

Call to Worship

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth;

We will lift up joyous songs and sing your praises.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it rejoice.

Let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord,

For God will come to judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

Let us join with all creation to praise the Lord! Let us worship God.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 23rd Sunday after Pentecost. November 16, 2025. Year C.

*Hymn

O Master, let me walk with thee

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1. O Master, let me walk with Thee
in lowly paths of service free;
tell me thy secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

2. Help me the slow of heart to move
by some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.

3. Teach me thy patience, still with Thee
in closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong.

4. in hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broadening way;
in peace that only thou canst give,
with thee, O Master, let me live.

"Oh Master, let me walk with thee." Words by Washington Gladden. Public domain.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of creation and compassion,

You hear the cries of your people. You know our fear and despair.

In your great love, you assure us that you walk with us in Christ Jesus.

In this time of worship, we long to see your new heaven and new earth break through, making your justice known and life fruitful for all your children.

We praise you for the hope you offer us in Christ Jesus.

We trust that you are at work in your church and in creation so all that is broken will be made new. Through our prayers and our praise, strengthen our trust in your promised future, O God, Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of all life.

God of promise and purpose,

You set before us a vision of your new heaven and earth,

yet we confess we easily cling to the past.

We hold on to grudges and resentment.

We grumble about change even when we see the need for it.

We resist making room for those who have faced discrimination in our community.

**Forgive these old ways of thinking and acting.
Create in us hearts made new by your mercy and love. Amen.**

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Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends, hear the good news! While the world judges in order to condemn, God judges with justice, equity and mercy.

All things have been made new in Christ and our sin is forgiven.

Thanks be to God that we can all make a new start.

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Prayer for Understanding

Holy God, you speak words of challenge and words of comfort through the scriptures. Send your Spirit to open our understanding to the word we need to hear this day, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Living Word. Amen.

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Scripture Reading Luke 21:5-19 Watch Out for Doomsday Deceivers

⁵⁻⁶ One day people were standing around talking about the Temple, remarking how beautiful it was, the splendor of its stonework and memorial gifts. Jesus said, “All this you’re admiring so much—the time is coming when every stone in that building will end up in a heap of rubble.”

⁷ They asked him, “Teacher, when is this going to happen? What clue will we get that it’s about to take place?”

⁸⁻⁹ He said, “Watch out for the doomsday deceivers. Many leaders are going to show up with forged identities claiming, ‘I’m the One,’ or, ‘The end is near.’ Don’t fall for any of that. When you hear of wars and uprisings, keep your head and don’t panic. This is routine history and no sign of the end.”

¹⁰⁻¹¹ He went on, “Nation will fight nation and ruler fight ruler, over and over. Huge earthquakes will occur in various places. There will be famines. You’ll think at times that the very sky is falling.

¹²⁻¹⁵ “But before any of this happens, they’ll arrest you, hunt you down, and drag you to court and jail. It will go from bad to worse, dog-eat-dog, everyone at your throat because you carry my name. You’ll end up on the witness stand, called to testify. Make up your mind right now not to worry about it. I’ll give you the words and wisdom that will reduce all your accusers to stammers and stutters.

¹⁶⁻¹⁹ “You’ll even be turned in by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends. Some of you will be killed. There’s no telling who will hate you because of me. Even so, every detail of your body and soul—even the hairs of your head!—is in my care; nothing of you will be lost. Staying with it—that’s what is required. Stay with it to the end. You won’t be sorry; you’ll be saved.

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

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **Thanks be to God.**

Message Stay with it

It seems a daily occurrence to hear of one more thing that is happening to the country to our south. One of the latest is to hear about the ball room that the President of the United States is building. It is nicknamed Trump's ball room. It will be adorned with gold and marble and the most expensive of materials. In fact, we are told that those kinds of changes are happening in the White House itself. In order for the ball room to be built that East Wing of the White House has been demolished. These stories of a man in a significant position of power doing such things, in some ways, seem to mirror the story told about Harold's Temple in Jerusalem in the time of Jesus.

Now this wasn't really Harold's temple. This was actually the second temple that had been built in Jerusalem and it was there before Harold got into power, but he did make it something spectacular. Harold did a lot of building projects. It was his way of showing his power and dominance. It was also because, well, he was pretty self-absorbed. This was a man who killed his own wife and some children because he was determined to keep his power and even if it were his family that he deemed a threat.

