

**ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH**  
**October 25, 2020 – Stewardship Sunday 1**  
***We Offer Gratitude Through Music***

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 pm, Sunday.

Email [sketchingalong4@gmail.com](mailto:sketchingalong4@gmail.com) to get the Zoom link.

## **Prelude**

### **Hymn: VU 820 *Make a Joyful Noise***

Make a joyful noise all the earth! Worship your God with gladness.  
Make a joyful noise all the earth. Come to this place with a song!

1. Know that your God has made you. Know it's to God we belong.  
And come to this place with joyfulness and praise. Worship your God with a song!

Make a joyful noise all the earth! Worship your God with gladness.  
Make a joyful noise all the earth. Come to this place with a song!

2. Enter these gates, thanks giving. Enter these courts with praise.  
Sing thanks to your God and bless the holy Name. Worship your God with a song!

Make a joyful noise all the earth! Worship your God with gladness.  
Make a joyful noise all the earth. Come to this place with a song!

3. Ages through endless ages, seasons of endless years,  
the love of our Maker ever shall endure. Worship your God with a song!

Make a joyful noise all the earth! Worship your God with gladness.  
Make a joyful noise all the earth. Come to this place with a song!

## **Welcome**

Welcome – both people in sanctuary and those at home joining worship through our video. This is holy ground we worship on, wherever we are.

Next week will be our AGM, both in sanctuary and on Zoom. The Zoom link will be in the News next week. Annual Reports are available and will be in the sanctuary on Nov. 1. The Annual Report is also on the website, and the link will also be in the News.

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 7:00.

Now we take time, create space for the holy in our hearts – breathe gently, noticing how you are filled with life-giving oxygen. Let us worship.

## **Acknowledging Traditional Territory**

Long before settlers came to this land and subsequent immigrants afterward, there were people here. We acknowledge that many Nations of Indigenous people have lived on the land. We give thanks for this land we are worshiping upon, particularly the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek who have been and continue to be stewards of this land. May we commit ourselves be partners in caring for the land, and may we work towards reconciliation, healing and just sharing of the land. Amen.

## **Lighting the Christ Candle**

We light this candle as a symbolic action to recognize God's presence.

**In every moment, Christ's light shines. Alleluia! (*light candle*)**

## Call to Worship with the Singing Bowl

Hear the sound!

**God is calling.** (*gong*)

We are gathered.

**God is present.** (*gong*)

Thanks be to God.

**Hallelujah! Amen.** (*gong*)

## Sung Opening Prayer: VU 382 *Breath on Me, Breath of God, vs. 1*

Breathe on me, breath of God,  
fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love,  
and do what thou wouldst do.

## 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.**

## Time up Front

*Narrator 1:* Music is a wonderful way to express LOVE because it appeals to all generations,

*Narrator 2:* to people of all religions;

*Narrator 1:* to people of all cultural backgrounds.

*Narrator 2:* Music blesses the hard-of-hearing;

*Narrator 1:* and all people, regardless of their educational background.

*Narrator 2:* Even our pets!

*Narrators 1 & 2:* Most important of all it's another way that we can pray to our God.

*Narrator 1:* Do you think God just loves to hear our voices in song as much as our spoken prayers?

*Narrator 2:* I think God loves hearing our songs of praise. Hey what if we added instruments in addition to our voices? Do you think God would like that too?

*Narrator 1:* I'm Sure God is not only pleased when we sing, but when we add our whole bodies to the prayer in song, by moving. So, Listen... I have a bell that rings. (*ring bell*)

*Narrator 2:* And I just happen to have a tambourine. Listen. (*play tambourine*) (*Narrator 1 can join in with the bell*)

*Narrator 1:* I'll bet Jonathan could play and sing something for us too. (*As Jonathan starts, the narrators add the instruments.*)

*Narrator 2:* Some of us sing well and dance naturally. Others find this more difficult, but God doesn't mind. All God wants is to hear us, enjoy our diverse songs of praise sung together. Maybe that too is what "Love" looks like – singing together, welcoming every new unique voice or sound... no exceptions.

