

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

April 12, 2020 Easter Sunday

Welcome to Worship, Easter Sunday

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, April 12

Email absolute_solutions@live.com to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Welcome

Welcome to worship on this Sunday when we celebrate New Life, Resurrection of Jesus and the power of resurrection alive and well in life. Thank you for joining us for worship at St. Andrew's United Church in Sudbury Ontario. We are so happy that you joined us. While we are not physically together, we connect spiritually. Now, if you are just dropping in to worship for the first time, you might prepare yourself in two ways. First, you could find an instrument or a noisemaker to make a joyful noise when the time comes. Also, could you get some bread or a rice cake, and juice handy? We are going to try to share in Communion today, and the juice (whether grape juice or some other) and any kind of bread. You can click pause to go and find those items if you wish.

If you would like to be a partner of St. Andrew's to support the ministries of this community of faith, there are three ways you can help. First of all, and maybe most importantly, you can pray. You can also send a cheque – contact Jill at 705-677-8686 for information on where to send your cheque while the church is closed. Or, you can visit our St. Andrew's website at www.st-andrews.ca/church and click on the "DONATE" tab near the top of the page. That takes you to Canada Helps, where you can make an on-line donation using your credit card or PayPal. Thank you for being a supporter of St. Andrew's and its on-going ministries.

Now let us prepare for worship together. Let us become connected by God's love as we enter worship.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We always begin by connecting with the land on which we worship. This land, wherever we are, we know that there were caretakers of the land for thousands, perhaps even 10,000 years, long before settlers came to this land and called it Canada. Where we physically worship at St Andrew's we are on the traditional lands of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek. Do you know whose traditional territory you inhabit? Give thanks to your Creator and to your Indigenous neighbours of a particular First Nation if you do. If you don't know the traditional territory you are on, go to www.native-land.ca. They have a wonderful interactive map that will help you. We give thanks for this land, and we pray that we might all work towards true reconciliation and just sharing of the land one day.

Lighting the Christ Candle

As you prepare for worship, take in a slow, deep breath. Breathe slowly, thoughtfully. Notice your breaths. Notice how you are feeling today. Connect with your body parts that are relaxed, some might be tense. Notice...connect. Give thanks for your body and all it does. As (Sophia) lights the Christ Candle, let us hear Isaiah's words:

You knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

Welcome Creator... Welcome Jesus (**silence**)

Call to Worship

One: Christ Has Risen!

All: He Has Risen, Indeed!

One: Christ Has Risen!

All: He Has Risen, Indeed!

One: Indeed, Christ has risen, and with Christ we rise in hope – hope of the future, hope of possibilities, hope of a lift ahead.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray. O great eternal spirit, earth-maker, pain-bearer, life-giver, be with us in the moment of resurrection, where all things seem possible, where all hope seems probable. We have come from a place of anxiety and fear and out into the light of hope. We dance this day knowing that we are working as hard as possible to bring about systematic changes in our world. The empty tomb has taught us that we all have a part to play, we all have the potential to change the narrative, and we all are integral to understanding the health of community, we are following the way of justice, and now we dance! Amen.

Hymn: VU #155 Jesus Christ is Risen Today

Easter Hymn

Jesus Christ is risen today, hallelujah!
our triumphant holy day, hallelujah!
who did once, upon the cross, hallelujah!
suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, hallelujah!
unto Christ, our heavenly King, hallelujah!
who endured the cross and grave, hallelujah!
sinners to redeem and save. Hallelujah!

But the pains which he endured, hallelujah!
our salvation have procured, hallelujah!
now above the sky he's King, hallelujah!
where the angels ever sing. Hallelujah!

Sing we to our God above, hallelujah!
praise eternal as God's love, hallelujah!
praise our God, ye heavenly host, hallelujah!
praise the Son and Holy Ghost. Hallelujah!

