

22nd Sunday after Pentecost - October 25, 2026

Call to Worship

We are called to love God with our hearts.

**We will do so, when we welcome those
tossed aside by the world.**

We are called to love God with our souls.

**We will do so, when the brokenness around us
transforms us into more compassionate people.**

We are called to love God with our minds.

**We will do so, when we think less of our needs,
and see each person as our neighbor, our sister, our brother.**

©2023 Thom M. Shuman. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com> October 23.

Hymn

Love the Lord your God

715

Love the Lord your God, with all your heart.

Love the Lord your God, with all your soul.

Love the Lord your God with all your mind,

Love the Lord your God with all that you are.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart" Tune: © 1991 Desert Flower Music/Jim and Jean Strathdee Text:
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Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God, our God,

You are gracious and loving, holy and eternal;

your love is steadfast, your presence ever near.

Your wisdom is older than time and as fresh as the morning dew.

Your name has come to us through the centuries,

yet you can always do a new thing to draw us back to you.

Holy God: Creator, Christ and Spirit, Three and One

we offer you our prayers and praise this day in humble expectation;

refresh our understanding and nurture our readiness to serve you.

In recalling all that you have done and who you are, we recall who we have been
and what we have done. Out of a desire to begin again with you and one another,
we confess to you our sins:

Merciful God,

**you know our hearts, the times we truly loved one another
and the times we merely tolerated each other.**

**You know our minds, the times we focused on you
and the times we pursued our own purposes.**

You know our bodies, the times we have served you

**and the times we have served only ourselves.
Forgive us those times we went our own way,
and renew our commitment to live lives marked by your grace,
we ask this in the loving name of Jesus. Amen.**

The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Worship Planner. 22nd Sunday after Pentecost. Reformation Sunday. October 25, 2026. Year A.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Friends in Christ, we are forgiven people,
set free from past failures, to make a fresh start this day and every day.
The Holy Spirit empowers us to love God and to love others.
Thanks be to God for such everlasting grace!

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Prayer for Understanding

Lord God, as we listen to the Scriptures this day, send your Holy Spirit so we encounter the words as your Living Word. Open our hearts to respond in love and service for Christ's sake. Amen.

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Scripture Readings

❖ Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 *"I Am God, Your God"*

19 1-2 God spoke to Moses: "Speak to the congregation of Israel. Tell them, Be holy because I, God, your God, am holy.

15 "Don't pervert justice. Don't show favoritism to either the poor or the great. Judge on the basis of what is right.

16 "Don't spread gossip and rumors.

"Don't just stand by when your neighbor's life is in danger. I am God.

17 "Don't secretly hate your neighbor. If you have something against him, get it out into the open; otherwise you are an accomplice in his guilt.

18 "Don't seek revenge or carry a grudge against any of your people.

"Love your neighbor as yourself. I am God.

❖ Matthew 22:34-46 *The Most Important Command*

34-36 When the Pharisees heard how he had bested the Sadducees, they gathered their forces for an assault. One of their religion scholars spoke for them, posing a question they hoped would show him up: "Teacher, which command in God's Law is the most important?"

37-40 Jesus said, "'Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.' This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: 'Love others as well as you love yourself.' These two commands are pegs; everything in God's Law and the Prophets hangs from them."

David's Son and Master

41-42 As the Pharisees were regrouping, Jesus caught them off balance with his own test question: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said, "David's son."

43-45 Jesus replied, "Well, if the Christ is David's son, how do you explain that David, under inspiration, named Christ his 'Master'?"

God said to my Master,
"Sit here at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool."

"Now if David calls him 'Master,' how can he at the same time be his son?"

46 That stumped them, literalists that they were. Unwilling to risk losing face again in one of these public verbal exchanges, they quit asking questions for good.

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The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Message The Posture of Humility

Love the Lord our God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.

I don't often begin a sermon with the scripture, but it may be worth it to say this and just sit down, letting each of us sit with what does that mean for us. What would it mean to love God with all your passion? What would it look like to love God with all your prayer? How would life change if we loved God with all our intelligence? Oh, and now put that in perspective with love others as well as you love yourself.

Love the Lord our God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and Love others as well as you love yourself.

And just for a moment go to the words in the Old Testament where God spoke to Moses and told him to say to the congregation of Israel. "Be holy because I, God, your God, am holy." And just in case you didn't catch it, there too you can find the words, "Love your neighbor as yourself. I am God."

Like, what else is there to say. Turns out there is not much else to say. Live with these tenets and love would prevail in our world because as individuals we would all take ourselves out from the center of our universe and make God the center. And our God is holy. Our God is the one who says, "love your neighbour as yourself" and this is predicated on the command to be holy.

There is so much to be said even though I could have just stopped and let you ponder those two commands. We could all spend a lot more time quietly considering what it means to love God fully; with everything we are and do. Yet, let's go further...

One thing to consider is that God said to be holy, so there must be some possibility for us to be holy. Even if we fall short, there is holiness in us as we are made in the image of God.

Think about that, no matter who you are, what you have experienced in life, you are made in the image of God, the image of a holy God, the image of our loving God. That means that we have some capacity to be both holy and loving. If you are someone who has grown up thinking you are worthless or if you are someone who has had a very good life...if you are anywhere on that continuum, think of yourself humbly, as having a seed of the divine in you. And if God is love and that seed of divine is in you, you have both the capacity for love and *are* loved.

That thought leads to, if we have the capacity for holiness and the capacity for love because of God, then loving God with all our passion, prayer, and intelligence becomes the most important thing on any list. It becomes a way of life, and there is no way to love God with all that we are and do and then turn around and not care about everyone else...the neighbour in your home, your community, or globally. If you love God, you become humble enough to recognize that everyone is created in the image of God. And if you treat another person with unkindness, as less than, as not worthy of care and compassion, then that is actually saying that somehow you are more worthy of all of those things, at which point humility flies out the door.