And this temple was spectacular. It is reported that it was pure white and much of it clad with gold. The scripture reading itself says that those walking with Jesus were "remarking how beautiful it was, the splendor of its stonework and memorial gifts."¹ This was a remarkable structure and though the Jewish people were not a fan of Harold and his way of wielding power through violence and submission of the people, they were pretty impressed by their beautiful Temple. Even if Harold was the one who had created the opulence, it was still viewed as the centre of Jewish faith and the place where God resided.

Yet there is Jesus, doing what Jesus does, putting everything into perspective, a God perspective. Jesus walking with those who were admiring the Temple said, "All this you're admiring so much—the time is coming when every stone in that building will end up in a heap of rubble."² Interestingly enough, those with him don't ask how or why, they ask when. One might wonder about that. However, they already understood that God's power was greater than any earthly power. So, they ask "When?"

Think about it, we often pray or ask, when will all this end. People have made a habit over the aeons of trying to predict when the world would end. Not necessary *how* it would

¹ [*The Message \(MSG\)*](#). Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

² Ibid.

end, though there are some who would speculate. The question is most often about *when*.

In our thoughts and conversations, in our experience we ask when will the suffering end. When will wars end and peace come? When will health care and education be equally available to all at a cost that everyone can afford? When will those in power pay attention to the needs of those who have no power? When will things on earth be as in heaven?

We do ask other questions, like how these things will come to pass, and what needs to be done in order for it to happen? Yet, most often the question is, when? That may be because it seems that history repeats itself so we know that “Nation will fight nation and ruler fight ruler, over and over. Huge earthquakes will occur in various places. There will be famines. You’ll think at times that the very sky is falling.”³ Persecution continues.

Jesus answer to this is endurance. “Staying with it—that’s what is required. Stay with it to the end. You won’t be sorry; you’ll be saved.”

This is all very mystifying if you consider that when this gospel was written the people had witnessed the destruction of the Temple in 70AD. Which means that Luke is writing about these things years after it happened, years after Jesus’ death and years after the Temple had been destroyed, and yet, Luke choses this story to share with those who at the time were living out their faith, trusting God with their very lives.

Now I will say, I find passages such as this difficult to preach on. When there has been so much suffering in the world I, like so many of us, wonder why God doesn’t just swoop down and fix it. Why do we have to have so much suffering? If there is a God, why are children abused? Why are not the resources of power and wealth used to do more good than harm? Why cancer or heart disease or whatever physical ailment? Why a crisis of drug abuse or even the violence that goes along with the drug trade? Why sex trafficking, mental health crisis, the list could go on and on.

And really that is what Jesus is saying. This has always been the case with humankind. Structures do not last, empires crumble, nothing stays great forever, life is a struggle, however, the one thing that endures is God’s presence and faithfulness through it all. God not once...not once...promised a life without pain and suffering, at least not until heaven and earth are one. God promised and promises to be with us.

Somehow in some way, God is always with us.

³ Ibid.

And we are called to endure. It doesn't mean that we don't fight for a better world. What we are called to is endurance in the midst of strife. This is not endurance for the sake of making it through, it is endurance that stands as a witness to the hope we have in God.

Historian and theologian Diana Butler Bass writes, "...Jesus described a robust endurance — persistence, tenacity, wisdom, and strength. He said that God's people would be persecuted and ridiculed. Why? For living with the sure knowledge that what Herod built will fall. Jesus' followers understand that what every egomaniacal power-hungry human has ever built will fall."⁴

However, God's people also understand that God is eternal, love is eternal, hope is eternal. Butler Bass follows up with these words, "The answer to *when* isn't a date assigned on a calendar. Jesus' followers have a different sense of time. Time isn't a deadline. Instead, it is a journey to hope through endurance. Endure in love. Love of God. Love of neighbor. Endure in what is real. Persist. Resist. Be brave and strong."⁵

Time isn't a deadline; it is a journey to hope through endurance. A different sense of time. That is truly profound. We so often think of time as a line from here to there. Our birthdays come year after year and we get one year older, another trip around the sun. There is birth, life, and death. A line from here to there. We see trips in that way; they start on this date and end on that date. They start here and end there. But what if our understanding of time isn't God's understanding of time?

