

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay – Liturgy

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

13th Sunday After Pentecost. August 18th, 2024

Call to Worship

As we gather in this sacred moment for a sacred purpose,
let us make the most of our time together.

We have come to worship the Lord our God.

As we sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,
let us make the most of our time together.

We have come to worship the Lord our God.

As we respond to the melody in our hearts,
let us make the most of our time together.

We have come to worship the Lord our God.

[Ministry Matters™ | Worship Elements: August 18, 2024](#)

Hymn

Let all things now living

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1. Let all things now living a song of thanksgiving
to God our Creator triumphantly raise,
who fashioned and made us, protected and stayed us,
by guiding us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us; pure light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
till shadows have vanished and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into Light.
2. By law God enforces: the stars in their courses,
and sun in its orbit obediently shine.
The hills and the mountains, the rivers and fountains,
the depths of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We, too, should be voicing our love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise,
till all things now living unite in thanksgiving:
to God in the highest, hosanna and praise!

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Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Creator, Christ, and Spirit,
when our souls hunger for fulfillment, you give us the Bread of Life.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit,
when our souls thirst for communion with you, you refresh us with living water.
Creator, Christ, and Spirit,
when we long for what is authentic, you show us the Way, the Truth and the Life.
And so we come to worship you,

Creator, Christ, and Spirit.

Receive our gratitude and praise, Living God,
for you are the source of all that matters, and the strength to live out your purposes.

God of all that matters,

Forgive us when we forget what matters to you.

**Forgive the sins we have tried to hide,
and those we were once proud to commit.**

**Forgive the sins we have done to please others,
and the sins we have done to please ourselves.**

By your grace, forgive us,

and bless what we can become through your faithfulness to us.

God of all wisdom, quiet all that distracts us and prepare us to listen for your Word speaking through the Scriptures. May we learn how best to follow you, in the example of Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 13th Sunday After Pentecost. August 18th, 2024. Year B.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Even though we turn our backs on God,

God is ready to forgive and heal our spirits.

God's love never fails, and we can rejoice in the power of that eternal love.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

[Ministry Matters™ | Worship Connection: August 18, 2024](#)

Scripture Reading Ephesians 5:15-20

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ So watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!

¹⁷ Don't live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.

¹⁸⁻²⁰ Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life. Drink the Spirit of God, huge drafts of him. Sing hymns instead of drinking songs! Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ.

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

Message Any Excuse for a Song

Some of you know or may recall me telling stories of having sung with a female quartet for many years when I lived in Northern Alberta. Some of my best memories are of the practices that my friends and I had nearly weekly for fourteen years. We loved to perform together and to have people enjoy what we presented and shared. Our love and care for one another, our joy of singing, overflowed to those who came to listen.

Music has always been a part of my life. I started piano lessons when I was still in early elementary school. My aunt was my first piano teacher. I continued taking lessons right up to 2010. I have fumbled with the guitar and came back from Hawaii with a Ukulele. I

have done some learning on my own, but signed up for six weeks of Ukulele lessons this fall.

Music has been a big part of the history of St. Andrew's as well, from the choir, to hosting recording artists and local talent. One of the best loved concerts of each year was the Thunder Bay Community Choir's Journey to Advent which took place here for many years coming to an end just this last December.

Even now as part of how we are living into our New Beginnings and partnering in and with community, last fall and right into June we began inviting local musicians and groups to share their music in our worship services. This is going to continue this year as well.

When you think about it, melody, rhythm and beat are part of what surrounds us from the song birds, to radio stations, to the beating of drums or hammers. Even machinery has a rhythm about it. Melody and beat are all around us. So, it may not be so surprising that in Ephesians Paul says to "Sing songs from your heart to Christ. Sing praises over everything, any excuse for a song to God the Father in the name of our Master, Jesus Christ."

All this to say that music is a part of us. Even those who would not claim to have any sense of rhythm and beat or those who sing out of tune can appreciate music and what it brings to their lives. Yet, these lines come at the end of our reading today. The reading begins much more somberly with a caution or rather a command to "...watch your step. Use your head. Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!" (15-16).

As is usual, in a sermon I can't take the whole of Ephesians and shed light on it, but it is important to remember that these six verses are a short excerpt from a larger letter. Ephesians is a letter of encouragement, of hope, and of belonging. There are things that should and must change in our lives if we are to lean and live into the promises held in Ephesians, but it is about us being a work in progress through the work of the Holy Spirit in us. Ephesians is about learning how to live as a beloved child of God.

The fact already is that God loves us. That is a given. Christ is the culmination of the promises of God, promises of love, forgiveness, and grace. What Ephesians hopes to do is encourage us to a different kind of living given the knowledge of God's love for us, the example of Christ in his living, dying, and rising, and the work of the Holy Spirit in us and in everything.

