

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

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

5th Sunday of Easter - May 3, 2026

Call to Worship

Easter people, in the midst of our questions and doubts, Jesus answers:

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

In the midst of our worry and distress, Jesus assures us:

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

In the midst of misinformation, confusion, and distrust, Jesus reminds us:

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

In the midst of dead ends and impossible challenges, Jesus shows us:

I am the way, the truth, and the life.

Come, let us worship as we learn to follow Christ, our way, our truth, and our life.

Come, let us worship! Thanks be to God! Amen.

Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, October 2025. [Discipleship Ministries | Week 4 – Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A...](#)

Hymn

All the way my Saviour leads me

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1. All the way my Saviour leads me;
what have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt his tender mercy
who through life has been my guide?
Heavenly peace, divinest comfort,
here by faith in him to dwell;
for I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.
2. All the way my Saviour leads me,
cheers each winding path I tread,
gives me grace for every trial,
feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
and my soul athirst may be,
gushing from the rock before me,
lo, a spring of joy I see.
3. All the way my Saviour leads me,
oh the fullness of his love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
in my Father's house above.
When my spirit, clothed immortal,
wings its flight to realms of day,
this my song through endless ages,
"Jesus led me all the way!"

"All the way my Saviour leads me." Words by Fanny J. Crosby. Public domain.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Steadfast God,

you are our refuge in times of trouble

our shelter when we are afraid, and our dwelling place forever.

In you alone we place our trust for you set the way before in Christ Jesus

and your Spirit gives us courage to follow him.

And so, we offer you our worship and love
as the Source of life for the world,
as the Son who preached the truth of grace and mercy,
and the Spirit who guides us this day and always.

Trusting in who you are, knowing who we are and what we have done,
we confess to you our sins:

**Steadfast God,
we confess Jesus as the way, the truth and the life for us,
yet we often fail to follow him, too often gone our own way,
distorted the truth and led hollow lives.
Forgive us for falling short of your purpose for our lives.
Give us courage to follow Jesus,
who continues to show us the way. Amen.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 5th Sunday of Easter. May 3, 2026. Year A.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Know that, in Christ, you are forgiven.
Accept God's grace and forgiveness this day,
and extend it to others for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 5th Sunday of Easter. May 3, 2026. Year A.

Prayer for Understanding

Gracious God,
send us your Spirit to guide our understanding as we listen to the Scriptures
so that we may follow you more closely, know your truth more fully,
and share in your gift of life more abundantly,
through Christ, your Living Word. Amen

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 5th Sunday of Easter. May 3, 2026. Year A.

Scripture Reading John 14:1-14 Jesus the Way to the Father

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” ⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.” ⁸ Philip said to him, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The

words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

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

Message Which Way?

If ever there was a passage of scripture that has caused harm this would be one of them. There are verses in this particular reading that people have used to exclude others in ways that have been harmful likely since they were written. Which brings me to context for just a moment.

Here we are just over a month out from Easter. Our texts have been about what happened after the resurrection and the people who encountered Jesus in those days after the resurrection and before the ascension. You have likely heard the statement, “Location, location, location!” Well, this is one of those moments when location is the context. The reading, as I said, is coming after our celebration of Easter and before the Ascension, but it is also important to remember two other things. First scripture was not written in the moment. If you were to open your Bible you would see that this story actually comes before the crucifixion. It is told as part of what is called the farewell discourse, Jesus’ words to his closest friends before he dies. He knows he will die, but the followers of Jesus are yet hopeful for an overturning of a regime.

This story takes place after Jesus washes the disciples’ feet and foretells how he will be betrayed by one of them, and how Peter will deny him three times before the cock crows. And as he speaks to them about dwelling places and how he will prepare a place for them, he is attempting to prepare them for when he will no longer be physically present with them. They haven’t figured that out, as you may have deduced by Thomas’ statement “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”¹ But Jesus is trusting that what he says in this moment will resonate and be remembered later. And the fact that we find these stories in the gospels and particularly here in John attests to the fact that these things were remembered and written down as important.

