

## ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

June 28, 2020, 4<sup>th</sup> After Pentecost

Welcome to Worship, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, June 21

Email [absolute\\_solutions@live.com](mailto:absolute_solutions@live.com) to get the Zoom link.

### Prelude

#### Welcome – Greeter: Anne Pile

Welcome to the worship service of St. Andrew's United Church, in Sudbury Ontario. Welcome to the sacred space. In ancient times, offering a drink and a meal, perhaps a place to stay for the night to a stranger, was essential hospitality. Jesus today picks up on Jewish hospitality, saying that by offering a cup of cold water to a stranger, you are welcoming Jesus. Sometimes the language we hear in our culture, in politics, seems the opposite of good hospitality. Let us today celebrate a spirit, a mindset, that Christ nurtures in all who seek to follow him: *Unconditional welcome* rather than the building of barriers between us.

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 above, 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 lovingly acknowledge the land and territory that we pray on as a community of faith. We acknowledge and pray for the peoples, ancestors, and presence of the Indigenous peoples of the Atikemekshing Anishnawbek and the Wahnapiatae First Nation. What First Nation traditional territory are you on this morning? We also acknowledge all of the Indigenous, Métis, and Inuit of this great land of Turtle Island and their ancestors, and all seven generations before and after us as individuals, as a church community and as a country of Canada. We have great work to do to bring Healing and Reconciliation – God grant us the courage and integrity to be about that work now and in the days, months and years to come.

#### Lighting the Christ Candle

Preparing for this worship, we are intentional in how we do it. We light a candle to symbolize holy presence. Of course our Creator is already here, all around us, but we prepare ourselves to welcome God. What can you do at home to prepare yourself for a holy visit? Many times we take a deep breath, we pay attention to how our body feels we breathe in, breathe out. Sometimes people take some quiet time. Just silence. Some people borrow the spiritual practice of repeating a mantra, like: I am a child of God. Thank you God. Take this quiet moment to welcome God the way you need to and I'll light the Christ candle as we begin worship.

#### Call to Worship

One: Welcome! In the name of God, welcome.

God's love stretches wide,

**All: ready to embrace all with love.**

One: You who are thirsty for the presence of God,  
welcome.

**All: May your thirst be satisfied.**

One: You who long for a caring touch,  
welcome.

**All: May you know God's love through the care of this community.**

One: In the name of God, welcome to all;

**All: let us drink deeply of God's presence and share this grace with one another.**

## Opening Prayer

God of steadfast love, today we remember Jesus' words: "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." We pray to welcome the outcast as we would welcome you, to do what you can to provide water to the stranger, and to trust always that you will be there. We pray our hearts into a worshipful welcome of you, God, by praying the pray 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: VU 228 *Sing Praises to God*

Sing praises to God! Sing praise in the height;  
rejoice in God's word, blest angels of light;  
high heavens, recalling by whom you were made,  
come, offer your worship in brightness arrayed.

Sing praises to God! Sing praise upon earth,  
in tuneful accord, you saints of new birth;  
praise God, who has brought you rich grace from above,  
and showered your life with abundance of love.

Sing praises to God, all things that give sound;  
each jubilant chord re-echo around;  
loud organs, your glory tell out in deep tone,  
and trumpets, the story of what God has done.

## Bible Readings

### **Psalm 13, VU p. 734**

How long, O God, will you utterly forget me?

**How long will you hide your face from me?**

How long must I suffer anguish in my soul,  
and be so grieved in my heart day and night?

**How long shall my enemy triumph over me?**

Look at me and answer me, O God my God;  
**give light to my eyes, lest I fall asleep in death,**  
lest my enemies claim to have prevailed against me,  
**lest my foes rejoice at my downfall.**

But my trust is in your mercy.

**Let my heart be joyful in your salvation.**

I will sing to you, O God,  
**because you have dealt so lovingly with me.**  
**I will praise your name, O God most high.**

### **Matthew 10:37-42 (NRSV)**

"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

## Response to the Readings

Open our hearts to welcome your challenging yet always encouraging Word this day. Nurture radical and holy hospitality in us toward all people we may encounter knowing that when we welcome stranger or friend, we welcome you. Amen.

### Message: *Whoever welcome you, welcome me*

What does a personal sense of mission look like in our modern world? Is it the sole realm of the evangelicals?

