

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

3rd Sunday after Pentecost - June 9th, 2024

Words of Welcome

Call to Worship

On an ordinary Sunday, we come to worship God.

**We come, trusting God will speak to us;
we come, hoping God will surprise us.**

On this day, like every other day,
we seek to follow Jesus:

**We follow, believing Jesus will be with us;
we follow, hoping Jesus will work through us.**

On this day, we lift our souls to God's Spirit:

**We open our hearts, that the Spirit may fill us;
we open our hands, that we might be a gift to others.**

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Hymn

When we are living

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1. When we are living, it is in Christ Jesus,
and when we're dying, it is in the Lord.
Both in our living and in our dying,
we belong to God; we belong to God.
2. Through all our living, we our fruits must give.
Good works of service are for offering.
When we are giving, or when receiving,
we belong to God; we belong to God.
3. 'Mid time of sorrow and in times of pain,
when sensing beauty or in love's embrace,
whether we suffer, or sing rejoicing,
we belong to God; we belong to God.
4. Across this wide world, we shall always find
those who are crying with no peace of mind,
but when we help them, or when we feed them,
we belong to God; we belong to God.

"When we are living," Words: Romans 14:8; paraphrase, v.1., anonymous; translation, Elise S. Eslinger, v.2-4, Roberto Escamilla; translation, George Lockwood. Music Hispanic folk song. © The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989 All rights reserved. All rights reserved. Annual License with podcasting OneLicense.net A-723877

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God of all creation,

we marvel at all the detail and grandeur you call into being.
You tend the fragile beauty and balance in the world,
receiving praise from the depths of the sea to the tops of the mountains.
You have seen your Church grow from tiny beginnings
into a worldwide community, full of diversity in voice and vocation.
Open our eyes to your purposes for each of us and all of us,
and for the Church in every location.
Awaken us with insights from your Holy Spirit and show us how to fulfill your will
in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

**God of purpose and possibility,
you give us work to do and the skills we need to do it.
Yet we prefer to follow our own ways. We think we know better.
Forgive our stubborn natures.
By the power of your Holy Spirit, create in us a teachable spirit
so we can learn new ways to serve you in Christ's name. Amen**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 3rd Sunday after Pentecost. June 9th, 2024. Year B.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hope in God, dear friends.
For the One who listens to our prayers is the God who loves us.
The One who knows our foolish lives better than we do, is the God who forgives us.
**This is indeed good news for us. No longer do we need to wait, but can rush
into God's gracious embrace, knowing that God will walk with us even when
we stumble, will continue to affirm us, when everyone else around us tears us
down. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.**

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Scripture Reading 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

¹³But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture— “I believed, and so I spoke” —we also believe, and so we speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. ¹⁶So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, ¹⁸because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

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Message Grace, Thanksgiving, and Glory

Context. Without some context this scripture cannot be understood to its fullest extent. This is a reading that comes from a place of suffering, of shattered relationships and trying to find an encouraging word when things are difficult, hard, and complicated. Paul is sharing a word of hope because frankly, life was difficult for him and for those who called themselves followers of Christ. It was difficult politically and socially, and it was difficult personally, for all involved. As with all groups of people whether it be a family, friends, in work, at play, in organizations, and in the church, where people are involved there is going to be conflict. Now conflict is not in itself a terrible thing. Challenges can bring about new ways of understanding life and new ways of doing things. It can open our eyes to possibilities, but it can also sting.

There are also the difficulties in life that have to do with what our bodies do as we age. Earlier in this letter Paul talks about our bodies as jar of clay. Clay pots were strong but could also be broken and shattered. In the scripture we heard Paul compares our bodies to tents. Not surprisingly as Paul was a tentmaker by trade. He understood that tents are subject to wear and tear, to being set up and then taken down, much like our bodies are subject to wear and tear. That wear and tear, that being taken down may come as we age and find that our minds are not as clear as they once were, for some even to the point of dementia. For others it can be mental illness, or hip replacements, cancer that threatens to take us or those we love from living our lives now, and for others it means facing the certainty of death. These things don't care about your age. Challenges in body and mind can come at any age.

We see our world that holds no lack of stories of hunger and desperation. Stories that demonstrate the lack of care for body mind and spirit. Wars and displacement, power and wealth literally and figuratively calling the shots that effects those with the least power and wealth. Life is messy and more than full of examples of how things, people, and relationships, whether between nations or between people are broken.

The Apostle Paul was not stranger to all of this and yet he writes about grace, thanksgiving, and how all of this displays God's glory in the world. It is here that Jesus is the key. I heard it put this way, "God's message of resurrection is a refusal to let human conflict set the terms for the future." Resurrection is by definition a message of hope. And this is not pie in the sky hope, it is a hope born out of the life of Jesus that was itself one of being challenged. Jesus pursued by authorities who ultimately took his life. Jesus' story is one of being with those who knew hunger and pain, death and illness. And yet

that is not the end of the story. For our sake Jesus lived and died. It was for the sake of God desiring relationship with each of us that Jesus rose at the power of God's hand. It was so that we would know that though everything in life seems to decline and decay, those things are not the final word for our lives.

