St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

November 23, 2025 - Reign of Christ

Call to Worship

Lord Jesus Christ, You have called us together,
To rejoice in who You are.

And delight in who we are because of You!
We stand amazed in Your presence,

Because, O Lord, You live your life in us!

~ posted on **Lectionary Sermons** *Worship Archive.* http://www.lectionarysermons.com/ARCH-W.html

***Hymn** *O God beyond all praising* **448**

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of majesty and mercy,
Three in One and One in Three,
we give you thanks and praise for your commitment to your creation.
In Christ, you have turned the world upside down,
revealing your strength through weakness, and your power through compassion.
In the cross of Christ you taught us
that no hopeless situation or frightening possibility is beyond your reach.
We praise you for your love at work around us and within us,
always able to do more than we can ask or even imagine.
Receive our love and our loyalty this day, our Sovereign and our Saviour. Amen.

God of wisdom and warning,
we confess that we often prefer our own plans to your purposes.
We shrink from acts of service that seem too demanding.
Forgive us when our commitment wavers
and we think someone else will take up the challenges we face.
Inspire us with the example of Jesus,
and energize us with your Spirit to follow him as our Shepherd,
wherever he leads. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 24th Sunday after Pentecost. November 23, 2025. Reign of Christ. Year C.

Assurance of Forgiveness

This is the good news: God remembers!
Not our sins, not our foolish lives, not our rebellion.
God remembers us - and redeems us!

God prepares the way for us –
the way to grace, to hope, to new life.
Joyfully, we offer our thanks to God. Amen.

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Prayer for Understanding

God of truth and justice, send us your Holy Spirit as we hear the Scriptures read and interpreted. Through your Word, grant that we might see your truth and justice unfolding in the world you love. Amen

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Scripture Reading Colossians 1:11-20

11 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power,
so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully **12** giving thanks to the
Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. **13** He
has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his
beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, **16** for in him all things
in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or
dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for
him. **17** He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** He is the
head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that
he might come to have first place in everything. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was
pleased to dwell, **20** and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things,
whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

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

Message What are you talking about

It is not an uncommon sight, in fact, it is more likely that we see people and find ourselves with our head in the clouds. Once, if you said of someone that their heads were in the clouds, you might mean that they were day dreaming, absent minded, or distracted. It might even mean that they were distracted by things that were not the practical things of day to day living. And that still is the case, but it can also look like those who have their heads buried in their phones, tablets, or whatever device has them no longer focused on the things of earth, but rather buried in the mass of information that takes one's focus or attention off of the physical world in which we live and has them in a technological cloud. It is called the "cloud" for a reason.

Now this scripture passage from the first chapter of Colossians seems to be somewhere in the clouds. It contains lofty language that is hard to unpack as it is so theologically dense. One might think that the Apostle Paul had his head in the clouds as he was writing this particular letter. Each sentence in this passage seems to be talking about more than we might want to consider. It is steeped in claims about who Christ is. Truly a fitting reading for a day we refer to as Christ the King or Reign of Christ Sunday.

To bring this back to down to earth some details about the context of letter might be helpful. First of all, Paul has never met these people. This church was founded by someone else, and he has had a visit that has informed him about some of the challenges being faced by the fledging group. None the least of which are those who seemed to have their heads in the clouds. They think only things that are spiritual are of importance; the body and earth take second place. The other thing you may find helpful to know is that Paul is writing to them from prison. He is not free; he is very much aware of the challenges of the being a human being who does not have his freedom and for who power and authority are being wielded over him.

It is from this place that Paul writes to this group residing in Colossae and shares these words that speak to who Christ is. And as we end what is the church year and next Sunday head into Advent and Christmas, it is important we remember that this is a full circle moment. Christ came as a baby, God in the flesh, God as a human baby. Then God lived among people. God the most powerful chose to come to us in human flesh and blood to teach, heal, love, and forgive, and then die. This death, undertaken by human hands, showed the humility God was willing to go through, facing death, dying in a must abhorrent way possible at the time, but then defeat death in rising from the grave, returning to God and then sending us the Holy Spirit.

To hear this, it is no wonder that the world has a hard time with the Christian faith. Gods do not humble themselves in this way…people are not this important. And why would God care? What are we that God is mindful of us?

We are God's created beings. The whole world is God's created world, and God seeing that the world was in trouble sent the Son who was always with God and is God, did this out of love to reconcile us back to God. To restore relationship with God in ways that it was meant to be. Ways of love, grace, and forgiveness.

Paul has absolutely no trouble writing these words from a place that might seem to have no hope at all, except that for Paul hope did not come from the world, or from within himself…hope was and is from God. Now this is not hope that takes us out of the world. We still have to live in the world, but how we live in the world changes when we understand that all things are lived within a larger realm of heaven on earth. We are more than beings that are born, live, then die. And though we don't know what it all looks like and means, we trust that, because Jesus was the first born of a promise, that we will never die.