What if this journey of faith is something different? What if faith is not at all about getting through life, but rather living life, with respect, wisdom, hope, grace, and love, along with a healthy respect for God? What if faith is about getting to know God's provision in our time now through the power of the Holy Spirit living and working in and through us?

This changes the way we look at life. Do we still wish that suffering would end? Of course! But when we look at life as a wandering journey of deepening faith, hope, and love, rather than a destination, then I wonder if we get closer to what is intended for our lives.

Maybe in the days to come we can continue to work for a world that is free from tyranny, illness, and injustice, all the while living into the hope that we find in Jesus who came to us as God in flesh and blood, as a person. God who did not keep himself separate from our suffering, but endured even to the point of death on a cross. God who loved the world

⁴ Butler Bass, Diana. [Sunday Musings](#) When, when, when? Accessed November 16, 2025.

⁵ Ibid.

so much that becoming one of us was the way to reconcile us into God's grace. God did not sacrifice us, God sacrificed Godself and this out of love.

May the knowledge of God's love for you, the hope we have in Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit help you to stay with it. To stay with it with a robust endurance. And stick to it attitude of persistence, tenacity, wisdom, and strength.

All this we ask through the one who created us, loves us, and is with us. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God of our past and our future, God of healing and hope,
We come before you with grateful hearts trusting that you walk with us through all the times of our lives. We give you thanks for all the benefits we share in a nation with many resources and many opportunities. Yet we remember before you the many who do not have enough and cannot see their way forward. We remember before you those living with hunger and communities struggling with the impact of fire and storm, earthquake and famine.

We pray for all those working to relieve suffering in so many precious lives here and around the world.

God of these present times,
We give you thanks that we live in a country of relative peace and good order, a place where injustices past and present become subjects of investigation. We pray for the work of healing and reconciliation engaging Indigenous communities with other citizens in this land. Open hearts in mutual understanding and provide opportunities for common enterprise.

We pray for those who have come to Canada, fleeing violence and deprivation in their homelands. Provide comfort and support through the generosity of neighbours and protect newcomers from misunderstanding and discrimination. Guide us to create a sense of home that all can share.

God of time beyond our imagining,
We give you thanks for all we learn through scientific investigation that stretches us to reimagine your creation in its vast mystery and beauty. Thank you for increasing insight in medical science and the possibilities it adds to your gifts of hope and healing.

We pray for all those who work in health care, for patients waiting for treatment, and for those who find no relief for their symptoms.

Bless them with your Spirit of courage and comfort.

Thank you for increasing insight in climate science and the awareness it gives about the impact of our lives on the wellbeing of the earth.

Create better agreement and cooperation in our communities to protect the earth for future generations by the ways we adapt our lifestyles now.

Bless us all with your Spirit of courage and commitment.

God of all life and each life,

In these moments of silence we hold before you those on our hearts this day who need to know you are near and that we care for them too:

Make us signs of hope and healing for every life we touch for we are the followers of Jesus who dare to pray together the words that 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

Each week we pray for the coming of God's Kingdom. Though we do not know exactly what this will look like, we offer our gifts to God for the work of the Kingdom here and now.

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There are various ways that people give to this congregation for our work as God's people, through signing up for a monthly donation, or sending an e-transfer.

Check out the opportunities to support St. Andrew's ministry at our website, [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#)

*Hymn

How firm a foundation

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1. How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in God's excellent word!
What more can God say than to you hath been said,
to you that for refuge to Jesus have fled?
2. "Fear not, I am with thee; oh be not dismayed!
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
upheld by my righteous, omnipotent hand.
3. "When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
the rivers of woe shall not thee overflow,
for I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
and sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
4. "When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
my grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply:
the flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine."

5. “The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not - I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never - no, never - no, never forsake!”

“How firm a foundation.” Words from K in Rippon’s Selection of Hymns 1787. Public Domain.

Benediction

Luke records Jesus saying “The kingdom of God is within you.”
So go with courage, carrying seeds of the kingdom,
sowing justice, kindness and mercy in Jesus’ name.
And take with you the blessing of the God who made you,
the Christ who mends you,
and the Spirit who gives you life. Amen.

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