

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
November 15, 2020 – Stewardship Sunday 3
We Offer Gratitude Through Food

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, November 15.

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

Prelude

Hymn: VU 460 *All Who Hunger*

1. All who hunger, gather gladly; holy manna is our bread.
Come from wilderness and wandering. Here, in truth, we will be fed.
You that yearn for days of fullness, all around us is our food.
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.
2. All who hunger, never strangers; seeker, be a welcome guest.
Come from restlessness and roaming. Here, in joy, we keep the feast.
We that once were lost and scattered in communion's love have stood.
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.
3. All who hunger, sing together; Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come, from loneliness and longing. Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal. Taste and see that God is good.

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. 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 symbol of the opening of our hearts and minds to Holiness in our midst, whether in this sanctuary or in your home where you are joining us from today.

In every moment, especially when we celebrate food, Enjoying it together physically or virtually – Christ-light shines. Alleluia!

Call to Worship

Taste and see that God is good. God of abundance.

Source of all our wonderful senses, we give you thanks for life's goodness.

Every day you feed us, bodies and souls, with nutritious food.

Help us share our abundance as we share the Good News of your abundant Love.

Opening Prayer

Day by day, God, we are blessed by your generosity, your care and comfort, that feed us. Yet, we don't always share your generosity with others. Feed us in worship not with quick and easy spiritual fixes, but feed us instead with Word that fills our souls with wonder and love that we cannot help but share when we leave here.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come! Amen.

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 131 *If Our God Had Simply Saved Us (vs. 1, 2, 3, 10)*

1. If our God had simply saved us, merely brought us out of Egypt, only opened up our prison: Dayeinu. (Pronounced *die-yea-noo*.)
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

2. If our God had split the Red Sea, made a way through walls of water, only opened up the waters: Dayeinu.
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

3. If our God had kept our feet dry, kept our heads above the water, kept us safely without drowning: Dayeinu.
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

10. If our God had given us manna, daily sent down bread from heaven, simple manna in the desert: Dayeinu.
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!
Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

Time up Front (*Jeannine Zadow, narrator*)

In the past few weeks, we discussed how the people of Israel travelled through the wilderness and the extreme difficulties they encountered. Fortunately, their faith in God protected them and they in return gave thanks to God as best as their surroundings would allow.

Since they were nomadic, they were not in any one place long enough to farm. Finding and providing food was a serious problem; for not only were they unable to cultivate; neither could they carry a lot of provisions as their loads had to be light to continue the journey. We could compare their challenge to the First Peoples of the Canadian Prairies who followed the buffalo herds that provided the necessities of life. They could not farm but depended on their Creator and the natural environment to prepare such things as pemmican for food.

We are told in the Bible that God provided for the Israelites in the form of manna, a bread that became a staple for them. God told them to gather only enough for their families – no more. Manna was not to be stored or hidden away as it would not last. God provides just enough for each of us. We are warned not to be greedy and to have faith that God will provide.

During the first outbreak of COVID-19, we all experienced that fear that we would not have enough supplies or food to sustain us beyond a few days. We watched as people panicked: filling grocery carts with reams of paper towels, toilet paper, antiseptic supplies and even flour and baking powder. What were we to do? God told the Israelites to be patient, to have faith and to

share. Jesus said the same to his followers. The clergy of all faiths asked us to follow this advice. Soon companies and resourceful suppliers came to our aid, restocking store shelves with what we needed. For a while we, as the Israelites in the wilderness, were told to take only what was needed. We had to ration and we survived.

St. Andrew's offers **Gratitude through Food**. We feel the call to assist those who have little or nothing by delivering provisions to the shelters. We share even though we are very uncertain about the future. We have faith!

Remember – COVID-19 **does not stop LOVE from being celebrated**.

The following quote from Melody Beattie – an American author on books about drug addiction and recovery – seems best to sum up our topic on Gratitude: “**Gratitude** unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough and more. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. May **Gratitude** make sense of our past, bring peace for today and create a vision for the future.”

Hymn: VU 131 *If Our God Had Simply Saved Us (vs. 14, 15)*

14. If our God had fed us only, feasted us upon the mountain – not inviting all the neighbours: Dayeinu.

Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

15. But, our God, who holds the banquet, calls the whole world into freedom, opens up the new creation: Dayeinu.

Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

Dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dadayeinu, dayeinu, dayeinu!

Scripture Readings (*Brennan Maag*)

Acts 2:44-47

The first scripture reading gives us a glimpse into what the early Jesus community looked like, how they cared for one another, and strangers in need, soon after Jesus' death.

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Exodus 16:13-21

Our second reading, and the focus for today, tells us about Manna, a mysterious food.

