

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
June 13, 2021, Sacrament of Communion

Welcome to Worship

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

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

Prelude

Hymn: VU 703 *In the Bulb There is a Flower*

1. In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.
2. There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.
3. In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's United Church, a community of faith in Sudbury, Ontario. I hope you enjoyed last week's worship where we celebrated the anniversary of The United Church of Canada. That story, a miracle of sorts, entire denominations deciding to go all in, bringing their gifts as individual entities and joining together. That service was a miracle of sorts, 10 different Sudbury area congregations each leading a part of the worship.

We will be celebrating Communion today – all are welcome. All you need is yourself, and your "elements" that represent the bread and cup – it could be a rice cake or toast and juice or your morning tea and coffee. When we bless it together, they become sacred.

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

I invite you to close your eyes, to take a few intentional deep breaths. Slow your mind down, open your heart to what God's spirit is saying to you today. Let us centre ourselves in this space – where you are, where I am, we are woven together by Spirit.

[silence]

Today, we remember Jesus who in the Gospel of John is described as the light of our world.

[light the candle]

Could Jesus also be the quiet comfort of night and rest in our perpetually lighted world?

I invite you now to join me as we open our hands, our hearts, our spirits; whatever is comfortable for you.

[open hands]

Let us speak to, and listen to, our Creator:
We open ourselves to you, Creator God.

God, we are listening, we are here.

[silence]

Thank you, God, for all that is good.

Thank you, Holy One, for all Creation, of which we are a part.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Here we are worshiping on the traditional land to First Peoples. Across Turtle Island Treaties were made between colonizers and those who had lived on the land for millennia. Here at St. Andrew's, we give thanks to the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnabek who call this territory home, and share the caretaking of this land with them. We give thanks for the current and historic contributions that Indigenous and Métis peoples have made. May we journey and act together towards Reconciliation.

Call to Worship

All around us, God is looking for folks
who will join in serving others.

**It is as if God is planting seeds of compassion in us,
watching for them to bloom in our lives.**

In our midst, Jesus is walking among us,
tending our hearts, watering us with grace.

**It is as if Jesus is trusting that our souls
will grow big enough to welcome everyone.**

From morning to evening, the Spirit is at work,
gently tending this garden called life.

**It is as if the Spirit has found the perfect spots
to bring forth crops of justice and peace.**

Opening Prayer

Let us pray: Spirit of God, settle in among us; look past our external features, peer inside our hearts. See us for who we really are: yours. We are stubborn, doubting, self-centred and yet, ever yours. May we see ourselves through your eyes too. Grant us insight to see as you see, and the daring trust in you enough to allow your unpredictable choices to lead us closer to you. This we pray in the name of your beloved, and ours, the one we call Christ. Amen.

Hymn: VU 361 *Small Things Count*, vs. 1

1. Small things count, so Jesus said:
cups of water, crumbs of bread,
small things done because we're kind
count as big things in God's mind.

Time Up Front – Gloria Appianing

**The Parable of the 'Seed Sower' – Children's Lesson
– Based on Mark 4:26-32 and Matthew 13:1-23.**

Did you know that there is a parable in the Bible that is the most important? It trumps all parables in fact! Jesus said it this way in Mark 4:13.

“Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?”

What is the Parable of the Seed and the Sower?

The parable of the seed and the Sower is about the Word of God being sown in our hearts with gladness and producing fruit. It is plain and simple, but not easy. Why?

Because YOU determine if the seed will be planted in your heart or not. Yes, it is you... not Jesus.

Jesus is the Sower, and He sows His seed wherever He goes. The Sower is generous and sends His seed everywhere, no matter what kind of soil it lands in. He does not hold back. That is true with God. He never holds back from us. God generously gives us everything we need. He tells us all we need to know. We can trust that God is good and gives generously to us. God calls us to be generous also and not to hold back – He calls us to help Him sow His seed. But what is His seed?

Jesus tells us that the seed is God's Word. It is the truth about Jesus – the Good News – the gospel. There are many ways to share the Good News. We can spread the news through lots of creative ways: sharing balloons, or through wristbands, inviting a friend to church, using stories and lots more. However, in some countries it is against the law to share about Jesus so the people have to whisper it or tell each other in secret, or they even have to find special ways, like sending balloons with bibles inside them.