Time Up Front

There are different Easter rituals you may enjoy: from chocolate Easter egg hunts to a few years at churches I served we hid a Hallelujah egg over Lent, then on Easter morning the kids would hunt in the sanctuary for it... upon finding it yell: Hallelujah! Right now, we are going to make some noise because on social media I've noticed that throughout this COVID-19 outbreak people have been encouraged to go out in front of their places at a certain time to make noise in support of all the courageous healthcare workers that are putting their lives on the line. We are going to make a joyful noise right now with our noisemakers, a party of noise to celebrate that Jesus has risen, and to support all the frontline works including those keeping essential services going in our communities.

God loves a joyful noise. Let's make noise first, then we'll stop. I will say "Christ is risen" and you will say with great joy: "**He is risen indeed!**" Let's make noise!

One: Christ has risen!

All: He has risen, indeed!

Bible Readings

Psalm 118 (NRSV)

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Let Israel say: "His love endures forever."

The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly; the right hand of the Lord is exalted; the right hand of the Lord does valiantly."

I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the deeds of the Lord.

Matthew 28:1-10 (NRSV)

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my

message for you.” So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

Response to the Scripture Readings (Psalm 19:14)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Message

So I want you to imagine the Marys, forlorn, arriving at the tomb. Then a sudden shaking of the earth, and they encounter an angel. How would they have felt? Wonder? Fear? When an angel in a Bible story says, “don’t be afraid” well, the person encountering that angel is probably afraid.

Couple that encounter with meeting Jesus outside the tomb and you have a **brehtaking morning**... Having started in sadness... but a Surprising turn of events. In what might look like just another day today defined by a virus, what holy surprises might be in store for you today? Look back in your mind’s eye at the past week. Did you have surprising, even joy-filled encounters, that dispersed your sense of isolation and routine? Maybe it was a spontaneous driveway party, a phone call. Or perhaps it was a seeing your grandchildren on a video call. This morning I heard on CBC radio an interview with a very elderly man who contracted the Spanish Flu as a child.¹ He spoke of being isolated high up in his house, but his father coming home from a trip. The man remembers the joy he felt watching his father climb up a ladder to his window with a box of toys under his arm. He treasured for many years a fire engine from his father.

The Easter story, the story of Jesus overcoming death is a reminder to always be open to God’s surprises. These stressful times tempt us to expect death, but Christians are sometimes aptly referred to as an “Easter people.”

Right now our families, our friends, neighbours, even people we don’t know well and meet on social media – they need perhaps more than ever our generosity of spirit. The world needs Easter people; you and me, embodying Christ’s love in even simple gestures. Whether we share the good news stories we find on social media, or we just pay attention to every moment in a day when we can be a blessing to someone else. We are an Easter people.

Will you pray with me? God, Thank you for the blessing of this resurrection story of Jesus and the Marys. Help us to pay attention to surprising moments filled with new life. It won’t be easy. Daily isolation in our homes, news that seems to only talk about one thing. May we remember your surprise you gave those women, disciples,

¹ The story was, in fact, Scarlett Fever survivor Don Robertson, remembering his dad, "One day he did put a ladder up to my window and there was a cardboard box that he hoisted up to my window filled with toys," remembers Roberston. "It was just an incredible experience and a wonderful memory of my dad climbing this ladder". <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-april-10-2020-1.5529055/this-107-year-old-remembers-the-1918-spanish-flu-and-sees-the-similarities-with-covid-19-1.5529264>

may we always be looking for your surprising joy and wonder in our everyday lives. May we be your Easter people. Amen.

Offering Moment

As we prepare for Communion, with your bread or wafer and juice, I invite you to think about the giftedness of this moment. Sure, we are separated today in our homes, but very much connected by modern technology. As you bring your Communion elements to this Table I want you to consider yourself a gift. What gifts, skills, capacity to make a difference in this world has God planted in you in order to grow in you and to be shared? In these strange times, our family, friends, our very world needs our generosity of spirit and sharing of our gifts. God's vision of transformation for this world needs you and I. Let's sing as we prepare for Communion.

Communion Hymn: VU #475 Now the Silence, Now the Peace Now
Now the silence. Now the peace. Now the empty hands uplifted.
Now the kneeling. Now the plea. Now the Father's arms in welcome.

Now the hearing. Now the power. Now the vessel brimmed for pouring.
Now the body. Now the blood. Now the joyful celebration.

