

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

January 9, 2022

Worship led by Torrin Maag

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, November 8th.

Email sketchingalong4@gmail.com to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Hymn: VU 100 *When Jesus Comes to Be Baptized*, vv. 1, 4, 5

1. When Jesus comes to be baptized,
he leaves the hidden years behind,
the years of safety and of peace,
to bear the sins of humankind.

4. O Spirit help us be like Christ:
to live in love and charity,
to walk in truth and justice now,
and grow in Christian dignity.

5. We praise you, God, source of all life,
we praise you, Christ, eternal Word,
we praise you, Spirit, gracious gift;
your triune presence fills our world.

Inviting Holy Light

As we prepare for worship, we breathe. In... Out. Creator, Sustainer, Spirit, be with us, welcome us into community. Open our hearts to welcome in all who seek. Open our minds to radical transformation this Advent. We invite Holy Light as we prepare for worship. *[Dave lights candle]*

Hymn: VU 376 *Spirit of the Living God*, vs. 2

2. Spirit of the living God, move among us all;
make us one in heart and mind, make us one in love:
humble, caring, selfless, sharing.
Spirit of the living God, fill our lives with love!

Nurturing Safe Space

We seek Holy Spirit and Love to help us nurture safe space in this place where all can participate in worship and life regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We as people of faith inherit a legacy, a history of hurt, but also journey into new chapters of healing and reconciliation. Today, here we are worshipping on the ancestral land the Wahnapiatae First Nation and of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, this land where the Robinson Huron Treaty was made in 1850, and never honoured by Canada. We live, work, play, and pray on the Treaty lands. May we live in harmony and respect with all those who share the earth with us and be thankful to God as we move into a peaceful and healthy future together.

Welcome and Announcements

Here we are, tentatively journeying into a new year. Here we are, knitted together thanks to the gift of technology. No, we are not physically together, but we are most definitely St. Andrew's United Church, the body of Christ, together in Spirit. So, yes, welcome!

Today we give thanks for our team, our musician today, Deb and Ralph McIntosh, and our readers today, Kathy Brankley, Jen Bruneau, and Suzanne Nykilchyk. Also, thanks to the many who you don't get to see.

Those at home, if you are new here, note that our contact information is at the end of the video, and you might want to visit our website or Facebook page, or email our office manager so you can receive our weekly e-newsletter called the NEWS. We also have a Virtual Fellowship time tonight at 7. As always, you can get your Zoom link to join that time of connecting by sending an email to Diane. That email address will be part of the credits after this worship.

Call to Worship

Like the soft whisper of a little child singing
to herself before anyone else in the house is awake,
**ever so gently, God's voice cradles us
with songs of wonder and awe.**

With the persistence of teenagers and young adults,
heady with the newfound freedom of questioning everything,
**God's voice rumbles like a river through our lives,
sweeping away all the boundaries between us.**

Like the grandpa who passes on the secret to his bread,
like the nana who teaches her grandkids how to drive,
**God's voice is always reminding us
that we are precious, esteemed, beloved.**

Opening Prayer (Jen Bruneau and Suzanne Nykilchyk)

Sue: Many voices speak to us. We are torn in many directions.

Dave: To whom should we listen? To what should we pay attention?

Jen: Which voices are the right ones? How do we hear the voice of God in all the noise?

Sue: Let us pray: Help us, God, to listen with our hearts.

Jen: Help us to open ourselves to your voice that forgives us when we do wrong, that calls us to serve you and others.

Dave: Open us to your voice inviting this very moment us to use our own voices to challenge injustice in our world.

ALL: Speak to us, God. We are listening. *[silence]*

Hymn: MV 87 Water Flowing from the Mountains, vs. 1

1. Water flowing from the mountains.

Water flowing o'er the earth.

Water comes to us, so precious.

Living water gives us birth.

Drink deep this source of life.

Drink deep and know.

For living water sings, and living water brings
the love that makes our spirit grow.

