

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay
<http://standrewspres-tbay.ca> - Minister: Rev. Joyce Yanishewski
15th Sunday after Pentecost - September 10, 2023

Call to Worship (based on Romans 13: 8-14 and Matthew 18: 15-20)

People of God, open your eyes!
Look around!
The presence of our Lord Jesus Christ is here—
among us and within us.
God's salvation is close at hand—nearer than you know.
So open your hearts and minds to the Spirit,
and let's worship God together!

[re:Worship: Call to Worship: Open Your Eyes! \(re-worship.blogspot.com\)](http://re-worship.blogspot.com)

Hymn

Arise, your light is come

712

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Arise, your light is come!
The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God
which shines on you today. | 2. Arise, your light is come!
Fling wide the prison door;
proclaim the captive's liberty,
good tidings to the poor. |
| 3. Arise, your light is come!
All you in sorrow born,
bind up the broken-hearted ones
and comfort those who mourn. | 4. Arise, your light is come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing;
God's power will make us strong. |

Words: Ruth Duck - ©1992 GIA Publications, Inc.
All rights reserved. Annual License with podcasting OneLicense.net A-723877
Music: public domain

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of grace and glory,
Your creative power is beyond imagining.
Your love is wider than the whole universe;
your mercy reached beyond the highest heavens;
your wisdom lies deeper than the fathoms of the sea.
Maker of all things, you became one of us in Jesus Christ,
walking the roads we take each day.
Through your Spirit, you are present with us
in every time and place, to comfort and challenge us.
We worship you, Creator, Christ, and Spirit,
and will live to bring you glory, now and always.

**God of majesty and mercy,
although Christ offers us peace, we confess we are a people divided.
We harbour fears and jealousy which set neighbour against neighbour,
nation against nation. We pursue profit and pleasures which harm creation**

**and the wellbeing of less privileged peoples.
Have mercy upon us, O God.
Set us free from our old ways to serve you
as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ. Amen.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 15th Sunday after Pentecost. September 10, 2023. Year A.

Assurance of Forgiveness

The Apostle Paul challenges us to lay aside actions and deeds that distance us from God and one another and to put on the armour of light.

Know that you are forgiven by God's grace.

So walk in God's mercy.

Be at peace with God, with yourself and with each other.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 15th Sunday after Pentecost. September 10, 2023. Year A.

Scripture Reading Romans 13:8-14

⁸⁻¹⁰ Don't run up debts, except for the huge debt of love you owe each other. When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along. The law code—don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of—finally adds up to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*.

¹¹⁻¹⁴ But make sure that you don't get so absorbed and exhausted in taking care of all your day-by-day obligations that you lose track of the time and doze off, oblivious to God. The night is about over, dawn is about to break. Be up and awake to what God is doing! God is putting the finishing touches on the salvation work he began when we first believed. We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

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

May the Lord bless to our understanding this word from the Lord

Message Who are you wearing?

The limousine pulls up to the red carpet, the driver gets out and opens the back door, the anticipation builds and a person of fame emerges from the darkness into the light of cameras flashing and the waiting red carpet commentator ready to get in a quick interview before the celebrity moves on. One of the first asks is "Who are you wearing?" The answers come, Ralph Laurne, Luca Faloni, the bag is Gucci, Louis Vuitton. The next days after a gala, the social media reporters are all over the conversation of who was best dressed and worst dressed.

More recently with the coronation of the king one of the important conversations for reporters was who was wearing which designer's clothing. Again, the answer to the question "Who are you wearing?" seems to be front and center. I googled to find out what different people were wearing, as I am not one to follow that kind of thing and discovered a website that answers the question of what and who Kate Middleton is wearing on any particular day.

I understand the importance of this for designers. To have stars and royalty wearing your clothing can make a huge difference in popularity and in sales. Still in my ordinary day, I may get a comment about what I am wearing, usually good comments as I am pretty sure when I get it wrong people just keep that to themselves or share with others, but no one ever asks me "who am I wearing?"

In the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, or NRSV for short, in Romans the Apostle Paul writes, "put on the armour of light" (v12) and just a few lines after writes it more succinctly, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." (v14). Eugene Peterson uses "Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!"

This is not the only place in the scriptures that these or similar words are used. In Galatians 3:27-28 we hear, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have *clothed yourselves with Christ*. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Then again in Colossians 3:9-12 it is written,

Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.¹

This passage from Colossians helps us get to what it means to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, or put the way we heard it in The Message, dress ourselves in Christ. To sum it up in one word would be to clothe ourselves in love - top to bottom. Paul says, "When you love others, you complete what the law has been after all along." The law being what we know as the Ten Commandments. Paul shares a few of those commandments,

...don't sleep with another person's spouse, don't take someone's life, don't take what isn't yours, don't always be wanting what you don't have, and any other "don't" you can think of. [Which] finally adds up

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org>

to this: Love other people as well as you do yourself. You can't go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is *love*.²

So basically, all you need is love. But to clothe oneself in Christ means that people can visibly see how you love. It is not hidden. It is as recognizable as designer clothing.

