

**ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH**  
**May 9, 2021, Mental Health Awareness Week**

Welcome to Worship

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

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

**Prelude**

**Hymn: VU 374 *Come and Find the Quiet Centre***

1. Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.
2. Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, face to face,  
making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.
3. In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare!

**Welcome & Announcements**

Welcome to St Andrew's United Church, a community of faith that welcomes you here in Sudbury, Ontario.

Our latest video from our "Love Your Neighbour... No Exceptions" project is "Fur and Feathered Ministry." Outreach Ministry is not exclusive to churches. The park behind our church is home to many birds and small animals. A frequent visitor has made it her ministry to care for these critters. Loving your Neighbour, in this instance, takes the form of supporting this dedicated community minister.

If you are joining us for the first time today, thank you and welcome. At the end of the service, there will be information about how to contact us – via email, facebook, and even by phone. We also have a Virtual Fellowship time tonight at 7 p.m. hosted by Bev and Diane. Information on how to join this evening's fellowship time is included at the end of the service.

As we prepare to worship, let us take a quiet moment ... [silence]

**Inviting Holy Light**

We light this candle, a symbol of both the death of Jesus but also the mystery and wonder of Christ's resurrection. We are comforted by the light that shines within each of us; God loves us so very much.

Now, let us open our hearts and minds to both receiving and giving.

[light candle in silence]

**Acknowledging Traditional Territory**

We gather as a treaty people – Robinson-Huron Treaty people. We acknowledge the Anishnaabe, and particularly the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnabek who call this territory home. We give thanks for the current and historic contributions these and other Indigenous peoples continue to make in our regions. May we all live in peace and friendship, honouring the treaties, seeking justice and walking together in the spirit of reconciliation.

## Call to Worship (based on Psalm 104)

We gather in the presence of the One who breathes life into all of Creation.

**We sing God's praises, breathing in God's glory.**

All are welcome in the presence of the Most High.

**We come, seeking the goodness in the hands of God.**

We gather as God's beloved people, leaving no one outside.

Together we reflect the fullness of God's love.

**Together we bring God's love into the world.**

**Let us worship the Living God whose breath gives us life.**

## Opening Prayer

God of love, today as we celebrate Mental Health Sunday, stir in us deep compassion for people living with brain disorders and their families. Raise our awareness of how we can create a supportive and safe spiritual community for people who feel isolated, shunned and ashamed.

O God, help us to trust your Spirit's work to make us whole, together in relationships of mutuality and partnership, in sacred rhythms of giving and receiving. Spirit descend upon us now; teach us, support us, even challenge us to become the loving neighbours that Jesus called us to become. Amen.

## The Prayer Jesus Taught

Now we pray this along with 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 570 *Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands, vs. 1*

1. Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,  
healing pain and sickness, blessing children small,  
washing tired feet, and saving those who fall;  
Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all.

## Time Up Front (Video)

(Tom and Rebekah read from Desmond Tutu's book, "God's Dream.")

Desmond Tutu's beloved children's book, "God's Dream," describes a young boy who cries when he realizes that his selfish actions have caused a rift in a friendship with a classmate. Tutu writes that God cries, too, when we hurt others and are ourselves hurt. I'm taken by this sentiment of God crying with us; and the message that God is not too holy to feel. God is not above emotion, but God is below.

God is with us when our heart or our brain hurts – when we cry God cries, too.

We talk about how when we have big feelings that don't have words, they come out as tears.

*When we are crying, God cries, too.*

Sometimes just like other parts of our bodies get sick, our brains get sick too. We need help. We feel sad, or we have been hurt. Sometimes medicine or talking about it helps. God is ALWAYS with us!

Let us pray: Thank you God for tears that express how we are feeling. Thank you, God, for our brains that help us know your love. Thank you, God, for mental health and for people who help us feel better when we are sick. We love you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Hymn: VU 570 Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands, vs. 2**

2. Take my hands, O Jesus, let them work for you,  
make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do;  
let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,  
till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.