A healthy organization must know its mission, talk about it, review its mission from time-to-time, in order to flourish. A Mission Statement can take a long time for a community to develop, and some argue that a Mission Statement takes too much time and energy. By the time an organization has crafted it, circumstances in the world that we are called to serve may have changed – our mission may have changed also. The Vision Statement that St Andrew's developed long before I arrived here is both powerful and relevant:

Growing Spiritually  
Building Community  
Transforming Lives

That is pretty simple, but these words challenge us to stay focused. Anyone who knows me also knows that I love to multi-task. I can champion several things at once, but my challenge is to pay enough attention to one specific task to be effective in it.

We modern followers of Jesus need to focus on our mission that is grounded ultimately in radical love and welcome, just as those first century followers of Jesus needed to do. They needed their essential mission. In Matthew's Gospel the mission of the Jesus community was to proclaim good news everywhere that God's kin-dom, a new order, was coming soon. Everyone had their part in that accomplishing that essential task. Some had the passion for adventure, living as nomads, travelling from town to town to heal the sick and preach.

I bet there were more than a few adventurers, journeyers among them whom I can relate to, who were full of great ideas, ways to expand God's vision.

One follower might muse: *Let's create a little sandal making business to generate money to build a home base.*

Imagine Jesus responding, gently, asking the earnest follower: "Great idea. Now, what is your talent?"

The adventurous follower might reply, "My gift is preaching from town to town about God's Love." Jesus might respond, "Wonderful. Focus on that gift, trust God to provide the rest. Remember that God provides benefactors too, to feed our ministries. Trust in that."

Gifted benefactors are all around us and among us today, feeding ministries locally and globally. God provides – What gift or gifts does God provide in and through you? How is God using you right now?

Those nomads of Jesus time, free spirited faithful people in our modern time moving as the Spirit directs them. Trusting the good graces of those receiving them – to be bluntly honest, that type of mission is not for everyone. And benefactors, maybe they, envy the free-spirited charismatic adventurers. Paul, who came along after Jesus, rem indeed the faith communities of the first century that the Body of Christ needs many parts, each gift unique yet all of equal importance.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=460110544>

Keeping focused.

Growing Spiritually, Building Community... Transforming Lives.

When we connect with our God-planted talents, we move from memorizing the words of a Mission Statement to connecting deeply with a sense of personal, collective Mission.

Today, right now, we are invited to connect with the call of Jesus, to paraphrase him: ***Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me.***<sup>2</sup>

I imagine myself being symbiotically connected with Jesus. Just like fetus connected within the womb – interconnected. Christ-presence in us as we are Christ presence for all we meet. Do you feel that way? How does that, or ought that, sense of deep interconnection with Jesus impact our day-to-day living?

How are our interactions with people impacted if we truly believe that as people we meet encounter us, they are encountering Christ? It could be a powerful exercise this week for you and me, to be mindful of our welcoming encounters with difficult people. Maybe we would be even a little bit more patient? Loving?

If you are a long-timer in church like me, we can get routinized. We might be tempted to think we've seen it all. But to look with fresh spiritual eyes this week.

Are you a newer to Christian faith? In this passage, you might be interested in what Jesus says in today's passage:

...whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward<sup>3</sup>

The Greek word for “little ones” can be used to refer to children, but scholars say that this particular reference to little ones is Jesus speaking of those who are new in their faith. How many among us were invited by someone in our life to try participating in worship, or church camp, or Bible study, for the first time? Or, maybe you were, or you could be the one *doing the inviting*, or listening and supporting, for someone who needs a spiritual community to surround them and care for them.

We in the United Church are not always eager to “invite” – we can be quietly uncomfortable with evangelical acts like inviting, or sharing publicly a story of how God changed you, or, otherwise boldly embodying Christ's love. Perhaps today is your day to accept an ancient-but-oh-so-modern invitation to connect with Christ-presence in you and your gifts, and to audaciously live each day this week and every week with a sense of Mission to embody Christ's unconditional love and welcome. Amen.

### **Hymn: MV 144 *Like a Healing Stream***

Like a healing stream in a barren desert,  
Spirit water bringing life to dusty seed.  
God is trickling through our lives as in a dream unfolding,  
promising revival and rebirth...like a healing stream.

Like a gentle rain on a thirsty garden,  
Spirit water come to nourish tiny seed,  
God is bubbling through the soil to coax a new creation,  
yearning for an end to want and need...like a gentle rain.

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<sup>2</sup> Elisabeth Johnson, Commentary on Matthew 10: 40-42 workingpreacher.com

<sup>3</sup> Matthew chapter 10, verse 42 (New Revised Standard Version)

Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,  
Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,  
God is working in our hearts to shape new tomorrow:  
God will always challenge and provide! Like a mighty sea,  
like a river strong, like a gentle rain, like a healing stream.

