

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

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

All Saints Sunday – November 3, 2024

## Call to Worship

Here in this place, there are no foreigners,  
for all are welcome in God's house.  
Here in this worship, there is only acceptance,  
for love is the language of faith.  
Here in our lives, there are no divisions,  
for God dwells in each of us.  
Come, be welcomed,  
let us worship in unity and love.

~ Adapted from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2012*, © 2011 Abingdon Press.  
Posted on the **Ministry Matters** website. <http://www.ministrymatters.com/>

## Hymn

### *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty*

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1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation.  
my soul, praise God who alone is your health and salvation.  
Come, all who hear, sisters and brothers draw near,  
joining in glad adoration.
2. Praise to the Lord, who in all things so wondrously reigning  
hides you with sheltering wings, ever gently sustaining.  
Have you not seen how your heart's wishes have been  
granted through God's kind ordaining?
3. Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work, who defends you;  
surely God's merciful goodness here daily attends you;  
ponder anew what the Almighty can do,  
when in great love God befriends you.
4. Praise to the Lord, and with all that is in me adoring,  
all who have life and breath, come with glad  
praises outpouring! Let the Amen sound from God's people again:  
now and forever adoring!

"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty," words by Joachim Neander; translation by Catherine Winkworth.  
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## Prayers of Adoration and Confession

God of promise and purpose,  
in you we live and move and have our being.  
You are the Fountain of life, and you refresh us.  
You are the Light of the world, and you show us the way.  
You are the Spirit of life, and you move in us each new day.  
So we join our voices with the angels and archangels,  
with the saints and disciples of every time and place,  
to worship you as Creator, Healer, and Source of our hope and our joy.

Praise be to you, God most holy, ever Three and ever One,  
world without end. Amen.

**God of goodness and mercy,  
We have heard your call to put our faith into action,  
but fear holds us back.  
We stay silent rather than speak up when things go wrong.  
There is work to be done in Jesus' name,  
but we often seek an easier way.  
Forgive us, O God, and give us courage and commitment  
to serve as your saints in this time and this place,  
whatever the challenges may be.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 24th Sunday after Pentecost. November 3, 2024. Year B.

## **Assurance of Forgiveness**

Beloved, the Lord is loving, merciful, and just.  
Therefore, we are reconciled to God and to one another,  
that we might walk in peace and love.

Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year B, Volume 2 © 2015 Westminster John Knox Press. Page 225

## **Scripture Reading Mark 12:28-34**

<sup>28</sup>One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; <sup>30</sup>you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup>The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” <sup>32</sup>Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; <sup>33</sup>and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’ — this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” <sup>34</sup>When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.

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## **Message No Other Commandment**

Love God and love neighbour. That’s it. All we need to do. So simple. So straightforward a statement. No other commandment greater than these. “Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God, the Lord is one, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.” There is no other commandment greater than these.” (v29-30)

I have always been fascinated with the fact that these appear to be two commandments but Jesus answers with there is no other commandment ...singular ...greater than

these...plural. These two statements are so interconnected there is no separating the two. Still, let's start with taking a look at love the Lord your God.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. On the surface it sounds like the thing to do. If you have any thought of God, it is what one might want to be able to do. Yet, we are here together this All Saints Day, yes, to worship, but for many of us it is even more so because we are remembering someone close to us that has died. Regardless of whether it was someone in this past year or someone years ago, it may be hard to feel like you desire to love God with all your soul, mind, and strength. How can we love God when it feels like death has taken away so much of your love and life? We want to blame God for the hurt. In comfort we entrust the loss, the person to God, but it can be easy to stay bitter, to blame God for our pain.

We forget that God, in the person of Jesus, has suffered death too. I honestly believe that if we are made in God's image, then God knows the pain of loss. God's own loss in a humanity that doesn't know how to love, the darkness that can overcome the emptiness in times of death, and so also grieves with each of us when we grieve.

How does one love God with all their soul and with all their mind and with all their strength? Mysteriously, it doesn't have to come from our brute strength and determination. We have our part in that, but God meets us where we are at in pain, loss, and struggle. Slowly, as we determine to heal, to let God and others in, we find life again. And if we can't get there, it can start with as little as saying God I am here I need you to show up in a way I can recognize.

I have a Beatles' song going through my head with the words,

All you need is love.  
All you need is love.  
All you need is love, love.  
Love is all you need.

It is true. It is that basic but also so complex and layered. All you need is God's love and to love God, but one must first accept that God loves you. Then there is that second part to the one commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." (v31)

In a time when we can think only of how divided we are this seems an impossible ask. And it is. In and of ourselves this is impossible. Remember when Jesus is speaking about your neighbour, he is not just referring to the person next door or across the street or hallway. Our neighbour is any human being. Our neighbour is the one who we totally disagree with about immigrants or wars. Our neighbour is the person sitting on the steps of the church or living in the encampments at the edge of our water ways. Our neighbour is Israel and Palestine, our neighbours are other Christians who don't read and interpret the Bible the way we do. The neighbour is not just those who think and act like we do,

who fit into our boxes about what is acceptable and not. Jesus made no distinction. So really, this is an impossible thing to live out.

There are so many things, so many people that don't meet our personal or corporate approval. It happens in schools when one group of kids decides somehow that they are better than another child and bullying starts. It happens in our hockey arenas and on basketball courts and not necessarily or only with the kids but with the coaches and parents. We only need to look at any screen and we can find groups of people at odds with another. With the U.S. election only days away, the divisions in that land are screaming at us even here in Canada. But it is everywhere, politicians and people are attacking one another. There are great divides when it comes to discussions about self-governance for indigenous people and apologies. Race, culture, religion, borders, rich and poor...one could go on for days about the ways we are divided.