It is as Jesus said, you have to set these two commands, the command to love the lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence, this statement is set alongside of, love others as well as you love yourself. Everything in God's law hangs from these two statements. Do one and not the other and everything falls.

And this is where it may be helpful to take a posture of humility in our relationship with God and with others. Humility does not circumvent our own worthiness, God loves us, we are children of God, we are unique and important in our own right just because we are human beings. Humility does not mean that we are to be humiliated by another, which is why that second command stands alongside the first. To be humble means that we are acutely aware of the worthiness of all humanity. Even the most broken person is still made in the image of God.

This does not take away the need for justice and facing of consequences, but when that is necessary, it is done in a spirit of love and mercy. If we treat those who have greatly harmed others with the same harm, we are not loving the divine image of God in them. Again, it is not that there are not consequences to actions, but rather in living out our faith we see the humanity in another, and that means also seeing the holy in another. I know that may stretch our imaginations. It does mine, which is why we are continually in need of loving God with all our being.

Let me give you an example of humility, it is the example that Jesus used as he continued to speak with the Pharisees in our scripture reading today. Jesus asks the Pharisees to explain how David, under inspiration, named Christ his Master? Now David was

considered a great king. It was anticipated that an heir of David would be the expected the Messiah to come for the people of Israel. And yet David humbled himself, this great king, to say that the Messiah, whoever that might be down the line, would be David's Master.

You may have heard the saying that pride comes before a fall, but let's flip that on its head and consider that humility comes before being able to love as God commands us to love. It is in humility that we love God because we realize that we are not the be all and end all of our existence. We see others as valuable gems that shine with the brilliance of God's divine image.

Now, because we all fall short of being image bearers of God in the world, things in the world are distorted and corrupted. Be we can correct those imbalances, those distortions, by living into the command to be image bearers of God. We are to be holy, because God our God is holy.

Can you imagine a world where people are humble enough to say to anyone, "you are holy, you are worthy, you are loved?" Think on that. How do you go to war with another country if you understand and believe all people are holy, worthy and to be loved? How do you round up your neighbour or despise them if they are holy, worthy and loved in God's sight. How can you hit your partner in violence or commit a crime against another if you understand all people to be holy? Remember if all people are living this way, then that is how they see you too, holy, worthy, and loved.

Is this utopian? Probably, be we are commanded in our capacity as Christians to live this out. Can you imagine what the world would look like, how it would be transformed if just Christians could live this out well, or strive for it more and more each day? Humbling ourselves for the sake of love?

Love doesn't happen when power, pride, and wealth are corrupted and their use distorted, but how can anyone know what love looks like if it is not practiced beyond those that we think are worthy of our love.

And what makes any of us worthy of love?

It is our humanity; it is God within us who is holy. We are loved and worthy of love because God is holy and this holy God loves us.

If you feel like we are going around in circles with this thinking, we kind of are. As 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because God first loved us." We imitate God's character, God's divine, loving, character. Thomas Aquinas defined love as to will the good of the other. Love is a decision each and everyday to put the well being of another at the center of our lives. If that is happening then others are also putting our well being at the center of their lives.

Again, we don't live this out perfectly, which is the gap that concerns us and why we so cling to centering ourselves on our own well being. However, if we begin each day with

a posture of humility, one that says, we love God and will strive to love people, no matter their status or lack thereof. If each and everyone of us is doing that, then maybe we can begin to see the world shift and the power of love, the power of holiness that demonstrates a posture of humility, grace, peace, and love, maybe that will bring the hope needed to turn this whole lived existence around.

We do this, this loving our neighbour as ourselves, as we continually seek to love the Lord our God with all our passion and prayer and intelligence

We live in the power of the Holy Spirit, the love of Christ, and the grace of God. There is hope. Live out your calling to be holy because God is holy and watch in anticipation for a shift in your world, in our world. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Faithful God,
we do not have enough words to thank you
for all you have given us and the love you share with us in Christ Jesus.

In the silence of this time,
help us review the week just past,
remembering the ways we encountered you –
in the beauty of creation, the support of friends, the wisdom of books,
the joy of music, the energy of exercise, through study and prayer.

God of comfort and challenge,
we are grateful for your presence in these uncertain times
at home, at work and at school.

We give thanks for your attention to the small details
and the large responsibilities we face.

Make us attentive to the needs of those around us.

In silence we name before you those finding these days especially difficult.

God of persistence and inspiration,
we remember before you the many who struggle to recognize your presence
or fail to hear your voice amid all the competing voices in our world.

We pray for those feeling depressed or anxious,
those facing grief and loneliness,
and those who are worried about their health or their future.

God of justice and leadership,
We pray for our country and nations of the world facing immense challenges.
Guide decision makers in these complex times
and keep the hearts of those with resources open
to those who do not have enough.

We pray for places where justice is lacking,
where violence threatens, or leaders are untrustworthy.

God of the Church, we pray for your church:
where the church is divided, heal it;
where we are in error, correct us;
where we are tired, give us hope and expectation;
where we are serving your purposes, nurture and protect us.

God of grace and guidance,
You call us to be your hands and feet,
your voice and comfort in the world, following the example of Jesus.
Equip us to respond to the needs around us in his name,
and make us bold to get started right here and right now.
For we dare to pray the words Jesus 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

As members of Christ's body, the Church,
we draw on the gifts of many other followers of Jesus,
offered to him over centuries of service.
Our gifts join theirs so that God will be praised
and Jesus' love spread in this generation and those still to come.

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May you be inspired 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

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. |
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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

Go with love for God filling your hearts,
to show love to each neighbour or stranger you meet in the week ahead.
And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you now and always. Amen.