

## Call to Worship

Joy comes to those who hope in God.

**For the Lord is a Keeper of promises.**

Our God is a God of healing and help and hope!

**The Lord will reign forever,**

Our God will keep faith with all generations.

**Let us praise the Lord both now and forevermore!**

~ posted on the Archives page of the **Lectionary Sermons** website: <http://www.lectionarysermons.com/ARCH-W.html>

## Hymn

*All my hope on God is founded*

**462**

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.
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.

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## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Eternal God,

You are our beginning and our end.

You gave breath to all living things.

By your Spirit, you come among us this day,

breathing new life into our familiar patterns,

as the gift you offer us through Christ Jesus.

By your grace, you open new possibilities for the world you love.

So we offer you our lives in worship and in service,  
joining our voices with all your creatures,  
to offer you honour and blessing, glory and gratitude, now and always.

**God of mercy,**

**you keep an eye out for those who dwell on the margins of life.**

**You watch for those who struggle and suffer.**

**We confess we fail to keep our eyes open for those on the margins, in  
hospital, in prisons with real bars and imprisoned by life's challenges.**

**We have been silent when we should have spoken up in the face of injustice.**

**We have not shown up when we knew there was a need.**

**Our generosity to others does not match what you offer us.**

**Forgive us for thinking of ourselves first.**

**Renew our commitment to show others the kindness we meet in Jesus Christ.**

**Amen**

Adapted from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 16th Sunday after Pentecost. September 8th, 2024. Year B.

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

We have received, not the spirit of the world,  
but the Spirit that is from God.

May we understand the grace and forgiveness

bestowed upon us by God,

that others may find the Kingdom

within us and among us. [Ministry Matters™ | Worship Elements: September 8, 2024](#)

## **Scripture Readings** Psalm 146 Praise for God's Help

<sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

<sup>2</sup> I will praise the Lord as long as I live;

I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

<sup>3</sup> Do not put your trust in princes,  
in mortals, in whom there is no help.

<sup>4</sup> When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
on that very day their plans perish.

<sup>5</sup> Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord their God,

<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them;  
who keeps faith forever;

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed;  
who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free;

<sup>8</sup> the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;

the Lord loves the righteous.

<sup>9</sup> The Lord watches over the strangers;  
he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

<sup>10</sup> The Lord will reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the Lord!

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## **Message** God's Help

This has been quite the week, and one in which I have not been my most stellar self. There is a line in the letter to the Romans Chapter 3 verse 24 that reads, "since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". Well, I feel like I fell short in so many ways. I didn't prioritize well so things were not done in a timely manner. I rebuked others for their behaviour in a not so Christian way, even as what was frustrating me was the unchristian manner of conversations I was overhearing. I was short tempered and not grace-filled and I have since learned, even more unaware of how my physical reactions to what was going on in me and around me were having an effect on others.

To top that off I think I am struggling with what is called compound grief. Between the death of my uncle and another family member, along with the death of a beloved member of our congregation and the overwhelming suffering of another in hospital coping with cancer, well that is making tears well up pretty quickly for me. Love is so deeply important, humanizing, and grace filled, but it also means loss and grief are something one must content with as well.

Then the happenings at the church from renovations, to planning, to organizing, and the fact that we are in the process of hiring an administrative assistant. Well, let just say that most days lately, it is a game of dealing with what rises to the top. Most of the time I am able to forgive myself for the imperfections, other days, not so easy, especially when my example has fallen short or I have hurt others in the process of my own stresses.

It is times like this that the Psalms are a good place for me to land. The Psalms are like the songs of daily life. In the psalms one finds words of praise and joy, dancing and singing, words of life. The psalms are also abundant in words of fear, anger, death, and strife. Words calling out to God in lament and sorrow as well as soaring with hope and promise.

Part of their significance and why these ancient songs and words have continued to uplift and comfort people is that they are available and accessible to individuals, but they also speak to the whole of the human condition. We can say them alone or in community.

This particular Psalm is a praise psalm. It begins and ends with the phrase, "Praise the Lord!" The first two verses are all about praise, "Praise the Lord!"

Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.” As well, the title ascribed to this psalm is “Praise for God’s Help”. So if you didn’t get it yet, we are to praise the Lord!

What is interesting is that these verses of praise bookend words that tell of brokenness and hardship. Hear the words in between, think about the situations that may have caused such sentiments to be spoken.

- <sup>3</sup> Do not put your trust in princes,  
in mortals, in whom there is no help.
- <sup>4</sup> When their breath departs, they return to the earth;  
on that very day their plans perish.
- <sup>5</sup> Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,  
whose hope is in the Lord their God,
- <sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth,  
the sea, and all that is in them;  
who keeps faith forever;
- <sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed;  
who gives food to the hungry.
- The Lord sets the prisoners free;
- <sup>8</sup> the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.  
The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the Lord loves the righteous.
- <sup>9</sup> The Lord watches over the strangers;  
he upholds the orphan and the widow,  
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

It can make one wonder about what oppression was being suffered under the hands of rulers and those with power. The talk of mortals in whom there is no help sounds like one who has become isolated and alone, persecuted or having feelings of being abandoned by those who should have cared.