But let’s get back to the story, the retelling, and how, after the fact, some of these statements in this scripture passage have been used in ways that are not helpful.

This first part talks about dwelling places and this wonderful passage has brought comfort to grieving people for centuries. First of all, the statement “Do not let your hearts

¹ All scripture quotations taken from, *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.” English has a hard time translating the Greek well as words in English just don’t line up perfectly and so we miss the fact that this is not about individuals, though it can be read that way, it is more so about being together, in community, don’t let your collective heart be troubled.

Another word that can be translated more than one way is *believe*. This word is found in verses 1 and then 10 through 12. The translation of believe could have as easily be trust rather than believe. *Trust* in God; *trust* also in me. At verse 10 “Do you not *trust* that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” or “*Trust* me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then *trust* because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who *trusts* in me will also do the works that I do...”

Suddenly this passage goes from feeling very exclusive, like only if you are a Christian and believe in Jesus can you experience God, to a rather more inclusive view of how God works in the world. And to be sure, I am not attempting to water down our understanding of the Christian faith. It is a faithful expression of God in the world. Jesus was clear that “Whoever has seen [Jesus] has seen the Father” But maybe this is not the only way that God works in the world.

We believe that all people are made in the image of God, not just Christians, and if that is so, personally, I have to trust that God is at work in all kinds of ways in the world, not just in ways that I have come to understand. There is that word again. Trust. It is about trusting that God is at work and that Jesus was who he said he was. For Christians, Jesus is the expression of God in the world. At Christmas we proclaim Jesus as Emmanuel, God with us. And that understanding permeates everything that we read in scripture and how we experience, know, and trust that the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Comforter, the Teacher, is at work in and through us and others now in Jesus’ crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

Let’s once again look at the words of scripture, remembering that this story is told after the fact. It has been remembered, shared, written down to demonstrate that there is something worth thinking about here. These words often sound exclusive, but it is because the context is the fledgling Christian community that is trying to live faithfully into what they now know to be true of God, of Jesus, of the Holy Spirit, and of each other. These words were never meant to harm but to bring hope, peace, and build relationship between those who had come to believe that Jesus truly is the Son of God in ways that could be hopeful, filled with peace, and in relationship to others as well.

“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.” What if we looked at this as more inclusive of God’s good creation and the diversity of the world and humanity. And to dwell is not about a physical place it is more about being in relationship. It is about abiding in a relationship with God. Again, we make scripture so personal, and that is fine, it is good, it is comforting, but we must never forget that scripture is written for people in community, in relationship, it is never so personal that it excludes other people as individuals or as community.

It means that there can be very diverse expressions of faith in God and that is a challenging statement in a time when religions of all variations and variety are being used as a weapon. However, that too is nothing new. And one might say then, how do we know who has got it right? A couple of things here. We are not the judge...God is. But one thing that can help us understand where God is in this is if you see people acting from a place of love. And maybe that brings us to verse 11, “*Trust* me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then *trust* because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who *trusts* in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”

And what did Jesus do? Jesus loved people, especially those who were suffering and on the margins. Jesus healed them, taught them, fed them, and talked with them. Jesus loved.

That is the mark of abiding, of dwelling, of relationship. The mark is love. If any faith demonstrates love they are demonstrating who God is. For Christians, we love because God first loved us and that love was demonstrated as God, in Jesus, made a new way for us to be in relationships of love, forgiveness, hope, grace, and so much more, with God and with each other, the neighbour we know, the family we know, and the neighbour we don't know.

Faith is a gift, but as Christians, works are our response to gift of forgiveness, of grace and of love that is offered to us through our belief in Christ Jesus. We work to make the world a more loving place, a place where every life is precious and valuable. A world where justice prevails and those who would harm others are held accountable, but also extended grace as they repent of the harm they have caused.

One last comment, as it is likely one of the questions I am asked often, and it has to do with praying in Jesus' name. In verse 13 we read, “I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

Again, remember this was written to and for communities of people who had experienced Jesus' love in life and in death. This is written in the context of community, knowing the sacrifice of love that was experience in and through Christ. This means that your prayers must align with that of love.