This is true as we live and move and have our being in this life and also in the life to come. It is for these reasons that we talk about responding to the needs of those around us. It is for these reasons that we work to be the people of God who ourselves bring with us God's restoring love and work to the lives of others. And it is for this reason of resurrection, of the power of God over death, not just physical death, but the kinds of dying that takes the fullness of life away from us little by little or by the shovel full each day. It is for these reasons that we get to do what we can to make a difference in the world. For some that doesn't feel like much, but just your thoughts and prayers, make a difference.

I say this knowing that thoughts and prayers are not the only things or even enough for us to do as a church, but for some this is what they can do to hold together the whole. The rest of us take the strength from those prayers to hit the ground with boots on ready to do the work of changing lives with our actions. Which brings me to another point. We do not do this work from a place of knowing all or being fully restored ourselves. This is part of our individual and ongoing work as the body of Christ. God chooses to work through flawed human beings, trusts us enough to love God and others to go about in the world doing things that bring others to wholeness. It is not for us to fix people but to come alongside and be images bearers of God in the world.

The verse that really seems to speak to this is verse 15, "Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God." God has done everything in Christ for our sake so that in this life and in the next we know that God is with us, that God is stronger than human conflict and human suffering. This does not take away our struggle, but in the suffering of Christ we know that God gets it, that God also knows suffering through Christ's body given for us.

And there is the promise that all this suffering does not have the last word. Again, as Paul writes, "...we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.¹⁷ For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure,¹⁸ because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal."

In no way is human suffering ignored or unimportant in the big scheme of things, but it is also not the end all and be all. Suffering does not have to define us. Through grace, through thanksgiving, and in order that God's purposes and redeeming love may be

known, God is glorified when we lean in, trust God to lead us through each challenge, even to the point of death. We are never alone. Now and always, God's presence is with us. So go into the world with the Spirit of God leading you in your every experience and relationship. Go into the world with Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection as your hope for the yourself and the world. Go into the world trusting that the love and power that raised Christ from the dead still has this power today for us and for the world. Go in peace, go in hope, go in love. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of grace and compassion,
We offer you our thanks for the communities in which we share,
for our friends and families, our neighbours and fellow citizens,
and we pray for the widening circles of our lives.

We lift up those nearest and dearest to us,
naming them before you with affection and gratitude,
knowing that your love touches the depths of their needs
and celebrates the joys of their journeys:

Keep silence for 10 seconds.

God of grace and compassion,

Embrace the world you love.

We celebrate the life of this church community
whose worship and witness strengthen our faith in Jesus Christ
and challenge us to live what we believe.

Awaken us to opportunities to serve you in the friendship and fellowship we share.
Grant us courage to reach out in Jesus' name
into the midst of any sudden crisis or situation of deep human need.

Keep silence for 10 seconds.

God of grace and compassion,

Embrace the world you love.

We remember before you nations and neighbourhoods facing ongoing conflict and violence, those who crowd together in refugee compounds and homeless encampments, or who face the consequences of nature's unpredictable forces.

We join our prayers with the desperate wherever they find themselves:
grant us courage and resilience
to meet the steepest challenges and inspire our hope.

Keep silence for 10 seconds.

God of grace and compassion,

Embrace the world you love.

As summer approaches,
we give you thanks for beauty throughout your creation,
and for the refreshment and recreation it provides.

Yet we feel your passion rising
when we overlook the cost of our lifestyle on creation's fragile balance.
Show us how to act for justice with compassion
so that nothing precious, no one precious is overlooked.

Keep silence for 10 seconds.

We know in our hearts the tug of your grace and compassion
so we offer these and all our unspoken prayers in the name of Jesus Christ,
who taught us to say together:

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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

We believe, and so we will speak. We speak, and so we will live. We will live, and so we will be generous, because we know that, by God's grace, gifts we offer will extend hope, peace, and life to more and more people.

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Hymn

All my hope on God is founded

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| 1. All my hopes on God is founded
who does still my trust renew;
through all change and chance God guides me,
only good and only true.
Love unknown, God's alone,
calls my heart to be God's own. | 2. Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown, betray all trust;
what our care and toil establish,
tower and temple, fall to dust,
but God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower. |
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3. God's great goodness reigns eternal,
deep in wisdom, passing thought;
light and life are all God's splendor
bringing beauty out of naught.
Evermore from God's store
newborn worlds rise and adore.

4. Daily does Almighty Giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow,
God's desire our soul delighting,
pleasure leading where we go.
Love will stand at God's hand;
joy will wait on God's command.

5. Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ, the Son.
Hear Christ call one and all:
you that follow shall not fall.

"All my hope on God is founded," words by Robert Bridges and Joachim Neand
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Benediction

Keep your eyes open as you walk in God's world,
alert for occasions to share God's love.
And may the God who made us,
The Christ who mends us,
And the Spirit who gives us life walk with you each day.

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