In the morning the ground around the camp was covered with dew. When the dew was gone, thin flakes appeared on the desert floor. They looked like frost on the ground. The people of Israel saw the flakes. They asked each other, “What’s that?” They didn’t know what it was.

Moses said to them, “It’s the bread the Lord has given you to eat. Here is what the Lord has commanded. He has said, ‘Everyone should gather as much as they need. Take three pounds for each person who lives in your tent.’”

The people of Israel did as they were told. Some gathered a lot, and some gathered a little. When they measured it out, the one who gathered a lot didn’t have too much. And the one who gathered a little had enough. Everyone gathered only what they needed.

Then Moses said to them, “Don’t keep any of it until morning.”

Some of them didn’t pay any attention to Moses. They kept part of it until morning. But it was full of maggots and began to stink. So Moses became angry with them.

Each morning everyone gathered as much as they needed. But by the hottest time of the day, the thin flakes had melted away.

Sung Prayer of Illumination: VU p. 781, Refrain 2

My soul is thirsting for you, O God, my God.

Message: *Enough*

Can you think of any major event or milestone in life that is marked without food somewhere near the centre of it?

I found out that funerals have bread specifically named for the occasion. I did not know that! Perhaps one of the first banquets, certainly the first banquet of ancient Biblical history, comes from this story from Exodus where the hungry Israelites discover a mysterious, miraculous food just waiting for them to collect each day. In honour of Alex Trebek, here is a Jeopardy question for \$800: It's the amount of manna the Israelites gathered, if every person gathered a portion for themselves.

“What is ‘ENOUGH’, Alex?”

This is the real miracle of flaky manna – not that it mysteriously appears on the ground, but instead, that there is enough for everyone. Those who gathered little found they had enough; those who gathered more than they needed had nothing left over. They all had what they needed to sustain them.

“Enough” – If you have just been laid off, and needing to visit a food bank for the first time, hearing the word “enough” might be a bitter pill. It requires huge trust in God providing, abiding by that rule that you gather only just what you need. In our modern economy that preaches all-you-can-consume and constant growth, “enough” is not in the modern North American vernacular. The rule doesn't seem to stick for those Israelites, but for a time the Israelites demonstrate their trust in God's provision of enough to satisfy their needs. After escaping Egypt with their lives and despite their grumbling in the wilderness, this discovery of abundance, God's manna, is what Love looks like – God loves them even though they don't listen very well. How they must have celebrated over this miraculous food!

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” (Matthew 18: 20), says Jesus. We would qualify that with the command to wear a mask, and faithfully care for one another by keeping distance between us. We long for that, don't we, to share a meal with one another. It looks like the promised land, so close, that abundance symbolized by breaking bread together around table. Food itself, though, brings abundance. Sharing food with even one or two people within our safe bubble is enough – can you smell, taste, see that perfect meal being cooked and enjoyed in your imagination? You will notice the table (there is a table set for three people in the sanctuary) is set for three – perhaps a banquet shared by two is our present reality; the third is the Jewish tradition of setting an extra spot for the potential stranger knocking on the door, offering them hospitality. This banquet invites into a theology of God calling us to welcome to the table of God's love and community a vast diversity of people, a place where the spirit in me greets the spirit in you.

When I was an outreach minister in a suburban Oshawa church, I invited people to form teams that would cook and serve dinners at the downtown St. Vincent's kitchen. Food and money to run the kitchen depend completely on the goodwill of local businesses, organizations, individuals, and the people who volunteer. It was set up as a dining room then, perhaps not the same right now – everyone who comes through the door is welcomed, served at their tables a hearty meal complete with dessert and great service. I was blessed to be one of the servers who treated them everyone like the character in the old series “Cheers” – everyone yells “Norm!” as he enters the bar.

It is only partly about feeding the body, though. It is so much more – each day, kids, youth, middle-aged, and elderly alike come together to connect. They enjoy the warmth, the welcome, community, and sometimes even helping one another to solve problems like finding an affordable apartment. There are places like this in every city; here in Sudbury I hear a great deal about the Blue Door Café. In these modern, distancing times, downtown organizations and leaders – some from this church – in Sudbury are working hard to create safely distanced but warm space for people to gather, connect. God is resourceful, and working hard through people thanks to generosity of money and time and expertise to provide enough to go around!

