

Call to Worship

Come! Let us give thanks to God!

We give thanks for the gift of bread and food that nourishes.

Come! Let us give thanks to God!

**We give thanks for all the times God has made a way out of no way,
providing for us in body and spirit just when we need it.**

Come! Let us give thanks to God!

**We give thanks for the ways God weaves us together as a community of love
and care, supporting one another in the ebbs and flows of daily life.**

Let us come into God's presence with grateful praise!

Come! Let us worship God together. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2023.

[Discipleship Ministries | Christ the King / Reign of Christ Sunday,...](http://umcdiscipleship.org) (umcdiscipleship.org)

Hymn

O Lord, thou art my God and King

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1. O Lord, thou art my God and King;
thee will I magnify and praise:
I will thee bless, and gladly sing
unto thy holy name always.
2. Thee will I bless each day I rise,
and praise thy name time without end;
much to be praised and great God is;
whose greatness none can comprehend.
3. Thy saints shall praise thy glorious name;
thy mighty acts they shall declare;
thy wonderous works I will proclaim
and meditate on them with prayer.
4. Thy might shall be by all extolled;
thy glorious grace I will record;
with all my strength I will unfold
thy great and mighty acts, O Lord.
5. Thy faithful shall make known the fame
of thy great goodness and shall bless
the splendour of thy glorious name,
praising aloud thy righteousness.

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Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God most holy,

You are known to us as the Almighty, Eternal Ruler and Lord.

We call you our Shepherd and Guide.

We praise you with many names,

but you are beyond our imagination, so much greater than our words.

We know you in the stories of Jesus

and in him, we see your love in action, reaching out to the world.

You move in us and through us by your Spirit,
drawing us to you, sending us to live out your word.
God most holy, Three in One and One in Three,
we praise you with our lips and with our lives
to offer you honour and love, now and always.

God most merciful,

We confess that we have failed to love fully or forgive wholly.

You offer us freedom but we settle for the familiar.

You offer us hope but we prefer knowing what will happen next.

Teach us to give up cautious faithfulness, so that we can offer you our whole lives, and commit to following Jesus into the future you are creating.

God of mystery and majesty, your thoughts are not our thoughts; your ways are not our ways. Send us your Holy Spirit, speaking through the Scriptures, so that our thoughts and ways may be transformed as we encounter your Living Word, in Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Sunday of the Reign of Christ. November 26, 2023. Year A.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the Good News. God's compassion never fails.

God's loving kindness is steadfast.

Know that you are forgiven by the grace of Jesus Christ.

Forgive each other, and live in peace and harmony.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Sunday of the Reign of Christ. November 26, 2023. Year A.

Scripture Reading John 6:5-23

⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' ¹⁰Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

¹⁵ When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

¹⁶ When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷ got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸ The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹ When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰ But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' ²¹ Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

²² The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the lake saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. ²³ Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

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Message After Giving Thanks

Once there was a family that was not rich and not poor. They lived in Ohio in a small country house. One night they all sat down for dinner, and there was a knock at the door. The father went to the door and opened it.

There stood an old man in tattered clothes, with ripped pants and missing buttons. He was carrying a basket full of vegetables. He asked the family if they wanted to buy some vegetables from him. They quickly did because they wanted him to leave.

Over time, the family and the old man became friends. The man brought vegetables to the family every week. They soon found out that he was almost blind and had cataracts on his eyes. But he was so friendly that they learned to look forward to his visits and started to enjoy his company.

One day as he was delivering the vegetables, he said, "I had the greatest blessing yesterday! I found a basket of clothes outside my house that someone had left for me."

The family, knowing that he needed clothes, said, "how wonderful!"

The old blind man said, "The most wonderful part is that I found a family that really needed the clothes."¹

As I read this story written by Jerry Ullman, I found all kinds of moments of blessing within the story. Places where gratitude could be the response. It was in the ability to grow vegetables, in the building up of the relationship, the response of love that the family would buy clothing for the gentleman, and then the response that brings a smile

¹ Ullman, Jerry. *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul: 101 Stories of Courage, Hope and Laughter*. Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Hansen and Irene Dunlap editors. Health Communications, Inc. Deerfield Beach Florida. 1998. P162-163.

to one's face of the man being so generous, feeling that his needs were met, that he didn't even see his own need for clothing but looked to the needs of others.

There is a saying that you may have heard, have an attitude of gratitude. One source I looked up said that gratitude is the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. I like that, as it truly describes the actions of all in the story.

Gratitude is what caught my attention in the story from scripture as well. The feeding of the 5000 is one of the most well-known stories from scripture, it can be found in some version in all four gospels so we know it was and is a significant story. What is lovely is that the abundance of food starts out as a boy's lunch of five barley loaves and two fish. In fact, when Andrew tells Jesus that he has this food, knowing that it is not even a drop in a bucket when it comes to the need and the crowd they are faced with, he must have anticipated a different response from Jesus than the one he got.