Now the wedding. Now the songs. Now the heart forgiven leaping.
Now the Spirit's visitation. Now the Son's epiphany.
Now the Father's blessing. Now. Now. Now.

Presentation Prayer

As we offer our gifts on this joyous morning, may the bring light to those in the shadows, laughter to all who mourn, and hope to those longing for life anew. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Communion

God's Table today is not our traditional Communion in the church Sanctuary, but the table in front of you and I, it IS God's Table. Whether you break cracker, muffin or bread with me, what you are taking is just as much a Communion element as bread. And whether it is grape juice, apple juice or your morning tea or water, it is God's cup of blessing in this moment. So if you don't have your elements to eat and drink in Communion, I invite you to prayerfully bring it over now.

Welcome to tables that are spread out across our community; some of you will be sitting at the family's antique table, some of you maybe sitting in your comfy chair with your lap as your table. Know that wherever you are this Sunday, you are at Christ's table. For Christ is in your heart, and your house.

God, sustainer of us all, in our moments of deep fears, we praise and thank you, that through the creating spirit of this earth, and through your word, we are welcomed at this table in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. For the goodness of the earth, the space of creation, in the glory of redemptive powers, we praise your unending dancing spirit. Invite us now, the call of your prophets, enlighten us, with

the knowledge of your disciples, and bring us unto the place of understanding with all in our community. As we see that which is unseen, as we remind ourselves of our faithful journey, in this time of thanksgiving and praise. Amen.

Prayer of Consecration

On the last night he spent with his friends, Jesus took an age-old tradition of his people and transformed it into something new. He took bread, staple food of his land, blessed and broke it, and gave it to those around him saying, "Take, eat, this is my body, broken for you. Whenever you do this, remember me." After supper he took a cup of wine, common drink of his people, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink this, all of you, this is the new covenant in my blood. Each time you do this, remember me."

By remembering Jesus in this way now, we claim our common heritage as we proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

Prayers of the Community

God of great wisdom and love, you know that Christ's enduring love is not limited by walls, you have taught us that we may be in community even when we cannot touch flesh to flesh.

God of infinite time and space, let us not be bound by the understandings that we have put in place in our lives, instead may we remind ourselves that your great creation is how we must commune on a daily basis.

May we build right relationships with all our relations, even in the midst of the pandemic we are facing, may the bread of belonging sustain us, may the cup of blessing nourish us, and may we work to find refuge in the healing spirit that moves amongst us. We pray now the prayer that Jesus taught...

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.

Send, O covenant God, your Holy Spirit upon us and what we do here, that we and these gifts, empowered by your Spirit, may become signs of shalom to one another and to all peoples of the earth. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours everywhere, now and forever. Amen.

Dave: I invite you now to pick up the bread of belonging, may we as community share in God's banquet, together.

Catherine: I invite you now to pick up the cup of blessing, may we as community share in God's abundance, together.

Closing Hymn: VU #173 Thine Is the Glory

Judas Maccabaeus

Thine is the glory risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death has won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded graveclothes where the body lay.

Thine is the glory risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death has won.

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth: death has lost its sting.

Thine is the glory risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death has won.

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;
bring us safe to Jordan to thy home above.

Thine is the glory risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death has won.

Blessing

We have come together to worship and we take with us the community that we find in worship. Let us prepare to leave this sacred space with the words of Benediction from the Rev. Dr. Cliff Elliott.

“Go forth into the world with a daring and tender love,
go in peace – the world is waiting.
And whatever you do, do it for love, and in the spirit of Jesus
– who is your Christ!”

And in keeping with our practice, worshipping together,
but from our homes, let us pray together
the words of our United Church Moderator:

**Creator God:
help us to reach out with our hearts
when we can't touch with our hands;
help us to be socially connected,**

**when we have to be socially distant;
help us to love as perfectly as we can,
knowing that "perfect love casts out all fear." Amen.**

Postlude

Call to Worship from "Holy Week Resources" created by Shining Waters Regional Council found at <https://shiningwatersregionalcouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Holy-Week-Resources-30032020.pdf>

Offering Prayer thanks to Thom M. Shuman <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>

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