The psalmist also speaks about God’s care and compassion for those who are on the margins, whose lives have challenges, a God who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry, sets the prisoners free; opens the eyes of the blind. Think about people you know or have seen that fits those descriptors, maybe it is you. What do these words say to you in terms of God’s love and maybe our own iniquity when we see people in those situations?

The psalmist continues saying that God lifts up those who are bowed down; loves the righteous, watches over the strangers; upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin. In our time, when there are many opinions about refugees and immigrants, those who are unhoused, addicted, who one may think needs to quit feeding off the system, know that God see each one of them had has a special concern

for their well being, and because of that we too are called to have compassion, taking time to learn what are the root causes of these social challenges locally and globally and doing what we can to lift others up.

For myself I often land with the words “God lifts up those who are bowed down.” It is the weight of things, of responsibilities, of wrong decisions, of harm I have caused, of grief. Those are the things that bow me down and it gives me comfort and peace knowing that God cares even about those things in my life as I am one who does not really have the concerns of oppression or poverty or illness that so many others are contending with.

This psalm reminds us to pay attention to our own attitudes, actions, and words. Are we building people up with our words or tearing them down. As I was well reminded this week just by how my heart felt after speaking and acting in ways that did not fit my hope to be an image bearer of God, all of us fall short of the glory of God. But there is more in that short phrase in Romans that also gives me hope.

I want to share with you how that piece of scripture is paraphrased in *The Message*, a paraphrase of the Bible by Eugene Peterson.

Since we’ve compiled this long and sorry record as sinners and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we’re in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.” (Romans 3:23-24)

I am also reminded as I read a piece by Professor Rolf Jacobson of the following, “These acts are not universal — not everyone experiences every grace from God. The Psalter knows that we grow sick, we can be killed, we are oppressed. But God moves in the midst of sufferings, sustaining God’s people and pulling the beloved creation forward into God’s preferred future. These acts of deliverance are representative of God’s characteristic intrusions into a broken and suffering world.”<sup>1</sup>

So, we hold onto the Psalms as we join our voices with those of the ancients and those who have lived between them and us. All of us human beings living with everything from unimaginable suffering, to just not getting it right. And as has always been the case, those in power still most often do not see the need for compassion and justice. We hold onto the Psalms trusting and knowing, maybe learning through it all, God is faithful, present, compassionate and so we say, sing, or shout,

Praise the Lord!  
Praise the Lord, O my soul!  
I will praise the Lord as long as I live;  
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacobson, Rolf. Week 6 (July 5, 2015). [Commentary on Psalm 146:1-10 - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#)  
Accessed September 6, 2024.

## Prayers of the People

O God in whom we live and move and have our being:  
We come to you in prayer as the summer season draws nearer to its close:  
We give you thanks for the occasions we have enjoyed  
to catch up with family and friends;  
to travel for recreation and restoration and let our worries go.  
We are grateful for each moment to savour the beauty of creation.  
Refresh us for the season ahead we pray,  
and renew our commitment to serve you.

O God, Jesus faced many demands wherever he went,  
and pressure from critics, whatever he did.  
We pray for all those who have not found rest this summer:  
for those whose work is stressful, exhausting or unappreciated;  
and for those whose livelihoods remain uncertain  
because of circumstances beyond their control.  
We pray for those with hard choices to make,  
about work or school or what comes next,  
about relationships and priorities,  
or about social policy and community leadership.

*Silence for 20 seconds.*

May each one know your strength and guidance day by day.

Today we remember those for whom this summer has been touched by suffering:  
We pray for those who have lost loved ones,  
and those facing an uncertain future or a difficult diagnosis.  
We pray for those who have lost their homes, for whatever reason,  
and for those who despair about the climate crisis  
and what can be done to repair the suffering earth.

*Silence for 20 seconds*

We pray for all those who join efforts to relieve suffering of any kind.  
May each one find courage to face tomorrow in your company.

O God, we need the embrace of your presence, each in our own way.  
As we prepare to leave this service, walk with us,  
and show us how to live each day as those who follow Jesus,  
for we dare to pray the words he 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

We who have been richly blessed are called to share that blessing with the world. Give freely in the joy of serving your neighbor and your God.

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 this includes the 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](http://standrewpres-tbay.ca). There you can find various ways of giving from e-transfer to the online donate button that allows you to give by credit card. We are deeply grateful for your generosity.

## Hymn

*Oh for a thousand tongues to sing*

**374**

1. Oh for a thousand tongues to sing  
my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of God's grace.
2. Jesus, the name that charms our fears,  
and bids our sorrows cease—  
'tis music in the sinner's ears;  
'tis life and health and peace.
3. He speaks, and listening to his voice  
new life the dead receive;  
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice;  
the humble poor believe.
4. Hear him, you deaf; you voiceless ones,  
your tongues again employ;  
you blind, behold your Saviour comes,  
and leap, you lame, for joy!
5. My gracious Master and my God,  
assist me to proclaim,  
and spread through all the earth abroad  
the honours of thy name.

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## Benediction

Feel the power of Christ's healing love restoring you.  
Go in peace, offering help and hope to others.  
And may the peace of God always be with you.

[Ministry Matters™ | Worship Connection: September 8, 2024](#)