There have been a few people I have met in my lifetime who I could see were clothed in love. Just being in their presence it was as if love surrounded them. You couldn't help but see it. Feel it. One of the first people I remember this of was a good friend of my mother's. Though very much my senior, I loved being with the woman whose love and faith was as much of who she was as the clothes she had chosen to wear for the day. I made opportunities to sit with her over a cup of tea.

Another was a retired minister of the PCC, who had moved to my small community in Northern Alberta. I relished in the times when I got to sit next to him at coffee hour after church or visit in his home. Something about his presence just exuded love, as if he not only dressed in it in the morning, but wore pajamas of love, it so permeated his being. The same could be said of a missionary to India of the PCC who died this year, Pauline Brown. Our home was never so blessed as when we hosted her overnight. Just being in the same room with her was to know love and blessing.

The words that one might use to describe someone dressed in Christ would be more about how they are in the world. People dressed in Christ are compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, and patient as described in Colossians. Maybe this other familiar passage speaks to you from Galatians in which the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Again, love pretty much sums this up. And to get up and get dressed with this kind of attitude, this kind of meaning and purpose, might take practice, and even if you are someone who is like this most of the time, all of us have days that it feels like we got out of the wrong side of the bed. Yet, when we call ourselves Christians, or followers of Christ, we are to make a conscious decision to love as it is love that is the clothing of Christ.

When you put on this clothing you don't take it off mid-day as you might a jacket that has become too warm in the mid-day sun. This outfit of love is to last you the day no matter who you encounter. Note, this is not to say you take abuse or put yourself in a situation that you know will be harmful to you, at least not without the appropriate supports. What it does mean is that when you look at someone whether it be your spouse, your child, parent, or friend, when you look at the cashier, the drive-through clerk, the doctor or nurse, the custodian, the teacher, the person bruised and battered coming toward you

² [The Message \(MSG\)](#) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

on the street, it means you see them and you see in them Christ. Then you love them as Christ loves.

That I know is a big ask, a tall order, maybe a difficult task, but it is what being dressed in Christ is about. It is about seeing the other, friend, family, or foe, seeing them as Christ see them – as children of God. Some may be rough around the edges, some more elegant, but all are human. As some say, we all have to take down our pants to go to the bathroom. Well my uncles would be more indelicate in saying that, but you know what I am getting at.

Hearing from The Message again,

We can't afford to waste a minute, must not squander these precious daylight hours in frivolity and indulgence, in sleeping around and dissipation, in bickering and grabbing everything in sight. Get out of bed and get dressed! Don't loiter and linger, waiting until the very last minute. Dress yourselves in Christ, and be up and about!

Get up, get dressed, show up. Put on Christ, which is to clothe yourself with love and then get out there and love others. If you can't leave your room, know that you can love those who enter into your space to care for your needs and love them. If you can go wherever you wish, show up with love as your foundational garments, and love so bright that it becomes a light in the darkness of this world.

Maybe this quote attributed to St. Patrick will help you dress yourself in Christ each day. Think of these words as putting on the clothing of Christ.

“Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

May the love of God, permeate your life, your being so deeply, that all will recognize who you are wearing. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of love,
Creator of heaven and earth,
we are filled with gratitude for the blessings of this life.
For making us in your image to love and care for one another,
we give you thanks.
For the gift of Christ, who redeems and guides us,
and who gives us a pattern for everyday living, we praise you.
For the work of the Spirit, who works in us, through us and beyond us,
We praise you.
Hear us now as we pray for situations where your love and grace are sorely
needed:.

We pray for the church in this place and around the world,
facing so many new challenges to respond to so many enduring needs...

We pray for this beautiful planet, the fragile home we share with all living things...

For children and youth who worry about the future of the planet and their place in
that future...

For those who govern in this city/town/area and the nations of the world,
that they may find the wisdom and courage to do justice for all in the decisions they
make...

For the homeless and the hungry, for the unemployed and the uncertain,
and for all who struggle with daily decisions for their families and their future...

For those who mourn, for those who face illness or isolation,
and for all whose situations we carry on our hearts this day...

God with us, we thank you for your all-embracing love that touches all life and each
life, and keeps us in communion with those dear to us who now live with you. So we
join our voices to theirs in gratitude, praying the words Jesus taught us:

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 15th Sunday after Pentecost. September 10, 2023. Year A.

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

Paul's counsel to the church in Rome was this:
"Owe no one anything, except to love one another."

Rom. 13:8

So come, let us love one another and all in God's world
by sharing what we have been given
so that needs are met and the gospel is proclaimed.

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>

Hymn

We are one in the Spirit

471

1. We are One in The Spirit, we are One in the Lord,
we are One in The Spirit, we are One in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity will one day be restored,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.
2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
we will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
and together we'll spread the news that God is in our land,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.
3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
we will work with each other, we will work side by side,
and we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.
4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus, who is God's only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our Love,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Words and Music: Peter Scholtes ©1991 Lorenz Publishing
All rights reserved. Annual License with podcasting OneLicense.net A-723877

Benediction

The Apostle Paul teaches that we owe no one anything but to love one another.
So go with God's love in your hearts to share that love with everyone you meet.

And so may God, the Source of Love,
Christ, the Face of Love in action,
And the Spirit, the transforming Power of love,
go with you to bless you
and move through you to heal and bless God's world.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 15th Sunday after Pentecost. September 10, 2023. Year A.