Jesus said to Andrew and the others, "Make the people sit down." I wonder what was the look on the disciples' faces. What do you mean, make the people sit down? What the heck is Jesus going to do with five loaves and two fish? Well, the first this Jesus does is take the loaves and give thanks. It was not until Jesus gave thanks that the food was distributed and all had as much as they want. Of course, you know the rest. It is when all were satisfied that Jesus told his disciples to "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." (v12)

The disciples, the people, and Jesus go from having five loaves and two fish to an abundance that finds that, after all have eaten, there were still twelve baskets filled with food. Yes, this is a miracle story. And whether or not you believe in miracles, the meaning remains, that there was abundance. What I would like to you sit with though is that before the abundance happened and the leftovers were gathered, Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks.

The first act was that of thanksgiving, and attitude of gratitude.

Now, I could not tell you how many times I have read these words of scripture, but it is a lot, and it was not until I was preparing for this worship service it was pointed out in my reading that later on in verse 23 it says, "Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks."

A whole lot has happened between the time when Jesus takes the loaves and gives thanks and feeds the multitude, but what is remembered the next day is that this is the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. John does not write, this is the place where the miracle happened, but rather it was the place where Jesus had expressed gratitude to God. We don't know what Jesus' exact words were, yet we know that there was provision, gratitude, and abundance.

This last month the sermon series has been called *Our Grateful Hymn of Praise* and I have been using the resources from Discipleship Ministries, but this is the first time I

have wanted to directly quote the writer, Rev. Dr. Derek Weber. I really appreciate what he has to say, so let me share his words.

John doesn't call it a miracle place. He says that it is the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

Really? That's the description? Not where an amazing thing happened. Not where the unexplainable took place. No, where they ate after the Lord had given thanks. Think about it. That's what John wants us to remember: that this meal, this miracle happened after gratitude was expressed. Gratitude for the abundance that didn't look like abundance. Gratitude for the satisfaction that came out of hunger. Gratitude becomes a way of seeing and a way of being in the world. We give thanks to God for what is about to happen. We give thanks for what we might not yet see, but what we trust God will provide.

...It is about the spiritual discipline of gratitude. Like any discipline, it is one that we choose and then work at until we become better at it. We live, because of that choice, grateful to God first of all for the abundance that surrounds us. But gratitude spills over into the rest of our lives as well. We are grateful for those in our circles of care; we are grateful to those who help us live in the manner to which we have become accustomed. We recognize that none of the benefits we enjoy come without effort on someone's part, and we learn to be grateful to those who help make our society run smoothly. If we were to make a list of all those who provide for us, who care for us, who stand with us, we would probably never get to the end. We are truly woven together in a human tapestry of love and caring. Jesus invites us to become more aware of that reality and to live gratefully every day.²

May each of us practice the spiritual discipline of gratitude, knowing it truly does take practice. It is an attitude that is developed and cultivated. It means looking at each situation and finding something that hones in us the quality of being thankful; ready to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

As the Apostle Paul writes in the first letter to the church in Thessalonica, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thess. 5:18). Amen.

Prayers of the People

Merciful God,
We thank you for the light you shine into our lives.
The signs of our times are worrisome.
The earth itself groans in pain,
and people have grown suspicious of each other.

²Rev. Dr. Derek Weber. [Discipleship Ministries | Christ the King / Reign of Christ Sunday... \(umcdiscipleship.org\)](https://umcdiscipleship.org) Accessed November 24, 2023.

As the days grow shorter and the nights, longer,
comfort those who dread the short days
and direct any who have lost their way.
Wherever people feel overwhelmed by the demands,
let them catch a glimpse of your brilliance.

Generous God,
we remember that the days are difficult for many.
We pray for those who are hungry and cold, stressed by rising costs all around.
Alert us to ways that we can set a feast for those in our community and beyond
whose cupboards are bare. Warm them with your love.

We pray for those who are grieving.
Make us patient, compassionate companions to those in mourning,
even when we're not sure what to say.
Fill sorrowing hearts with your comforting presence.

We pray for those who feel like the world is ending;
for whose lives have been uprooted by fire, flood, storm, or conflict,
and for those who worry about the future of the earth itself.
Steady us amid the upheavals around us,
and remind us that your steadfast love will see us through.
Help us trust in you, no matter what is happening.

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And now we pray together, using the words that Jesus 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 has blessed us in Christ and in creation with all that we need to thrive. Yet Jesus' story reminds us there are so many in this world who do not have what they need. What we offer today will reach out in Jesus' name to touch lives in need with the love of God. The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. Sunday of the Reign of Christ. November 26, 2023. Year A.

Should you wish to support this ministry and/or 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 sing, O church, in joy!

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1. Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!
For Christ the Lord has led us through the ages long!
In bold accord,
come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!
2. Long years have come and gone, and still God reigns supreme,
empowering us to catch the vision, dream the dream!
In bold accord,
Come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!
3. Let courage be our friend, let wisdom be our guide,
as we in mission magnify the Crucified!
In bold accord,
come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!
4. Come sing, O church, in joy! Come join, O church, in song!
For Christ the Lord has triumphed o'er the ages long!
In bold accord,
come celebrate the journey now and praise the Lord!

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Benediction

Go, now, giving thanks for all that God has done
and all that God is doing in your life, in this community, and in the world.
May we be surprised by grace as gratitude opens us to recognize
God's abundant provision all around us. Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, May 2023.