*Narrators 1 & 2:* Music is a beautiful way to worship God.

*Narrator 1:* Did you know that Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, was the first person in the bible to sing and dance?

*Narrator 2:* I did. We will hear more about gift of music given to God in the scripture lesson and in today's Message.

*Narrator 1:* Thanks.

### **Scripture Readings (*Betty McFarlane*)**

#### **Psalm 100**

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come into the LORD'S presence with singing.

Know that the LORD is God.

It is God that made us, and we are God's;  
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving,  
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to God, bless the holy name.

For the LORD is good;

God's steadfast love endures for ever,  
and the LORD'S faithfulness to all generations.

#### **Exodus 15:1, 20-21**

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; ...

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

'Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously;  
horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'

### **Response to the Scripture Readings (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

#### **Message: *Spiritual Aerobics***

You may or may not have grown up with giving thanks for food before meals, using a scripted prayer, or an impromptu prayer, or, perhaps like the LeGrands you have a few fun blessing songs you learned from church camp. Perhaps you continue this spiritual practice.

When I was a child, my siblings and I dutifully folded our hands before every supper that we ate together and my father would say the Anglican prayer he learned as a child, "For that which we are about to receive, may the Lord make us truly thankful." To which we all replied, "Amen." Interesting, my father has changed. He creatively comes up with the blessing each meal, gradually getting longer each time, at which point my mother nudges him. He brings it to a close."

No matter how absurd and chaotic the world seems, or the plainness of the food on our plates, it is about saying "Thank you."

Sometimes I don't feel like saying, "Thank you"; even, sometimes, reluctant to say "thank you" to God. Maybe I'm not thankful when I'm being bullied by a kid on a schoolyard, or during a week when everything just seems to be going wrong. What does it mean to "rejoice always" or to "make a joyful noise" (Psalm 100:1) to God in times like this? Is there a chance that our practice of gratitude could blind us to the reality around us where some enjoy abundance while others struggle to survive?

How can we sincerely *make a joyful noise* of gratitude while remaining attentive to unjust systems and people in need?

For an example, let's look at Miriam who for the second time, it seems, witnesses Moses' salvation from water, remember that she may have been there watching when the infant Moses was taken up from the river by Pharaoh's daughter. Here, Miriam sings, dances, and plays a tambourine in gratitude after she, Aaron, and Moses, along with all the Israelites, have emerged untouched by the Red Sea while it closed over Pharaoh and the Egyptian Army. As the enemy drowns, Moses and the Israelites sing their gratitude to God, source of strength and salvation, but Miriam goes further. When she and the women pick up tambourines and dance, they *embody the victory* of the oppressed over the oppressor in a language that amplifies the words of Moses' song. The *language of the body*—movement punctuated by drumbeat and the clash of cymbals—*visibly and physically enacts the freedom* they have gained because God has triumphed. In this act and because in her whole body she understands whom to thank, Miriam is called "prophet."

A prophet has the special status of truth-teller or one who urges the people to obey God. Moses, of course, is the most significant prophet in the Hebrew Bible, but Miriam's action here, her "joyful noise," brings to the people a reinforcement of their indebtedness to God. She frames Moses's song by making a refrain of his first line, "Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea." In her dance and celebration, she reiterates the wisdom of Psalm 100: "Know that...God...made us" (v. 3) and not we ourselves; know that we are God's people, and this is God's saving act.

Therefore, says Paul in the first letter to the Thessalonians, "Give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Note, Paul does not limit those circumstances to the good things of life, such as liberation from oppression, full bellies, or a good harvest. If we are to give thanks "in all circumstances," if that is what constitutes true rejoicing and rest in Christ, then we cannot insulate ourselves from our flaws and disappointments even when we dance and sing for joy as did Miriam with the women. But how is this possible?

Am I to be grateful when things are *not* going my way? You want me to take up my tambourine when my plate is empty, when life has handed me the pits instead of the cherries? Am I to turn in gratitude to God when I know that my unearned privilege has been handed to me because others have less or none? To give thanks for good and bad is like patting my head and rubbing my stomach at the same time. Can it be done without confusing or blending the two?

