

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
June 14, 2020, 2nd After Pentecost
Blessing of Torrin Maag as he begins immersion experience
at Forest Hill United Church

Welcome to Worship, 2nd Sunday after Pentecost
Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, June 14
Email absolute_solutions@live.com to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Welcome – Donna Mese

Welcome to the worship service of St. Andrew's United Church, In Sudbury Ontario. In this challenging time where we must maintain physical distancing, it is more important than ever to stay connected, to experience the Spirit's connecting work within us, around us, and connecting our world when our world, more than ever, needs God's unifying, justice-bringing work.

Please join us for Virtual Fellowship Time at 11:30 this Sunday morning – to get your Zoom link to that event, please contact Leslie Cassidy. Her contact information is published in our weekly NEWS emailed on Thursdays, and on our Facebook page.

Now let us prepare for worship together.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We take a moment to give thanks for the privilege of living on this land, land where you are and here where I am where First Peoples have been stewards for thousands of years. The land where St Andrew's worships is on the traditional territories of the Atikemekshing Anishnawbek and the Wahnapiatae First Nation. We all worship, you and I, on a traditional territory of a First Nation. We give thanks to the Creator for this wonderful land, and pray one day for just sharing and true reconciliation.

Lighting the Christ Candle

Take a few seconds to prepare in quiet. Like the Spirit's breath, our breath cleanses, opens, enlivens. Follow your breath, in and out. You and I are children of the Living God. We are created with purpose, nurtured in Love, and beckoned by a still small voice to follow in faith. As we light this candle, may we attune our hearts and minds to God's still small voice inviting us to listen... to answer. **[light candle]**

Call to Worship

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!
**Worship God with gladness and come into
God's Holy Presence with singing.**

God created us, we know that we are beloved children of God;
**Enter into this sacred space with thanksgiving,
let us bless God's holy name.**

The Lord is good, offering steadfast love that endures forever.
Even when we might fall short of God's Grace,
God will be faithful always, and, to all generations! Hallelujah!

Opening Prayer:

God-Who-Made-Us, you made us to be connected by Spirit and as one body in Christ, but right now, we are often fractured and disconnected. Some of us feeling lonely, maybe forgotten, but God, you see us and know us, and weave us together even when we cannot be together in person. Nudge our hearts to remember that we each have purpose, each with gifts to share with

each other and the world. Spirit of God, descend upon us in our physically separate spaces, knit us together into the tapestry, colourful, even strange at first glance, but wonderful in your eyes. This we pray along with 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.

Hymn: MV 62 *There is Room for All*

There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing;
there is room for all, sheltered in God's love.
And I rejoice and sing, "My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."
There is room for all, there is room for all!

Chacun a sa place á l'abri sous l'aile de Dieu;
Chacun a sa place en l'amour de Dieu.
De joie, je chanterai: "Mon refuge en lequel je me confie."
Chacun a sa place, chacun a sa place.

There is room for all in the shadow of God's wing;
there is room for all, sheltered in God's love.
And I rejoice and sing, "My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust."
There is room for all, there is room for all!

Bible Reading: Matthew 9:35-10:1a, 10:5-10:14

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits...

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.

Response to the Bible Reading

As we reflect on sacred Story, Spirit give us inspiration. As we seek a fresh direction for our lives, grant us courage to follow your call, God. Living Word, bless our receiving of you today. Amen.

Message: Yes, you!

We celebrated two big birthdays over the past two Sundays – first the birthday of the Christian Church on Pentecost, then we celebrated 95 years since the extraordinary work of 3 denominations deciding to become one United Church of Canada. The balloons are cleared, the bits of cake scraped off the floor. Now what? How do we live day-to-day as Christians?

Of course, we can ask: Is there any wisdom to glean from Biblical Story? You know I'm going to say, of course there is. This story we just heard, a portion of Jesus' pep talk to the disciples as he sends them off, no one alone, always in pairs. It is a tough world out there.

Imagine their lives, nomads wandering from town to town. They depended on the hospitality of villagers – no home; severing detachments that would weigh them down when Spirit calls. Utter trust in God's grace to carry them. For many among us, our problem is likely the opposite; we have many entanglements, mortgages or rent to pay, jobs or relationships that we might be very focused on.