Time up Front (Rev. Dave)

Baptism. Here at St. Andrew's, we use what is called a font. It has regular water in it. We can swish around in it. (swish) We take a little one or an older one, and we baptize them by sprinkling water on their head – baptizing them.

Some churches have a tub or pool. Some churches even go out to the local river or lake and people actually go INTO the water. Can you believe it? When they are baptized, they go under the water. Going down represents their letting go of old ways – like letting go of gossiping, not

sharing, hurting others without thinking. When they come up it represents how as followers of Jesus they live differently – playing well and sharing with others, loving.

Jesus, we will hear today, was baptized in a river, so there wouldn't have been a tiny sprinkling of water – he would have been drenched. An epic moment in the Bible, life changing, God talking.

To live our lives like Jesus is epic as well – it is a chance to be kinder, to love, to share, to care not just about ourselves but about others, especially strangers who need our help in our community and around the world.

Hymn: MV 87 *Water Flowing from the Mountains, vs. 2*

2. Water rushing down the rivers.

Water rushing to the sea.

Water comes to us, so precious.

Living water makes us free.

Drink deep this source of life.

Drink deep and know.

For living water sings, and living water brings
the love that makes our spirit grow.

Scripture Reading (*Kathy Brankley*)

Jesus' Ministry Begins – Based on Luke 3

This reading, a paraphrase of a story from the Gospel writer, Luke, tells us about a moment that no one would ever forget. Jesus gets baptized.

The road was busier than usual, as hundreds of people walked in the same direction. They were all headed for the River Jordan. Many people were already gathered along the river's edge. People were coming for one reason: they wanted to see John.

John was related to Jesus. Their mothers had known each other many years before. But John and Jesus had never met, for John had spent most of his life in the wilds of the desert, seeking to learn about God. He dressed as a man of the wilderness in clothes made of camels' hair and leather.

But it was what John said that drew the people to him and what he did for them.

John had learned about the messengers God had sent to people long ago. He knew he had to be a messenger, too. So John would shout his message, "Good news. Prepare the way. There is one who is coming who will show us God's love." Day after day, John would call out to the people and encourage them to change the way they lived so they would be better people. And then, when the people were ready to change, John would lead them, one by one, into the river until the water was waist-high; and there, John would say a prayer, dip them under the water, and baptize each one.

When the people came out of the river, they were wet but smiling, and feeling clean and new inside.

"Maybe John is the one for whom we have been waiting to be our teacher and leader," people began to wonder.

But John would shake his head and say, "No, no, it's not me. Why I'm not even special enough to stoop down and undo his sandals. No, I am here to help you get ready to meet him. I baptize you with water, but this special person will baptize people in a very different way. He will baptize you with God's Holy Spirit."

One day as John was preaching, Jesus stepped out from the crowd and walked up to John. He placed a hand on his shoulder and said, "John, please baptize me, too."

John recognized who this was, but before he could reply, Jesus removed his seamless tunic and waded into the River Jordan. The water came up to his knees, and then up to his waist.

John followed Jesus into the river. He put his hand on Jesus' head, said a prayer, and then dipped Jesus into the water. As he came up out of the water, Jesus prayed to God. And then, looking up, it seemed like the sky split apart and there was light all around. The Holy Spirit hovered over Jesus like a dove, and deep down and all around, Jesus heard a loving voice say, "You are loved by God. I am so pleased with you."

This was the moment when Jesus' ministry began – a ministry of teaching, healing, and showing people the way of God's love.

Let us pray, Spirit, bless our hearing of this Story filled with hope and transformation. Call us with tender words of mercy that remind us how we belong to you, and embrace us with your love. Amen.

Message: "In Deep" (Rev. Dave Le Grand)

Message will be posted on the website when it is available.

Offering Moment

Being in one place so much over these recent years, we sometimes miss seeing what God is up to. My hope is that in this season of Epiphany. Do you know that the word epiphany comes from the Greek word that means "to reveal" or "to be manifest"?