It may be worth remembering that the command to "rejoice always" does not limit believers to a mood of meaningless happiness. Miriam's joy is not like that of, say, Grey Cup winners who crow "We're number one!" Her rejoicing is in God. Loosely translated, she could be saying something like "God is number one." I believe that God wants us to rejoice in all that God gives, not because God needs our praise or wants us to be endlessly "happy clappy," but precisely because in the act of giving thanks and rejoicing in God, we come together into relationship with God. We begin to know, with Miriam, that God triumphs gloriously, not we ourselves, and that though generations pass, God's love endures forever.

As we explore the theme of gratitude over these 4 Stewardship Sundays, we will be challenged to bring our whole selves, body and mind, to thanksgiving. Dancing and playing tambourines, Miriam and the other Israelite women lead us in a kind of spiritual aerobics, a full body experience of gratitude. As we move into the week ahead, let's emulate Miriam and the Israelite women by mentally beating the tambourine and dancing each time we remember to thank God for God's faithfulness.

## **Response Hymn: MV 142 *Oh a Song Must Rise***

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise once again.

Singing out God's praises and glory, the faithful voices blend,  
oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

1. From the mountains to the valleys, from the desert to the sea,  
a song must rise once again.

From the voices of our leaders, the voice of you and me,  
a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise once again.

Singing out God's praises and glory, the faithful voices blend,  
oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

2. From poverty and riches, from the voice of young and old,  
a song must rise once again.

From the free and the imprisoned, the timid and the bold,  
a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise once again.

Singing out God's praises and glory, the faithful voices blend,  
oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

3. From ev'ry house of worship, in ev'ry faith and tongue,  
a song must rise once again.

From the villages and cities, a new song must be sung,  
a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

Oh a song must rise once again.

Singing out God's praises and glory, the faithful voices blend,  
oh a song must rise for the spirit to descend.

## **Stewardship Testimonial (*Diane Trollope*)**

Good morning! Well, here we are once again in Stewardship mode. But then life is being a steward in our time, energy, space, food, even silence and wearing masks. We need these things in our life, and stewardship is balancing all of these things while living them out.

That also means our faith. I am quite sure I did not hear the word 'stewardship' when I was young at home, or at school. It was used more at church. Yet it is a word we live by consciously, or unconsciously. Balance is health.

We are in trouble with this world. The Natural world is sending pretty stark messages that we are at the very edge of catastrophic results which are life threatening. The human race is at another crucial edge. It is all dependent on humanity's choices regarding itself and Nature. It is not a competition.

God is the Author of both Nature and humanity... and I might add science as well. How humans have used these is what has made divisions and torn it all apart.

'Being Green is Faithful' is the front of a card I designed a long time ago. It is faithful to be green stewards of the Earth. It is faithful to be for the human race... to work towards creating common ground for all colours of the human race to honour each other and enjoy God's amazing diversity. We are all gifted, unique, and loved beyond imagining by our Creator. It's called grace.

We should expect and enjoy differences as where we are born has its own culture and religious beliefs and within these are more subtle differences.

Stewardship is looking out for one another and that includes the whole of God's Creation. Whole means undivided, not broken, or torn apart. Seems like there is a lot of mending and healing to be done. First we must acknowledge our own brokenness, because God works with the truth.

As for today I have choices. If I listen to any more news of the ingrown violence and systemic racism that sports today as being normal, when it is so demoralizing to each and every human life, I can only stand taller and live more clearly in my walk with the holy Creating Energy to call out the healing power of love. Being a Steward is love in action. God is a verb on the go.

It seems to me stewardship may well begin when a tiny child eagerly shoves a half-eaten cookie in a trusted mouth. This is an act of love, sharing what was given with another. The concept is still a seed, but the tot's delight is quite evident.

So being a steward means I get to be involved in sharing God's abundant grace with those we serve, both in our community, and around the world. It rises from being grateful.

It is the call to love, and to respect life. It is the Call I answer each day. The inner voice of the heart pulsing thrum, drumming the call: to love. Love. Love...