Jesus had just died, what were the disciples, his community that depended on him, going to do? They listened to Jesus, and watched him as he modelled community for them – never hesitating to stop and look in the alleyway there where someone is huddled. He invites that person to new possibility. It is a strange and diverse community he assembles, really risky bringing so many different personalities and styles to God’s banquet table. But he trusts that Holy Spirit will give us what we need to share our brokenness and passion alike in the creating of God’s kin-dom vision right here. We are not big, or flashy – we might be inclined at first glance looking at our present reality that we are small. If... If you and I are willing to have faith enough to follow today, God will give us, God makes us enough to do remarkable things. We are not alone. Thanks to technology, you joining us at home, you here in the Sanctuary, we can gather around God’s table. I’ll invite Roger to pan down to the table, you in the sanctuary look at the table – we are at table, and God is the disheveled, disoriented stranger who wanders in to join us at that spot we made for her. We are not alone and we have more than enough to love every neighbour.

Your and my spiritual homework this week is to practice eating and drinking intentionally – widening our awareness of God’s abundance in the food we enjoy within our safe circles. In those moments, may we prayerfully ask: how can we share abundance with someone who needs it? God provides enough for everyone, no exceptions, to have enough. But God needs our help.

Hymn: VU 355 *For the Crowd of Thousands*

1. For the crowd of thousands sitting on the ground,
seven is sufficient, seven will go round.
2. Seven is sufficient, fish and loaves of bread;
Jesus, for our hunger, gives us life instead.
3. Jesus makes his offer: fish and bread as food.
Make us truly thankful, make our living good.
4. If we give to Jesus bread to bless and break,
five and two will feed us seven days a week.
5. What we give to Jesus, and with others share,
will at last be gathered: over and to spare!

Stewardship Testimonial (*Torrin Maag*)

Offering Moment (*Debby Laporte, Chair of Stewardship Team*)

On the screen you will see the “fun page” that was included with your Stewardship package that was recently mailed to you. I hope you have had time to work on the word search, maybe do some colouring – Stewardship can be a lot of fun! A reminder that if you have a word that describes what Stewardship means to you – please send it to Alison. Our Steward “ship” sails on calm seas even though the waters beneath us are raging. But nothing can stop our “ship” from navigating these turbulent times. Thank you to Alison and Maureen for their creative efforts.

Our program this year may seem subdued, but it has been nothing but subdued. Your Stewardship team has been very active behind the scenes. COVID-19 has made us rewrite the way we have delivered our program. We have continued to meet mostly through Zoom and the “occasional” email. All your leaders at St. Andrew’s have zoomed their way through the challenges that this virus has brought to us. Never underestimate the power of prayer, the phone calls, the baking of muffins, providing vitamin C, etc., etc. Our incredibly hard-working ministry team and your church council have been meeting without fail. Everything has been done with a focus on our mission and doing what we do best – love and care for each other.

With a focus on our financial side we have our expenses under control – that is incredible – however, our revenue has declined, increasing our deficit. While the deficit was planned so that we could have an incredible ministry team, the financial givings show that they are down from what our budget predicted. If you are new at St. Andrew’s, we are just happy you are here, we appreciate any contribution that your heart tells you to make. For those of you who have been part of this community awhile, we ask that you direct your donations toward the “local fund” rather than to Benevolent Fund or the Out of the Cold funds which are very healthy at present. However, please continue to support Mission and Service, the big picture ministry of our United Church – it is the essence of what we do, and the greater church needs our donations to do what we ourselves cannot do. We are not on this journey alone.

The slide on the screen now (pie chart from the Stewardship Brochure) shows the allocation of monies we have spent on your behalf to do the work God has guided us to do. This graph tells a story about what we do, thanks to your sharing of time and talent and treasure. It is amazing how many incredibly wonderful hands have joined to do God’s work – these figures are from 2019 and this year some expenses will be lower, but the work is still being done. And this does not include the volunteer hours that are so graciously donated 24/7. What a truly wonderful church we have.

Next week I invite you to bring your Response Card to worship and we will have a special basket that you can place them in right next to the regular offering basket. Or mail them in – that works perfectly too. And yes, the mail is still such an important service that is provided to us. Please fill out the back side of the response card. Volunteering is what we do so well and there is ample room for many more opportunities to volunteer – let us know. I ask you to also think about what each of you can offer financially to our church. Any gift is so wonderfully received, and we honour all gifts.

One of the members on the Stewardship Team – Diane Trollope is a gifted poet. She wrote a poem years ago and I refer to it now (“Stewardship Is...”, found in the Stewardship Letter and on the last page of this document). She has creatively used the letters of the word Stewardship to spell out some of the important aspects of what it means. Thank you, Diane!

As I look back over this past year, I reflect on what this church means to me and how I have grown to love the people, the music, the people we reach out to, even more than I thought possible. I know you feel the same way too. You have opened your hearts to me and Graham. And volunteering as your chair of Stewardship and Resources has been hard at times but the benefits outweigh the hard work as I see our church family work together to get us through these trying times. Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit. It works through each one of us.