Being at home so much, we might miss those holy revealings around us – simple things like a sunrise, the chirp of a chickadee, the blanket of snow on a chilly winter day. The Reaching Out team who, thanks to you, were able to help provide a Christmas dinner for children and families of Lansdowne and Queen Elizabeth II public schools, I think that they, like Mary and the Magi after the holy gift exchange felt holiness. Your church, St. Andrew's, supports, visits, and offers practical help to households in crisis – all thanks to your offerings.

The United Church of Canada, through Mission and Service, does marvellous ministry near and far, collaborating so that the most vulnerable can feel God's love – that is also thanks to you. Thank you.

Now let offer our talents, our skills, and our very being to God, as an offering to do God's work in the world, as we also share in the Gifts given us.

Dedication Hymn: MV 161 I Have Called You by Your Name, vv. 1, 4

1. I have called you by your name, you are mine;
I have gifted you and ask you now to shine.
I will not abandon you; all my promises are true.
You are gifted, called, and chosen; you are mine.

3. I know you will need my touch as you go;
feel it pulsing in creation's ebb and flow.
Like the woman reaching out, choosing faith in spite of doubt,
hold the hem of Jesus' robe, then let it go.

Dedication Prayer

We have heard your voice, and prepare to go as your community through the deep waters of life.

And as we go down as Jesus did into the waters of blessing, we know your promise is alive within us: you strengthen us, you put the vision before us to become more as you created us to be, each unique as you call us. *[silent pause]*

Now we ask you to journey with us, in us, before us. We rise renewed, newly alive to your peace, with a passion for justice alive in our souls. We rise from the waters, committed as servants of the Gospel, dedicated to your realm of love. Amen.

Dedication Hymn: MV 161 I Have Called You by Your Name, vs. 5

4. I have given you a name, it is mine;
I have given you my Spirit as a sign.
With my wonder in your soul,
make my wounded children whole;
go and tell my precious people they are mine.

Prayers of Community

Let us offer our prayers to God, knowing that the love that flows from us will come to those for whom we pray. *[silence]*

In scarcity and uncertainty, when jobs disappear and worry about the future gnaws at us, give strength to your people, O God.

Come, God, bring your peace.

Come, God, bring your peace.

In decline and despair, when social structures collapse and we wonder what will come next, give strength to your people, O God.

Come, God, bring your peace.

Come, God, bring your peace.

In conflict and violence, when dreams are destroyed and justice is ignored, give strength to your people, O God.

Come, God, bring your peace.

Come, God, bring your peace.

In dysfunction and fear, when we fail to share the waters of your love to others, give strength to your people, O God.

Come, God, bring your peace.

Come, God, bring your peace.

In sickness and aging, when the vulnerability of our bodies is evident, give strength to your people, O God. Especially, now, Creator, we offer to you in this silent moment all the names of people and situations of concern to us today. *[silence]*

Come, God, bring your peace.

Come, God, bring your peace.

God, who gives the waters of life and love, strengthen us all in every way so that we may be filled to overflowing.

And we pray the words that Jesus taught us, saying...

The Prayer Jesus Taught

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kin-dom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kin-dom, the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: MV 30 It's a Song of Praise to the Maker, vv. 1, 2, 4

1. It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the thrush sings high in the tree.
It's a song of praise to the Maker,
the gray whale sings in the sea,
and by the Spirit, you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

2. It's a call of life to the Giver
when waves and waterfalls roar.
It's a call of life to the Giver
when high tides break on the shore,
and by the Spirit, you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

4. It's the chorus of all creation;
it's sung by all living things.
It's the chorus of all creation,
a song the universe sings,
and by the Spirit, you and I
can join our voice to the holy cry
and sing, sing, sing to the Maker too.

Blessing

God has called each of us by name.
Do not fear, for God goes with you wherever you may go.
Even when we pass through rough waters, God will be with you.
Go in peace to love and serve your God. Amen

Blessing Hymn: VU 509 I, the Lord of Sea and Sky, vs. 3

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame,
I will set a feast for them;
my hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

Postlude

Acknowledging Traditional Territory written by Lori Van Santvoort-Jansekovich. *Gathering*, Epiphany 2022.
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