How do we actively make space amidst the pressing demands of our lives so we can experience a call or sense of mission? Even if we do hear God's call, will we answer? *What is it you want me to do? You sure it's me you want?*

Calls in life, we've also used the term "shoulder taps"; do you have room in your life for one? What might one look like? Imagine that you are at the church's Annual Meeting. It is decided that the church needs a new diversity team. They need a chair for that team, someone with great skills. They are describing the mandate of this new committee and you hear your name mentioned... Would you consider leading this team, they ask? You have skills and experience. They are right. It is definitely work that is important to you, you think, but thinking more about it, the church has so much work to do. At first you're flattered. But, can you do it?

Those disciples upon first hearing Jesus' vision for the work to do at first hearing I imagine them excited, but then the questions emerge. They are natural ones. Can I do this? This is going to be challenging, is it worth it?

Really listen to Jesus, and the call does not at all sound easy. The Storyteller Matthew describes needy crowds of people needing hope, healing. *Travel light and don't accept money*, Jesus says. *If people don't welcome you or care to listen, brush the dust of at the edge of town and move on.* What, potentially hostile hosts? This always reminds me of my two weeks learning to sell vacuum cleaners with my trainer... twice we encountered hostility. One of those times the free thank you gift my supervisor gave them was used as a projectile thrown at us as we fled the house.

The call to be Christian is not at all easy. This all brings to mind for me the words of Bruce Cockburn:

*But nothing worth having comes without some kind of fight.
Got to kick at the darkness 'til it bleeds daylight.¹*

The good news is that they, and we, are told not to do this alone. We are part of community first, we accompany one another. A phrase in today's instructions of Jesus intrigues me:
Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town
of the Samaritans, but go rather
to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Jesus is not here advising his friends *not* to reach boldly outside their Jewish circles to those in need. "Lost sheep...of Israel" – for me those are the faithful, the people have just lost their way and need care. There is something very close to home for me, in this. So many children and grandchildren of dedicated United Church people grew up hearing the stories of faith.

But, somehow, the Story doesn't always take hold in them. So many wonderful people in our world do not get to hear, daily or weekly, that they are known and so loved by God. Not the fickle brand of love that the world offers. but God's love is unconditional type that loves you with all your blemishes. In this busy world I think that people need to be reminded that they have purpose, and that calls from God are not just for Reverend or Pastor so-and-so. Like Torrin, exploring his call to

¹ Lovers in a Dangerous Time. Bruce Cockburn. lyrics © Carlin America Inc

an adventure ahead that is still taking shape for him. For you, and I, and all of us, working out a sense of call can take a lifetime.

Where are the good people weighed down by burdens in life; entangled in the complexity, needing to simplify? How do we encourage one another in this holy loving work?

Those *crowds* comprised of the *harassed and helpless*. We know that that our work as Christians begins with our collective work to meet fundamental needs: providing food and shelter to those who have little. But then, as Maslow suggests, when those are met, we help each other, the needy people around us, to address the spiritual needs; helping one another to contribute meaningfully. Feeling like we belong within a community. We are called not to go alone, but go as community, to go with God to model Holy and Unconditional Love to a world full of good people in our families, among our friends, and even to strangers who just need to be reminded that God loves them, blemishes and all.

Hymn: VU 266 *Amazing Grace*

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fear relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

Blessing of Torrin Maag

Donna:

Earlier in the spring, we celebrated with Torrin Maag, when he learned that he had been accepted into the Explorer Program for The United Church of Canada.

The Explorer Program is an immersion-type learning experience, where people who are considering a possible call to the ministry are invited to try out an opportunity of working in a team ministry over the summer.

Torrin was paired with the congregation of Forest Hill United Church. Due to the pandemic, and because of restrictions put on travel and worship, the program was cancelled. But the people of Forest Hill thought they could continue, in a different but creative way. They invited Torrin into a conversation and together, they came up with a plan.