And on this drumming note I welcome you to the call to stewardship.

### **Offering Moment**

Thank you for all that you do to bless your world and the time and your treasure that you already dedicate to St. Andrew's. If you haven't yet supported us, check out our website, Facebook page – the addresses are at the end of this video. Consider subscribing to our weekly emailed newsletter by emailing Alison at [church@st-andrews.ca](mailto:church@st-andrews.ca).

This Stewardship Program over October in worship will hopefully inspire you with news about how God's Love gets lived out here at St. Andrew's. Church is God's work through you, and me, the people.

As we think of our neighbors, may our souls be touched by their needs, and our hearts open our resources to offer gifts which will bring healing, peace, and grace to all. Amen.

### **Offering Hymn: MV 191 *What Can I Do?***

What can I do? What can I bring?  
What can I say? What can I sing?  
I'll sing with joy. I'll say a prayer.  
I'll bring my love. I'll do my share.

### **Prayers of the Community**

*Note: As each part is prayed, a finger is raised or uncurled or pointed. At the end, the whole hand is open.*

Dear God, we give you our thanks and praise for all the gifts we have received from you over the week.

We pray for our schools, for students and teachers, support staff and parents. Help each of us study and work hard as you intend us to do. (**raise first finger or thumb**)

We now pray to reach out to those people and places in need of prayer. We pray for the leaders, in churches and of nations, as they strive for peace and justice. (**raise second finger**)

### **Sung Refrain: MV 154 *Deep in Our Hearts* (vs. 1)**

1. Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
deep in our hearts there is a common song;

deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
telling Creation that we are one.

We pray for the strongest people and nations, the wealthy and powerful, that we, your people, may learn to share our wealth, our power, our opinions. Together with all your people, we long for a world filled with freedom and equity. **(raise third finger)**

**Sung Refrain: MV 154 *Deep in Our Hearts* (vs. 2)**

2. Deep in our hearts there is a common purpose;  
deep in our hearts there is a common goal;  
deep in our hearts there is a sacred message,  
justice and peace in harmony.

We pray for the most vulnerable, the sick, the sorrowful, the lonely, and the oppressed, along with our friends who are struggling today. May they feel your healing power and your comforting presence. **(raise fourth finger)**

**Sung Refrain: MV 154 *Deep in Our Hearts* (vs. 3)**

3. Deep in our hearts there is a common longing;  
deep in our hearts there is a common theme;  
deep in our hearts there is a sacred current,  
flowing to freedom like a stream.

We pray for the smallest people, children, babies, the elderly, the forgotten ones, the homebound, and for all of your glorious creation. May we listen to the quiet voices in our midst. **(raise fifth finger/thumb)**

**Sung Refrain: MV 154 *Deep in Our Hearts* (vs. 4)**

4. Deep in our hearts there is a common vision;  
deep in our hearts there is a common song;  
deep in our hearts there is a common story,  
telling Creation that we are one.

And may the people of God, with open hearts and open hands, say together, Amen. Amen.

**Commissioning**

We have this gift of music, entrusted to us by our Holy Muse, our God. Let us cherish it, share it. Let us sing Love that all who hear might know that they are beloved children of God too. Amen.

**Commissioning Hymn: VU 481 *Sent Forth by God's Blessing***

1. Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.  
The supper is ended, O now be extended  
the fruits of this service in all who believe.  
The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action for God and for all.  
God's grace did invite us, God's love shall unite us  
to work for the kingdom and answer its call.

2. With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,  
the tasks of our everyday life we will face.  
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,  
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.  
With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;  
unite us as one in this life that we share.  
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving  
give honour to Christ and the name that we bear.

**Benediction Hymn: VU 964 *Go Now in Peace***

Go now in peace, go now in peace.  
May the love of God surround you  
everywhere, everywhere you may go.

**Postlude**

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**This worship service is adapted from *Called to be the Church: Congregational Giving Program 2020. Loving Our Neighbours*. The United Church of Canada.**

**Dialogue during Time up Front was written by Jeannine Zadow.**

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