

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay

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

Harvest Sunday – October 11, 2026

Call to Worship

We gather in God's holy presence, where God embraces us with grace.

Here God will transform us into disciples.

We glorify God, who yearns for justice for the last and the least.

Here God will write compassion on our hearts.

We give thanks to God for God's persistent love that seeks us out.

Here God will breathe the Word of Life into our lives,

and so we will praise our God!

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 20th Sunday after Pentecost. October 11, 2026. Year A. Harvest Sunday.

Hymn

Come, ye thankful people, come

803

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| 1. Come, ye thankful people, come,
raise the song of harvest home;
all is safely gathered in,
ere the winter storms begin:
God, our Maker, doth provide
for our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come:
raise the song of harvest home. | 2. All the world is God's own field,
fruit unto God's praise to yield;
wheat and tares together sown,
unto joy or sorrow grown;
first the blade and then the ear,
then the full corn shall appear.
Lord of harvest, grant that we
wholesome grain and pure may be. |
| 3. For the Lord our God shall come,
and shall take the harvest home;
from the field shall in that day
all offences purge away;
give the angels charge at last
in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store
in God's storehouse evermore. | 4. Even so, Lord, quickly come
to thy final harvest home:
gather thou thy people in,
free from sorrow, free from sin;
there, forever purified,
in thy presence to abide.
Come, with all thine angels, come:
raise the glorious harvest home. |

"Come, ye thankful people, come." Words by Henry Alford. Public domain.

Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of all time and space,

You have called people to meet you over the centuries,

in many different places, in many different ways.

We praise you for welcoming us, receiving us as we are.

You hear our prayers and claim us as your own.

In this hour of worship, send your Spirit upon us

to revive our faith and guide our footsteps

in the way of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Saviour.

**God of all life and each life,
you know all about us, our deepest concerns and our fondest hopes.
We confess we are often anxious to see results.
We lose patience when we cannot see progress.
We blame others rather than seek solutions.
Forgive us. Help us claim your peace when our hearts are anxious,
Knowing that Jesus wants to heal us and love us. Amen**

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Assurance of Forgiveness

God challenges us, God encourages us.
God confronts us, and God accepts us.
God works wonders in our midst and gives us the eyes, the hearts,
the souls to see such miracles.

**God forgives us, God guides us through the wilderness of the world,
God leads us home. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

[Lectionary Liturgies: Liturgy with communion for October 13, 2019 \(Pentecost 18/Trinity 17/Proper 23/Ordinary 28 - C\)](#)

Prayer for Understanding

God of prophets and parables, we gather to listen to the Scriptures read and proclaimed. By your Spirit, grant us fresh understanding, and challenge us to live according to your transforming grace. Amen.

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Scripture Reading Luke 17:11-19 Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy

¹¹ Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance ¹³ and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed. ¹⁵ One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶ He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?" ¹⁸ Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" ¹⁹ Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

- Luke 17:12 The Greek word traditionally translated leprosy was used for various diseases affecting the skin.
- Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by [Biblica, Inc.®](#) Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

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

Message Rise and Go

In the archives of Northwestern University there is a story of a man named Edward Spencer. Let me share it with you...

Edward Spencer was born in 1835 in Stephenson, Illinois. He was the first child born in this frontier town, which later became Rock Island, Illinois. He

attended Garrett Biblical Institute with the intention of becoming a minister.

In the early hours of September 8, 1860, the steamboat Lady Elgin collided with the schooner Augusta on Lake Michigan. Spencer was among a group of students from Garrett and other volunteers who worked to rescue survivors of the shipwreck. In total, he rescued 17 people from drowning. Spencer never fully recovered physically from his efforts. His physical condition led him to leave school and return home to Rock Island, where he ran a stove and hardware store and acted as secretary of the Rock Island County Bible Society. He later moved to California and lived on a farm. He died in California in February 1917.¹

Now we know that there were others out there saving lives, but for some reason this story of Spencer Edwards has stood the test of time. But to the point of this sermon, it is said that he was asked years later, if there was any particular memory he wished to share and he said “Only this, of the sixteen or seventeen people I saved, not one thanked me.”

I suspect this wasn’t because there were not grateful. But in the moment, I would think that most people, including ourselves, are not able to fully comprehend all that has happened to them and those around them when it is a time of fear, hope, joy, anxiety, or any mix of emotions and circumstances.

More than once I have heard people say, I wish I could find that person again, or have an opportunity to say thank you. I just wasn’t thinking about it at the time, I was so overwhelmed with emotion or deep into the situation. Some people are able to seek out those they wish to thank, but I think it is more often that to trace back to a person who has helped can be more difficult than one might anticipate. So, it may not be surprising that in the story of the healing of ten lepers only one turns back and goes to thank Jesus.

Imagine this scene. You are an outcast in society. Whatever skin disease you have has caused you to be considered “unclean.” Meaning you can’t live with your family; you are outside the normal functioning of the community. You live with others, but all of you are in the same boat, unable to participate the normal activity of daily living in and with family, friends, work, or social events. Then you hear that Jesus is entering your town. His reputation for healing has gone before him and instead of shouting the warning to stay away from them, as was required so that others would not become unclean, they call out him, in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!”

And Jesus simply says, go and show yourself to the priest. You may wonder at that statement, but it was a requirement in the time, that, should you find yourself healed, the

¹ [Spencer, Edward, 1835-1917 | Archival and Manuscript Collections](#) Accessed October 11, 2026.

priest had to vouch for it so that you could once again join family and friends as part of the community. So of course they head off, trusting that this guy is healing them as he has done for so many others. It is only as they are going on their way that they are healed or as we read, cleansed.