**Scripture Readings (Allison Desormeaux)**

**Lamentations 5: 19-22**

*The book of Lamentations uses "lament", a prayer of protest, complaint, and grief that fervently appeals, either individually or as a community, for divine deliverance. At its essence, a lament is a "cry for help" to God.*

*We know this experience, crying out in anger, grief, frustration, or torment. Individuals with mental illness know lament all too well. Today's reading is a community lament about their sense of alienation. The stigma of mental illness can leave one feeling alienated in the community, even within one's family. Let's listen with our hearts and minds ...*

But you, O Lord, reign forever;  
your throne endures to all generations.  
Why have you forgotten us completely?  
Why have you forsaken us these many days?  
Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored;  
renew our days as of old—  
unless you have utterly rejected us  
and are angry with us beyond measure.

**1 Samuel 16: 14-23**

*Young David is introduced to the troubled King Saul who is tormented by "an evil spirit from the Lord." David provides soothing music for the troubled king. But, more importantly, he is caring and compassionate even in the face of Saul's terrible rages.*

*Some modern researchers suggest that Saul suffered from a mental illness. As people of faith, can and should be instruments of healing and comfort to those we know are suffering from a mental illness through no fault of their own.*

Now the spirit of the Lord departed from King Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul's servants said to him, "See now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our lord now command the servants who attend you to look for someone who is skillful in playing the lyre; and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will feel better." So Saul said to his servants, "Provide for me someone who can play well, and bring him to me."

One of the young men answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a warrior, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence; and the Lord is with him."

So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David who is with the sheep."

Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a kid, and sent them by his son David to Saul. And David came to Saul, and entered his service. Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer.

Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight." And whenever the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

Let us pray: May your Word, God, come alive in us. Inspire us to reach out in love as a sign of your radical hospitality and grace. Encourage us to receive the gifts that are given by all, including those who are living with mental health challenges. Thank you for inviting us to welcome into your love every neighbour. Amen.

**Message: *Loving in a Dangerous Time*\***

*\* Drawing from Bruce Cockburn's powerful song, "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" released on the album Stealing Fire, 1984*

*Full Message not available at time of printing.*

Like other impairments, mental illness produces disability in two ways:

- (1) it directly impedes functioning of the persons affected; and
- (2) it triggers prejudicial responses that produce socially constructed impediments to their functioning.

These responses, often called "stigma," compound the disabling effects of the person's medical condition.<sup>1</sup>

**Meditation after the Message**

Breathe deeply... Close your eyes and relax. Allow yourself to know that you are held in the loving arms of God. Thinking about yourself or someone you love, prayerfully ponder these questions? Consider now, how am I feeling, especially about my mental health now, in this moment? What do I do that helps me to express my pain, anger, or any feelings that I am experiencing?

What can I do to contribute to my healing process? Does my belief in God's unconditional love for me help me to accept myself just as I am? You are so precious, you are good, just the person, the child of God that you are. Even in your struggles towards wholeness, you are wonderfully made right now.

Breathe deeply again. Let the gentle healing love of your God enter into your heart. Know that God brings peace, healing and comfort to every part of your being God abodes in you. Amen.

**Hymn: VU 359 *He Came Singing Love***

1. He came singing love and he lived singing love;  
he died singing love. He arose in silence.  
For the love to go on we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

2. He came singing faith and he lived singing faith;  
he died singing faith. He arose in silence.  
For the faith to go on we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/584191b49de4bb461ebf5e87/t/593acbede4fcb559168befe6/1497025526200/KingSaulAndTheStigmaOfMadness.pdf>

3. He came singing hope and he lived singing hope;  
he died singing hope. He arose in silence.  
For the hope to go on we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

4. He came singing peace and he lived singing peace;  
he died singing peace. He arose in silence.  
For the peace to go on we must make it our song;  
you and I be the singers.

### **Invitation to the Offering**

Thank you for your generosity. We long to be members of the beloved community. We desire to experience God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. And so we share what gifts we can, laughter, hope, tears, time, talents and treasures, to do our part, trusting that the kin-dom is close when we are working together in community.