I think that this verse is maybe made clearer through Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of scripture in *The Message*. Here we read, “From now on, whatever you request along the lines of who I am and what I am doing, I'll do it. That's how the Father will be seen for who he is in the Son. I mean it, whatever you request in this way, I'll do.”²

So which way of expression of God is the right way? Which way is the right way to pray? Which way is the best way to be in community? Which way is the right way to live? The

² [The Message \(MSG\)](#) Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by [Eugene H. Peterson](#)

answer continuously comes back to love. If you do all things from a place of love, trusting that the source of that love is God then you can determine for yourself which is the way. You will know the way the truth and the life because you know that God is love, that you are loved, and that our highest calling is to love.

In Christ, with Christ, and through Christ. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

As the sun's presence lengthens in the northern hemisphere, trees burst into full green and flowers blossom in field and forest, we recognize the blessing of these days.

Many feel the bubbling up of joy in response to Jesus' resurrection. Many know the gifts of light, laughter, and love which confirm our growing into abundant LIFE. And we're eager to *taste and see the Lord is good!*

Sometimes that happens as the foundation of relationships grows more real in our congregation. Sometimes it happens as serendipity when we welcome strangers and find they become dear friends. Sometimes it happens as one gift inspiring another and soon the box is overflowing with what is offered.

Today, you're invited to share what you have already received: your time, your talent, your treasure (including moments of your life translated into the money).

Let's use this opportunity as one way to celebrate the One who calls us into marvelous light!

[May 3, 2026 - Center for Faith and Giving](#)

May you be encouraged to visit our website at [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#) and give a financial gift to support the work of this ministry.

Prayers of the People

Holy One, God with us,

We give you thanks for the promises Jesus gave to all his followers,
that in him we see your face.

He has shown us the face of your mercy and compassion,
so we thank you for understanding us better than we know ourselves.

He has shown us the face of your peace and justice,
so we thank you for calling us to make a difference in the world for his sake.

Holy One,

in Christ, you show us the Way that leads through paths of service.

We pray for those who feel lost or alone,
those who live with anxiety or doubt their own value,
and all who cannot imagine a purpose for themselves.

God of the Way,

lead those who are struggling to find the hope you offer
through the assurance of your love.

Holy One,
in Christ, you show us the Truth that is revealed through costly love.
In these days when lies are easily disguised,
we pray for those who have put their faith in false hope and flimsy promises,
those deceived by empty promises from the power hungry,
and any misled by conspiracy theories that circulate each day:

God of the Truth,
reveal the shallowness of things that distract or mislead us
and give us courage to stand for truth, even when it is unpopular.

Holy One,
in Christ, you show us the Life
that overcomes death through your resurrecting power.
We pray for those facing illness or grief,
any who live with deep sadness, depression or despair,
and those whose lives are diminished by discrimination in action or attitude.

God of Life,
support all those who are suffering
and make your justice known in our land.

Holy One,
challenge us to find renewed purpose in following in the footsteps of Christ
so that in our living and loving, your kingdom of justice and love is revealed;
for we pray the words he taught us, saying:

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

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We gather our gifts together and present them as an offering of gratitude and praise.

Hymn

I know not why such wondrous grace

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1. I know not why such wondrous grace
to me God has made known;
nor why, unworthy as I am,
Christ claimed me for his own,
but I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that Christ is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.
2. I know not why this saving faith
to me God did impart,
nor how believing in the word
brought peace into my heart,
but I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that Christ is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.
3. I know not how the Spirit moves,
convincing me of sin,
revealing Jesus through the word,
creating faith in him,
but I know whom I have believed
and am persuaded that Christ is able
to keep that which I've committed
unto him against that day.

"I know not why such wondrous grace." Words by Daniel W. Whittle. Public domain.

Benediction

Don't let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God, and in God's son, Jesus Christ,
who is the way, the truth and the life,
and through whom we come to know the Father.
And may the blessing of God,
the grace of Jesus Christ,
and the presence of the Holy Spirit
go with you as you leave this place. Amen.

[re:Worship: Easter 5 Year A](#)