Can you imagine what that must have felt like?

I often speak to people who come to the door of the church and they just want healing in their lives, but like the lepers, they are seen as the fringe of society, they are not integrated. We make wide circles around them to avoid the possibility that somehow their troubles and uncleanness might touch us and make us unclean too.

I suspect that are those of us who in some way also feel that there is something about us that is unclean. Maybe it is anger that seeps into your relationships, maybe it is your attitude that hurts rather than brings wholeness. Maybe it is addiction that has separated you from community. For some it is having been molested or some sexual misconduct they have participated in or another has taken upon them that has made them feel unclean.

I understand that one, as I was one who was molested by various individuals in my young life. Few of them were connected to each other and I began to think that I was the one that was unclean. That there was something in me that made boys and men think that they could do these things to me. Healing from those thoughts, emotions and triggers has taken decades and it is something that I continue to deal with.

So when those ten men have the hope and knowledge and experience that they are healed, their emotions, like a wave, get them moving on to the priest, healing as they go, knowing that they are going to get to be with their loved ones, living with them, participating in the world around them once again, and they just go. They do as Jesus says and as their own laws would have expected.

So why is this one man singled out as doing something to take notice of? What about his actions made a difference for Jesus?

I think there are a couple of things to note here. First, it was a Samaritan that turned to come back and thank Jesus. This was someone that was viewed as unworthy, other than, those who were accepted. Jesus in telling this story is saying there is something to learn from unexpected people in unexpected places.

I think there is also more to consider about why this story resonates for the Gospel writer and for us. I wonder if it is the fact that the man saw himself healed and then realized that it was because of this one man, Jesus, that he would live in fullness of life again. He had the presence of mind to stop and pay attention to the why and the who of this miracle he was experiencing...this life saving act. In that moment he stopped, turned around and

went back to Jesus, praised God in a loud voice, and prostrated himself in thanksgiving before Jesus.

Before we start to think that this is the way all things should be, it may be important to remember that in the stories of Jesus there were many responses, many ways that people recognized Jesus and the difference he made in their lives. Yet, this is the one before us today and it may be that it gives us opportunity to reflect on how belief in Jesus, trusting in God, and relying on the work of the Holy Spirit in us makes a difference, then give thanks.

Maybe we have responded to God grace and healing in the moment, or maybe we are only recognizing the gifts of God in our lives right now. It really doesn't matter. What matters is seeing how God is working in our lives, the lives of people we love, and in the world. In a time when the world seems to be going headlong into strife and struggle, it may be the very time to give thanks.

However, you may have noticed that the story didn't end with thanksgiving, it ended with Jesus saying, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well." To give thanks, to recognize healing and wholeness, to see Jesus at work means to rise and go. Rise and go to be light and salt in the world. Rise and go to love others participating in the life of those around you in ways that also bring healing and wholeness. Rise and go to show others how God has changed the way you see and experience the world.

Rise and go with thanksgiving, hope, grace, love, and faith. Faith that sees Jesus in our lives and God working in others. Faith that sees that justice and mercy are part of God's desire for the world. Faith that sees the other in need of healing and wholeness.

Rise and go. Rise and live!

In Christ with Christ and through Christ. Amen.

Prayers of the People

We give you thanks, O God, for all things that make life good,
and pray that all people will share in the blessings we know.

For the world,
for the wonders of earth, sea and sky;
for beauty in nature and wildlife;
and for the rhythm of the days and seasons;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

For waters that refresh and sustain life;
for soil that is fertile and rich;
for those who tend crops and care for harvests;
for those who produce, deliver and market our food;

and for those who make sure the hungry are fed;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

For days to work and strength to do it;

for the many different gifts and talents you have given us;

for those whose work is dangerous and demanding,

for those whose positions are necessary for communities to flourish;

and for moments of leisure and rest when you restore us;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

For human life;

for talking and thinking together, working on problems and plans;

for burdens and joys shared;

for relationships that give life meaning;

and for the wisdom exchanged between old and young in mutual support:

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

For our circle of family and friends;

for children and their curiosity and joy;

for the insight that comes with patience and experience;

and for events shared and memories cherished;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

For your grace in times of anxiety, doubt and grief;

for healing in times of illness, confusion, and distress;

for rejuvenating strength and renewed purpose;

for scientific knowledge and discovery to confront disease and improve health;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

For the trust that you hear each prayer and know every need;

that you love and care for each soul and body;

and that you walk with us through all our days and seasons;

We give you thanks, O God, and ask that all may share such blessings.

We offer our prayers, spoken and unspoken, in Jesus' name,

saying together the words 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

With gratitude we offer gifts to God, praying that what we share with others will bring them healing, hope, grace, and peace.

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.

Hymn

For the fruits of all creation

802

1. For the fruits of all creation, thanks be to God;
for the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God;
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,
silent growth while we are sleeping,
future needs in earth's safe keeping, thanks be to God.
2. In the just reward of labour, God's will is done;
in the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done;
in our worldwide task of caring
for the hungry and despairing,
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.
3. For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God
for the good we all inherit, thanks be to God;
for the wonders that astound us,
for the truths that still confound us,
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.

"For the fruits of all creation." Words by Fred Pratt Green. ©1970 Hope Publishing Company
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Benediction

Go now, and live fruitfully where God has placed you.
Pray and strive for the welfare of those you live among,
and do your best to present yourselves to God
as faithful workers.

And may God open the pathways before you;
May Christ Jesus cleanse you and make you whole;

And may the Holy Spirit keep your spirits alive
and your feet from stumbling.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

[Proper 23 – Year C – LaughingBird](#)