we have to give doesn't amount to much in the light of all God have given to us and in the face of so much need. Put together as a community**

**of faith, what we offer God here in love becomes more, not simply added together, but somehow multiplied in its usefulness. May God bless our gifts and just as it was with the loaves and fishes, may there is enough for all.**

~ Adapted from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand website. <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/>

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**

*Come, know my joy, the Maker says*

**788**

1. "Come, know my joy," the Maker says  
and pours out works of power  
that sear the sense, defy the mind  
and fill the soul with awe,  
and we with open mouth receive  
God's gifts with infant need,  
And, sight unfocussed, scarce perceive  
Loves presence as we feed.
2. The feast we join is long begun;  
God bids us welcome here  
to name and use the sovereign gifts  
within our human care.  
With God's own joy some seem to soar,  
a fierce and holy flame;  
some gifts are thorns we scarce endure  
to touch, or face, or name.
3. "Come, seek my face," the Giver says,  
"with heart and soul and strength;  
let fear give way to love; come, step  
upon the waves of faith."  
Dear Giver, Gift, we seek your face:  
you share our thorn, our scar.  
We learn your joy when by your grace  
we share the gift we are.
4. "Come, learn of me," the Servant says  
and multiplies a feast  
of loaves and fish, of bread and wine,  
transforming every guest.  
"Come," says the Host, "from west to east  
bring gifts to share—come, eat! —  
none lost or wasted when God's feast  
of joy will be complete."

"Come, know my joy, the Maker says" words by Andrew Donaldson  
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**Benediction**

**Into a world of plenty, we go to speak charity,  
Into a world of pain, we go to speak healing,  
Into a world of hunger, we go to feed,  
Into a world of need,  
we go to bring the good news and abundance of our Saviour  
so we go now,**

and the blessing of God almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
descend upon you, and rest with you  
today and forever more.

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