The Sower sowed by sending the seed out. He threw the seed out onto the soil. We can send God's Word out by speaking it, sharing it, singing it, writing about it and more. But what is the soil that we are sending the seed to?

We are like the different types of ground and situations in this story. Let's take a look:

1. First there was the Path: Snatched by birds. For some, they hear the words of God at home or at church but straight away it is snatched away, and they don't take it into their hearts.
2. Second came the Rocks: Dried Up. Some stop being excited about Jesus and the words of God dry up in their heart. They are no longer alive in their life.
3. Third was the Thorns: Choked Out. Some people get so worried and distracted by other things that the Word of God cannot take root in their heart. It is choked out and lost.
4. Lastly there was the Good Soil: Grew. If our heart is good soil then we will reap a harvest, 30, 60 or 100 times bigger than what was planted.

Writing some bible verses on several inflated balloons and letting go freely and travelling in the sky to any place as a means of sending a message of God across the community to all individuals wherever they might land. (With an illustration)

Using the bubble gun to create bubbles as an illustration of how the word of God or the message of God is sent out to every part of our community irrespective of the directions the bubbles travel. (With an illustration)

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 2 Corinthians 9:6.

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. Galatians 6:7.

In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good. Ecclesiastes 11:6.

Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! Psalm 126:5.

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 1 Corinthians 3:6.

Are you hearing God's word? Are you telling others about Jesus? How are you responding to the Word of God in your heart?

Is your heart good soil? We can check up on our heart by seeing how we feel towards Jesus, church, and the things of God. Are we excited or fed up with the things of God? If we are fed up or bored, we can ask Jesus to help us get our focus back on Him and to get excited about Him once again to propel us in spreading and sharing his message. Amen.

Hymn: VU 361 *Small Things Count, vs. 2*

2. Small things make the big things grow:
grains of yeast inside the dough,
puffs that fill a big balloon,
notes that make a happy tune.

Scripture Reading – James Warner-Smith

Mark 4:26-32 - Contemporary English Version

Jesus said:

God's kingdom is like what happens when a farmer scatters seed in a field. The farmer sleeps at night and is up and around during the day. Yet the seeds keep sprouting and growing, and he doesn't understand how. It is the ground that makes the seeds sprout and grow into plants that produce grain. Then when harvest season comes and the grain is ripe, the farmer cuts it with a sickle.

Finally, Jesus said:

What is God's kingdom like? What story can I use to explain it? It is like what happens when a mustard seed is planted in the ground. It is the smallest seed in all the world. But once it is planted, it grows larger than any garden plant. It even puts out branches that are big enough for birds to nest in its shade.

Response Prayer

Let us pray: Yes, no, maybe, not now, who – me? How will we answer when you call us to leadership, Holy One? Whatever our answer may be, God, open our ears and hearts to hear your Word of invitation, and to know that you will equip us and guide us through, every step of the journey. Amen.

Message: “Mustard Seed Faith”

Message not available at time of printing.

Hymn: VU 503 *When Seed Falls on Good Soil*

1. When seed falls on good soil,
it's born through quiet toil;
where soil receives the earth conceives
the blade, the stem, the fruit, the leaves.
Good soil, O mother earth,
the womb, where seed takes birth.

2. God's word in Christ is seed;
good soil its urgent need;
for it must find in humankind
the fertile soil in heart and mind.
Good soil! A human field!
A hundredfold to yield.

3. Plough up the trodden way,
and clear the stone away;
tear out the weed, and sow the seed.
Prepare our hearts your Word to heed,
that we good soil may be.
Begin, O God, with me!

Invitation to the Offering and Prayer

Generosity comes in many different packages, doesn't it. It is the spirit of a simple gesture, we see a stranger struggling to open a door and we automatically stop what we are doing, ask if we can help. It is. I think of my parents, my grandparents, elders in my church who taught me about generosity shown by serving, volunteering time, caring about the community.