And absolutely *all* things fall under the realm of Jesus. Hear the words again from this scripture and listen to how many times the word "all" is used to show that every thing is held in Christ. Beside that, this passage is so dense that to hear it a second time can be

helpful. Okay now, let's listen for that little word, all… you may want to use your fingers to keep track.

> **11** May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. **13** He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
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> **15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, **16** for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. **17** He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. **19** For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

Did you get nine times?

In Christ everything has it's being. Nothing is beyond God in Christ. He made it. He lived it. He loves it. He's got it. You, me, all people, all the world. Those you hate, those you love, the politics, the religion, the spiritual, the earthly. Nothing is beyond God in Christ. Though now things feel pretty messed up, even as they did in the time of Paul with the Roman Empire controlling what for them was the known world, God is in the world, God will reconcile all things, and in the end it will be good.

You might be asking "when?" When will we be able to know and see and feel that God has got this? We can know it through the power of the Holy Spirit who is working in us and in the world at all times. It is also that God choses to continue that work of bringing heaven on earth through us very imperfect people.

You may also have heard me say last week, that God's sense of time and our own sense of linear or chronological time are not at all the same thing. And so, when we say that things will come to pass in God's time, it is not a cop out, but rather an acknowledgement that we cannot fully understand the ways of God. If we could then what need is there of God? If I can figure God out, if God is no longer part mystery, then what need is there of faith?

Yet, lived experience, that of the first Apostles, that of Paul himself, and that of the countless people who have called themselves followers of Christ, we know God. This

faith would have disappeared if there was nothing to it. People, including the first disciples and Paul, would not have died for something that was false. Paul would not have written as he did from jail if this was not something he knew to be true.

Living in our own time. So far removed from the eye witness accounts of Christ, we carry the stories, we live our own experiences of faith and encounters of the Holy. The Christian faith is a living faith. It is down to earth, made of earth, but it is also lofty and in the clouds kind of stuff.

Sometimes it feels like we do not know what we are talking about. How can we know the things of God? Yet, we do know. We know through story, song, answered prayer, through the experience of things seen and unseen, that God is at work.

God the maker of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ…the one who walked among us, who experienced princes and principalities, worldly kingdom and power, died at the hands of that power… Christ reigns. Jesus reigns, not as one who desires power for power's sake but power that is the epitome of grace, justice, and forgiveness and this because of love. Love for creation. Love for each person. Just is Lord and King, the Lord and King of Love. This is the one whom we adore. This is the one that we pray to and ask to be Lord of our lives. When we do so we can easily say, in a time when worldly power seeks power over us, that Christ is the King and may Christ reign in the world with the justice, power, grace, and love that is God. Amen

Prayers of the People

Lord Jesus Christ,
we give you thanks that you reign through love
as the power that embraces the world with mercy and hope.
Thank you for revealing that to trust is wisdom,
to forgive is the best way to deal with enemies,
and to serve is the best way to lead.
We pray that, through the grace of your kingdom,
each beloved creature and citizen will know safety and satisfaction in their homes.
Let the vision of your peaceable kingdom take root in our hearts,
bringing healing to families and communities,
and in every place wounded by violence or destruction.

Jesus, Prince of Peace, ***reign in us and among us****.*

Lord Jesus Christ,
We give you thanks for reaching out to those on the margins
and those others shunned,
so that each one knew they belonged in your kingdom.
We pray for those who face discrimination or insecurity in our communities,
longing for respect and a chance to thrive.

Teach us how to live differently as neighbours,
to acknowledge and work with others we've never worked with before.
Lead us by your Spirit
to share in your work of mending the world.

Jesus, Prince of Peace, ***reign in us and among us****.*

Lord Jesus Christ,
Thank you for enduring the pain of the cross and the darkness of the tomb
to show us there is life beyond death through your resurrecting love.
We pray for those who are grieving a loss this day,
the loss of someone beloved,
the loss of love or hope or trust,
the loss of opportunity or security or future plans.

Be present with all who experience the sadness and disruption of a loss,
and bring each one comfort and courage.

Jesus, Prince of Peace, ***reign in us and among us****.*

Lord Jesus Christ,
This day we pray for your church at work in the world,
confronting the challenges and changes of these times.
Unite us in witness and service,
and encourage us when difficulties arise,
for we are your people, committed to the unfolding of your reign among us,
as we pray the words you 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

The offering is one way to respond to God's gracious provision in our lives. Sometime we have more than enough, other times finances are tight and life more challenging. Regardless, we come before God and give what we can to support the work of the church in ministering to others. We gather our gifts together and present them as an offering of gratitude and praise.

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 etransfer.

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** *Christ is the King* **612**

Benediction

May God grant us spiritual wisdom and understanding
so that we may be able to see things from a spiritual point of view,
and so that we lives may be worthy of God, and pleasing to God.

And may we bear fruit in all that we do,
and continue to grow in our understanding of who God is.

And may God give us the strength we need
to endure whatever comes with patience and even joy,
always giving thanks to God who, through Jesus Christ,
has given us new life. re:Worship: Proper 29 C