### **Dedication Hymn: MV 85 *Take, O Take Me as I Am***

Take, O take me as I am; summon out what I shall be;  
set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

### **Dedication Prayer**

May these gifts help to build the community of radical belonging that we hope to create. May they be a legacy of justice, hope, faith and most importantly love. Amen.

### **Litany of Extravagant Welcome**

God of love, we celebrate that today you are still speaking a word of acceptance, wholeness, and inclusion of all your differently-abled people. We give thanks for this church and the ways we seek to live out Jesus' commandment to love You, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. On this Mental Health Sunday, we pray for people who live with untreated mental illness and who are unable to find help and cannot afford medical care.

God of Life: we pray for the Church that you created through your Son, Jesus Christ; that it may provide an extravagant welcome and serve those who live with a mental illness, particularly in minority communities.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

Guide us, the citizens and leaders of this neighbourhood, city, world, that we may unite to provide for and protect those of us who are poor, homeless and suffer in mind, body and spirit.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

Comfort and relieve those who are troubled in mind and spirit. Bring them hope, peace and the consolation of a loving community.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

Give patience and courage to the families and friends of those who are ill. Increase their perseverance as they face challenges to recovery for their loved one.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

Protect and defend those living with mental illness from exploitation, addictions, and abuse.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are contemplating suicide today, right now. Bring someone or something to intervene.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

For the families who have lost a loved one to mental illness, bring them comfort in trusting that your grace accepts their loved one, despite the event that brought them into your loving arms.

Lord, in your mercy...

**hear our prayer.**

Lastly, but close to our hearts too, we pray for those from our families and community and those who we don't know, but are concerned about. We offer you our heartfelt prayers for people and situations where people need your healing, your comfort, your care, in this silent moment...

Eternal Spirit of Love, Giver of life and health, we trust that in your time and way, you will dispel all confusion with your order, all fear with your peace. Through Jesus our healer we pray. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: MV 89 *Love is the Touch*, vv. 1-3**

1. Love is the touch of intangible joy;  
love is the force that no fear can destroy;  
love is the goodness we gladly applaud:  
God is where love is, for love is of God.

2. Love is the lilt in a lingering voice;  
love is the hope that can make us rejoice;  
love is the cure for the frightened and flawed:  
God is where love is, for love is of God.

3. Love is the light in the tunnel of pain;  
love is the will to be whole once again;  
love is the trust of a friend on the road:  
God is where love is, for love is of God.

**Blessing**

The One who created all that is calls us by name and invites us into a life of abundant Love.

**We go out into the world as God's beloved people, bringing Holy Love to all whom we meet.**

Jesus taught us to love one another as fiercely and freely as God loves each of us, with the power that binds us together as the Body of Christ.

**We will embody Christ by shattering stigma and welcoming all, leaving no one outside.**

The Spirit fills us with the Breath of Life and urges us to imagine anew how to be Church in the world today.

**We will breathe deeply and move beyond what has been and what is. We will follow the Spirit and bring hope and healing to all who live in despair and brokenness. We will be the Church! Amen.**

**Benediction Hymn: MV 89 *Love is the Touch*, vs. 4**

4. Love is the Maker and Spirit and Son;  
love is the kingdom their will has begun;  
love is the path which the saints all have trod:  
God is where love is, for love is of God.

**Postlude**

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We are grateful to The United Church of Canada and The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network for ***Radical Belonging: A Mental Health Sunday Resource for All***, the template and prayers used for this worship.

**Inviting Holy Light** written by Julie Hutton. Gathering Easter, page 42.

**Opening Prayer** adapted from Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund.

**Time up Front** story, "God's Dream," by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams. © 2008 Candlewick Press.

**Prayer after Time up Front** by Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund.

**Scripture Readings** from 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.

**Response to Scripture** adapted from Rev. Dr. Sarah Lund.

**Message** was drawn from Bruce Cockburn's powerful song, "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" released on the album "Stealing Fire", 1984.

**Offertory and Dedication Prayers** by Rev. Dr. Alydia Smith.

**Litany of Extravagant Welcome** adapted from Rev. Colin Jones, Co-Pastor of Advent United Church of Christ, Columbus. Ohio.

**Benediction** by Rev. Dr. Rachel Keefe.

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