Yet here stands this command, Love God and love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Now I didn't grow up watching Mr. Rogers, but there would be few people listening who wouldn't know who he was. There was even a wonderful movie made about his life back in 2019 with Tom Hanks in the starring role. Mr. Rogers' neighbourhood was a simple place on TV, he was the daily bread of many children, just as many of that same generation grew up watching The Friendly Giant or Mr. Dressup. What all of these shows were about was how to treat your neighbour. How to accept differences and see possibilities. The shows were about loving your neighbour as yourself. It was done through conversation and experience.

But then we realize that life is complicated. Think back to your own childhood. Do you remember wondering why you were supposed hate one person on the school playground? Somehow feeling that if you didn't go along with the hate that it might be you that would be turned upon. Maybe you experienced that. From there the hate, judgement, and exploitation just seem to get reasoned out. Somewhere along the line our experience teaches us that what one values is more important or somehow more valuable than what someone else values, whether it be the colour of one's skin or the politics we align with. With each passing year we find more ways and reasons to judge what and who is important and/or valuable.

As we age, we come to realize we are so far gone that this loving neighbour as oneself is really an impossible task. And it is. In and of ourselves it is impossible to do this. But just maybe we can strive to each day question our understanding of neighbour. Just maybe we can do a kindness that we hadn't done before for someone or some group that we thought we disliked. We can take time for a conversation with someone we don't align with, not to change their thinking but to learn. We can look for a way to experience things and people we don't understand. If each of us did that on a daily, weekly, or even monthly basis what changes would ripple through our church, our families, our

community and maybe even our world. The fear of the unknown about another would loosen its grip on our hearts, minds, and bodies.

There are ways to do this. Join Diversity Thunder Bay, volunteer at the food bank, go to the Masjid when they have an open house. You don't have to immerse yourself in it everyday, but you can take moments to experience and speak with someone else. Smile at the immigrant student working at Walmart, wish them a good day, thank them for their help. You can walk across the street or the hall to your literal neighbour and do a kindness. You can take a look at the action teams our church is developing as these are ways that we are going to work at engaging our neighbours.

You shall love the lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength and you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.

Both seem impossible. Yet when we are able to begin, with faith in God to walk with us in the impossible, we begin to see the possible. I am not naïve enough to think we are going to see peace on earth anytime soon, but when we trust God to work in us, in our grief, in our pain, in our judgement, in our lives, something starts to change within us. When we become image bearers of God in the world then other things start to change around us. Then we find, as Jesus said to the scribe, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." A kingdom not of forced rule, power, and politics, but a kingdom of love, forgiveness, peace, hope, grace, and even joy and learning.

May you know this day that God is with you, that the Holy Spirit is with you as comforter, guide, and teacher, and Jesus Christ goes with you as Saviour and friend. For just as we are to love God and neighbour, God loves you, is with you, and goes with you. Amen.

## **Prayers of the People**

Eternal God,  
On this Sunday marking the faithfulness of all your saints,  
we give you thanks for people in our lives who have shown us  
your loving kindness through their witness to Christ.  
Inspire us by their examples and show us how we too can  
live out our faith in the midst of challenging times.\

God of guidance,  
**Speak into our lives today.**

Loving God,  
You keep calling us to care for neighbours in need  
and show hospitality to strangers in our midst.  
Thank you for your persistent love  
which continues to comfort and challenge us.  
Open our hearts and our eyes so that we can see how  
to offer that love to others as we follow Jesus' example.

God of guidance,  
**Speak into our lives today.**

Living God,  
You bring new life to the discouraged and those facing danger and death.  
Thank you for signs of hope which break into this troubled world  
and defy the powers that stand against you.  
With your Spirit, work for peace in areas of conflict  
and reconciliation between enemies.  
Show us how to stand up for compassion and mutual respect  
in the face of so much anger and ridicule.

God of guidance,  
**Speak into our lives today.**

Creating God,  
we praise you for the beauty of this world  
and the rhythms of nature which sustain us.  
Give us courage to act on behalf of your creation wherever it is under stress.  
Nurture our commitment to act as your stewards of the earth  
and give voice to the suffering of voiceless creatures.

God of guidance,  
**Speak into our lives today.**

Wise God,  
hear us in this time of silence  
as lay before you the people and places on our hearts this day:

Now we join with the followers of Jesus in every time  
and place to pray as he 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**

When we make an offering to God for the work of the church it is a sign of many things...gratitude, hope, trust, and praise to name a few. It is a way of saying that God matters and the work of the church matters, that people matter. So we gather our gifts together and present them as an offering of gratitude, hope, trust, and praise.

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

### *Joyful, joyful we adore you*

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1. Joyful, joyful we adore you,  
God of glory, Lord of love.  
Hearts unfold like flowers before you,  
opening to the sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;  
drive the dark of doubt away;  
giver of immortal gladness,  
fill us with the light of day.
2. All your works with joy surround you;  
earth and heaven reflect your rays;  
stars and angels sing around you,  
centre of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
flowery meadow, flashing sea,  
chanting bird and flowing fountain,  
join to praise you joyfully.
3. You are giving and forgiving,  
ever blessing, ever blessed,  
wellspring of the joy of living,  
ocean depth of happy rest,  
God Creator, Christ our Saviour,  
all are yours who live in love.  
Teach us how to love our neighbour;  
lift us to your joy above.
4. Morning stars, awake the chorus;  
mortals, join with every part,  
for what joy is set before us  
as Christ's love joins heart to heart!  
Ever singing, march we onward,  
victors in the midst of strife;  
joyful music leads us sunward,  
in the triumph song of life.

"Joyful, joyful we adore you," words by Henry Van Dyke. Public domain

## Benediction

Love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your might.  
May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
That you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit  
And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

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