### **Minute for Mission**

### **“A Safe Home”**

There is something interesting about hospitality. No matter where it is found around the world, it usually looks the same – a smile, a warm welcome, understanding, acceptance, and gratitude. In Nairobi, Kenya, there is a Christian safe house for people who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Questioning or Queer, Intersex, and Asexual or Ally – LGBTQIA. The home is a haven for refugees from Uganda, Somalia, and South Sudan. The refugees who live here pray and dream of a day they are resettled in a country like Canada where they can live freely without fear of imprisonment.

While the group waits to be resettled, they have named themselves Nature Network and they spend their time creating art, changing the world through beauty. Whether it is movies, dance, or events posted on Facebook, the group always puts their best foot forward. They also offer hospitality – not just to people from their regions, but in 2017, they welcomed pilgrims from The United Church of Canada, who came to hear and share stories of struggle, courage and bravery. When the Nature Network group heard about what life can be like in Canada, they cheered, since that’s what they’d been praying would be possible for them one day. We are thankful that in The United Church of Canada there are opportunities to sponsor and support LGBTQIA and Two-Spirit refugees. We are thankful that United Church people find so many ways to offer the hand of Christ, hospitality to our neighbours.

If Mission & Service giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! If you have not given, please join me in making Mission & Service giving a regular part of your life of faith. Loving our neighbour is at the heart of our Mission & Service.

### **Offering Moment**

The gifts God gives are meant to be shared. By that I mean: All is God’s first – our talents, personality, and the possessions that we have – we believe, all starts with God. But those gifts become more powerful when they are shared. I have heard some great stories of parents who start early paying their children allowances for work done. They encourage their children to spend a little for themselves, save a little, but also to donate a portion of their allowance to a cause that is important to the child. We are never too young to learn, learn how to be grateful for what we have and, to be generous with our blessings and sharing them. My question to you is, how can you be generous with what you have? Remember, volunteering and sharing yourself is very important.

If you already are a partner with St. Andrew’s United Church, donating financially, or among the many priceless and dedicated volunteers who are the engine of many ministries here, thank you! If you are not yet a partner of St Andrew’s, please consider it. We need you... God’s work needs you, certainly we need your prayer. If you have any questions about how you can become involved, visit our Facebook page, or send us an email ([church@st-andrews.ca](mailto:church@st-andrews.ca)), and ask to subscribe to our weekly email Newsletter. Thank you for all that you do out of love. God, thank you for our blessings, please accept us and our gifts as we offer them back to you by our generous lives. Amen.

### **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 of courageous love, we hear your call as we offer our living to you. You invite us to love with heart and soul and mind and strength, and then you ask more of us, that we might dare to be your servant people. In all the stories recorded in scripture, we learn how Jesus taught us to see you in our neighbours. But we need help to see with your eyes. Point us in the right direction. Teach us to look, and listen, to keep a clear mind and a firm heart. We pray for moments of quiet that will help us find clarity. We pray for experiences of laughter that will remind us how your call us to live joy-filled lives. We pray for moments of insight as we learn from the wisdom of elders and teachers.

Help us hear the promise and know the calm that lives at the heart of your being, and is your gift to us. And then, we pray for the courage to choose the braver path, the path of love, speaking truth, bearing witness, so that your power and your goodness will be known in the world, one small action at a time.

God, how you must long for a world in which the last shall be first, in which the lowly are cared for. We offer prayers for those who grieve and those who wait. We pray for friends who are feeling tired of all this isolation and long for companionship. We pray for front line workers who carry the well-being of your people in their hands. We pray for those who do not have enough.

We are your people and we trust in your vision. We long for your kin-dom to come. Come, Lord Jesus and make home in our hearts today. God, hear our prayers and in your love, answer. Amen.

## Closing Hymn: VU 227 *For the Fruit of All Creation*

For the fruit 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 safekeeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.

In the help we give our neighbour, 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.

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.

## Blessing

One: Live as a testament to God's welcome and grace.  
Look for life, not in the promise of status or fame,  
but in the still, small voice of radical love.  
Go in peace and love, listening to the voice of God  
amid the blur and noise of the world,  
offering nourishment to neighbour and stranger,  
and remembering the love of a humble but mighty God.

**All: We go with renewed hope and a braver faith.**

One: Let us go to bring hope and healing to the world  
with a gift as simple as a cup of water,

**All: and as complex as our lives, we will join Jesus in serving those around us. Amen.**

## Postlude

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