This short passage is a reminder and a warning to live as followers of Christ, as people who believe that there is something bigger than what we see going on in the world. Living as people who understand that God is at work. Because of that, we are called to live in the world, to do what we can to transform the world in our individuals lives and most certainly as a community of faith knowing that these are desperate times. The New Revised Standard Versions of the bible says, "Be careful then how you live, not as

unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil.”
(v15-16)

It doesn't take much looking around to see how desperate the times are, and we are not to ignore that. In fact, we are to be change makers. We are not to live carelessly, unthinkingly. Eugene Peterson paraphrases the Greek by saying “Make sure you understand what the Master wants.”

There is a difference between living out our lives as we please and living out our lives knowing that things are difficult, that life and lives have challenges, that things are desperate, while finding a way to make a difference, not just for ourselves and our loved ones, but for anyone who is seen to be on the margins, vulnerable, and/or powerless.

Having said that, we are not to live as people who feel doomed, but rather we live in the express joy of knowing the love of God, the forgiveness of sins, and seeking the Holy Spirit for guidance. Looking to understand the will of God in our lives. And that will is that we would be image bearers of God. When people see us, interact with us, join with us, observe each of us, there should be some divine sparks that says to them, there is something different here.

There is the line that says, “Don't drink too much wine. That cheapens your life.” This applies to anything that cheapens your life. It isn't just about drinking but rather about anything that takes away your value as a child of God, a living breathing human being. We are image bearers who sing. We sing our praises, we sing our love, we sing our laments. We sing praises over everything, anything for an excuse for a song to God.

Bodies respond to music. Our bodies are the original instrument. Using our bodies for singing or enjoying singing is a built-in response to God at work in us. I believe it is an act, a response, that has been dulled over time and could use some work at being revived and appreciated.

As you approach the coming days, remember your call to be an image bearer of God in the world. Someone who pays attention to the need of others, but also someone who notices the music of life, pays attention to the rhythms and beats of the world. It is the work of the church to do so as well.

Then sing. Sing the pain, sing the joy, sing the praise of the world to God. Any excuse for a song. That music can heal, can bring people together, can transform. It is only a part of our expression of living but it is a powerful one. This is not only for those who can keep the beat or sing the melody, it is the response of anyone and everyone who knows God at work in the world. Your living is an excuse for a song to God the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Gracious God,
we are grateful for your presence with us in all things,

especially in times of challenge and change.

We thank you for times of rest and reunion this summer,
for opportunities to see people we miss
and places that inspire us with wonder.

Yet we know this summer holds deep challenges for many,
and so we bring before you people and places on our minds and hearts.

We pray for the families and communities facing fire, flood or storms,
worrying about what will remain of their homes and hometowns.
Protect those who fight fires or conduct rescues in dangerous circumstances.
Open our hearts in generosity to do what we can to assist recovery.

We pray for the earth,
for the land and the seas suffering as the climate warms,
and for the creatures being displaced by disaster and disruption.
Protect all that is precious to you in creation,
and open our hearts to live more responsibly
within the balance of life you created.

We pray for people facing hatred and discrimination,
and those coming to terms with historic injustice and injury.
Guide the relations between indigenous peoples and other Canadians
to correct misunderstandings,
and create justice for all communities.
Open our hearts to discover what we share as your peoples,
and appreciate the gifts we have to offer to each other.

We pray for all those who are suffering this summer:
those who face pain or illness,
those who are dying or who know bereavement,
all who are anxious about what lies ahead,
and any who do not have enough to make ends meet.
Bring courage and comfort to those who are struggling,
and open our hearts to offer companionship to ease their journey.

In silence we hold before you those near and dear to us.
Speak to us the truth we need to hear and guide us in our relationships:
Receive our prayers, spoken and unspoken, O God,
as we offer the words Jesus taught us:

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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

Ephesians 5 encourages us to “Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise...giving thanks to God at all times and for everything in the name of Jesus Christ.” (vv. 15, 20) We give thanks by trusting God with our resources. We give thanks by using the gifts of God for the kingdom of God. We give thanks by sharing our abundance for the mutual benefit of our community. Give thanks with everything we have.

[After Pentecost 13B – August 18 - United Church of Christ \(ucc.org\)](#)

St. Andrew’s uses all the money that we receive to support the ministry of God from this church and in community. Your gifts make a difference and allow us to continue this ministry of online worship as well. If you are able to make a one-time donation or support this ministry on an ongoing basis your gift makes an impact. Please check us out at standrewpres-tbay.ca. There you can find various ways of giving from etransfer to the online donate button that allows you to give by credit card. Thank you for your support.

Hymn

Take my life and let it be

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| 1. Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days:
let them flow in ceaseless praise. | 2. Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee. |
| 3. Take my voice and let me sing
always, only for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee. | 4. Take my silver and gold:
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect, and use
every power as thou shalt choose. |
| 5. Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart: it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne. | 6. Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself and I will be
ever, only, all for thee. |

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Benediction

May you experience the fullness of life.
May abundance be your regular portion.
May grace, hope, and generosity be your guide.
And may the joy of the Holy One sustain all your days.
Go in peace to love and serve. [After Pentecost 13B – August 18 - United Church of Christ \(ucc.org\)](#)