Next week is St. Andrew’s Day and yes, in COVID-19 times we will still have a celebration. Not the same as we had in the past but come to the Banquet and see who will be there!

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.

Sung Refrain: MV 151 *Your Will Be Done*

Your will be done, be done on earth.
Your will be done, be done on earth.
Your will be done, be done on earth.
Your will be done on earth.
Your will be done on earth.

Prayers of the Community

God, you placed each of us in the world, infant, child, teen, woman, man, elder, to be like salt. When fear gets in the way of commitment, when exhaustion gets in the way of doing, when not caring gets in the way of the loving action, may our salt not dissolve as if in water. And so we pray for all who are afraid, all who face oppression and injustice, locally and globally. Help us be your salt.

God, you placed us in the world to be its light. When we are afraid in the shadows, when we turn away from the struggles others live with, when we forget how to dance with the joy of your love in our living, forgive us in the times when the light slowly fades. Sometimes, we are afraid of the shadows, afraid of poverty, afraid of the hunger that exists in your people. Fill our bellies and our minds with nourishment. Help us to be your light.

God, you placed us in the world to live in community. You have taught us to share in the abundance of all life, to offer bread, to give our food away, to pay attention to the hungry and the searching. Be your truth, incarnate in our living. Be the grace of our sharing. May we continue to be a people who are known for sharing our bread, your abundant life. Help us to be like bread.

We bring now the prayers of the gathered ones here, and for those at home, we invite you to speak out loud the names of the people you hold up to the light in prayer.... We pray for (names on prayer sheet). God, hear our prayers and in your love answer. Your will be done on earth. Your will be done on earth. You will be done on earth. Amen.

Hymn: VU 457 *As We Gather at Your Table*

1. As we gather at your table, as we listen to your word,
help us know, O God, your presence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
Nourish us with sacred story till we claim it as our own;
teach us through this holy banquet how to make Love's victory known.
2. Turn our worship into witness in the sacrament of life;
send us forth to love and serve you, bringing peace where there is strife.
Give us, Christ, your great compassion to forgive as you forgave;
may we still behold your image in the world you died to save.
3. Gracious Spirit, help us summon other guests to share that feast
where triumphant Love will welcome those who had been last and least.
There no more will envy blind us nor will pride our peace destroy,
as we join with saints and angels to repeat the sounding joy.

LYN (Love Your Neighbour) Presentation (*Reaching Out*)

Following the closing words, Jonathan is going to lead us in the first ever public performance of the new Love Your Neighbour song, written by a friend of our congregation. Then, as you leave the worship space, we invite you to stop by the Love Your Neighbour table in the narthex. Joyce will encourage you to pick up your gift of a phone sticker or if you would like, to purchase some "swag", a button for your coat or backpack or a bookmark. There will be a small charge to help us defray expenses of the bookmarks and the buttons.

Commissioning

With no exceptions, God is inviting us to go into this day, Loving our neighbour who doesn't **look like me, think like me or love like me;**

We love our neighbour who doesn't speak like me, pray like me or vote like me.
Hey Dave, God calls all of us to "Love Our Neighbour. No exceptions!"

Sung Benediction: *Love Your Neighbour*

1. You gotta love your neighbour who doesn't look like you.
You gotta love your neighbour who doesn't think like you.
You gotta love your neighbour who doesn't love like you.
Loving your neighbour is what you gotta do.

2. You gotta love your neighbour who doesn't speak like you.
You gotta love your neighbour who doesn't pray like you.
You gotta love your neighbour who doesn't vote like you.
Loving your neighbour is what you gotta do.
No exceptions! (*spoken*)

Postlude

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** written by Jeannine Zadow.

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Exodus 16:13-21 reading from New International Reader's Version (NIRV) Copyright © 1995, 1996, 1998, 2014 by Biblica, Inc.®. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Prayers of the Community adapted from Prayers for the People. Ten Days for Global Justice, which continues in KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, www.kairoscanada.org.

Love Your Neighbour song written by a friend of the congregation.

Stewardship Is...

by Diane Trollope

S – Stewardship is how we live our life!

T – Thankful giving initiates action!

E – Energy brings joy!

W – Wholeness brings healing!

A – Acceptance of others brings forgiveness!

R – Recognition that each one has gifts to offer!

D – Dedication to others brings hope!

S – Serving with our time, talents, and financial resources!

H – Healing belongs to everyone!

I – Inspiring justice for all!

P – Practising our faith is Stewardship!