Torrin:

Using Zoom, like we do here at St. Andrew's, I am able to offer some leadership in Sunday worship and other church activities. I am participating in and helping run an online Bible Study, Spirit Circles, and pastoral care. I'm also helping with their YouTube services: reading scripture, writing prayers, and presenting three sermons over the summer. My first-ever sermon will be next Sunday, on the 21st.

While I'm disappointed that I won't be learning under them through the Explorer Program, I'm glad to have the opportunity to work with them regardless, receiving their support and feedback.

Donna:

On May 17th, Torrin's relationship with Forest Hill was formalized in a covenant. While we are not able to make a formal education covenant with Torrin, we are able to offer you our blessing, and hold you in prayer.

We celebrate the good news that there are differing gifts, many ways to serve, and we believe that God is working in your life, Torrin, to guide you into a future we can only imagine and celebrate.

Torrin, your home group members, Betty McFarlane, Revs. Dave and Catherine and me, Donna, will be there however you need us.

Your whole church family at St. Andrew's holds you in prayer.

Let us pray: Loving God, through the teaching and leading of Jesus, you show us your way. Guide Torrin as he tries on this experience of ministry. We give thanks for the congregation of Forest Hill United Church, their leaders and all the people who will offer encouragement and support to Torrin this summer. Bless the ministry Torrin and Forest Hill share together. Amen.

As your home church family, we rejoice in your gifts, Torrin, and we pray God's leading in your life. Amen.

Offering Moment

How are your talents, your personality, your abilities, geared towards healing a hurting world? Caring for lonely people? Supporting the work of a church that is active locally and globally? Share with God...now... your offer of yourself. You with your gifts, your passions, your joys and even responding to injustices in the world that make you angry. Let us offer ourselves, our gifts to God. Now. If you already support St. Andrew's, thank you so much. If you haven't, yet, prayerfully consider. We love having partners, and would be happy to answer questions you might have. Send us an email, or go to our Facebook page, or subscribe to our weekly email Newsletter to find out what we are up to. Thank you for all that you do out of love, my friends.

Offering Hymn: VU 540 *Grant Us, God, the Grace*

Grant us, God, the grace of living, with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living we may offer faithfully.

Prayers of the Community

God, you call us to work with you, in partnership with the Spirit's leading. As we watch the news, we hear how your spirit is giving voice to the voiceless in our world. We pray for those who march; for those who stand with the poor; and those who wait with the imprisoned. We pray for the health of children and for the well-being of our elders. We pray for those who dream of going to school, and for everyone who seeks to live a life of peace, days of well-being, building good connections and working towards the health of our community, your world we inhabit.

God, we hear you calling us today, to work with spirit-- your spirit in our words; your spirit in our actions; your spirit in the work of healing, connecting, and caring. We will remember you, as we follow Jesus this week. Help us to hear your call, to respond with joy and work in the spirit of love, hope, peace, and justice. We make this prayer in your healing name. Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 264 *Immortal, Invisible*

Immortal, invisible, God only wise;
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes;
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Blessing

As you leave this place, remember that you may be the only grace someone will meet this week.

We go, to share God's graciousness with all.

Remember you may be the only love someone will encounter this week.

We go, to be the love of Jesus for all.

Remember you may be the only peace someone will find this week.

We go, to share the Spirit of hope and reconciliation with all.

As we continue to pray in physically distanced times, yet joined by prayer, song, and sacred Story, will you pray again with me the prayer created by our United Church Moderator, Richard Bott:

**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." Alleluia! Amen.**

Postlude

Call to Worship: Adapted from Psalm 100, *New Revised Standard Version*.

Opening Prayer: Words adapted from a prayer written by the Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell, June 14, 2020 <http://rev-o-lution.org/>

Bible Reading: From the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Response to the Bible Reading: Adapted from a prayer by Susan Lukey. *Gathering* 2020, page 51. Used with permission.

Blessing of Torrin Maag: Written by Torrin Maag. Revised June 8, 2020.

Prayers of the Community: From *Pastoral Prayers to Share: Year A* by David Sparks. © 2010 David Sparks, Wood Lake Publishing Inc. Used by permission.

Blessing: Thom Shuman. © 2017 Thom M. Shuman, <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>

Closing Words: Written by our Moderator, The Rev. Dr. Richard Bott.