Generosity is also supporting causes that touch your heart. That is discipleship, hearing the call to care, to give time and money when your heart is touched. Remember the mustard seed, it is not the size that matters but the generosity in your heart as you give.

If you already contribute to the mission of St Andrew's, maybe the larger work of the United Church through Mission and Service. Thank you! If you haven't yet found a way to support the work of St Andrew's but maybe you are thinking about it, contact us. Our contacts are in the credits at the end of this worship.

Let us pray: We remember those seeds of love, hope, grace, and peace which we carry in our hearts and souls, as well as our wallets and purses, so that in remembering, we would offer them to our God for use in the work of reconciliation and hope. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Dedication 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.

Sacrament of Communion

May the Listening God be with you.

May God also be with you.

Let us open our hearts to the One who hears us.

We offer them to our God, who knows we are all the same.

Shout for joy, people of God, and sing glad praises.

We join praising the One who is always with us.

Into the emptiness of chaos,
you flung the seeds of creation, Gardening God.
Volcanoes erupted, to become gentle lakes;
eye-delighting eagles soared high in the skies;
gentle does and fawns strolled through the mists of morning.
All this beauty and goodness you fashioned in your image
but we reached sought instead weapons and power
to dominate rather than to be stewards of Creation.
Prophets came to call us back home,
yet we persisted in believing
that our old, comfortable, ways were the best ways.
Determined to no longer grieve over us,
you sent Jesus to plant resurrection in our lives.

With all the Created World in its majesty and wonder
we sing our joy to you:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God who hears us.

All creation remembers your gifts.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who scatters your seeds.

Hosanna in the highest!

Walking ancient roads, Christ leads us into your kingdom;
as we sleep, he gives us fresh visions from you.
When we awaken, take us by the hand
to show us your wonder;
Visions of accepting everyone as sisters and brothers,
teach us the power of life over death and resurrection.

On the night before he died
it was Jesus who took a loaf of bread,
gave you thanks, broke it, and said,
“Take and eat; whenever you do this, remember me.”
Likewise, after supper, he took the cup, saying,
“This is the new covenant; remember me.”

As we remember his life, ministry, and death,
as we celebrate the gifts of his table,
we speak of the mystery we call faith:

**Christ died, so the old creation could begin to pass;
Christ was raised, the new creation growing in our midst;
Christ will come, so everyone will be made new.**

Prayers of Community

Like the people of our Bible heritage, we ask many things of you, Listening God. Send help, give support, remember our offerings, bless us with health, help us find the patience and attentiveness in each moment to see opportunity to grow even amidst COVID.

May we be as that grain of wheat falling to ground, dying in the parable of Jesus. It is hard, death... letting go of things, people, old ways. But then out of death, comes life. In nature we know it to be true, but help us to have the courage to open ourselves at times to your call to let go.

That little mustard seed, not as grand as we may be led to believe, but we know that your power is found in the smallest – the widow and her mite, the quiet one who never saw themselves as a leader, until they heard your call. Thank you that small things matter, that insignificant things can make all the difference.

Many of us are tired, God. Many of us anxious about health issues, financial challenges, hearts wrenched by conflictual relationships. May we find in the summer breeze, the glimpse of a glorious sunset, the whispers of leaves in the bush, may we hear your voice assuring us that death and loss are not an end, but resurrection will come, often in unexpected ways.

Thank you for all the heroes of our world:

Front line workers, first responders, kind neighbours who reach out to care for someone, known or stranger, who is going through tough times.

Especially this week the families impacted by the discovery of the unmarked graves at the Kamloops Residential School – may our resolve to work for reconciliation be evermore inspired. We pray also for the families impacted by the racially motivated killing of four of Muslim faith in London. May we stand with all who feel vulnerable, targeted, insignificant as living embodiments of Christ's teaching.

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.

Pour out your Spirit upon the gifts of the bread and the cup,
as well as those gathered for this feast near and far.

The bread, broken, becomes the seeds: *[break bread]*
of hope planted in despair,
of joy planted in grief, of kindness planted in cruelty.

The cup which is poured out *[pour cup]*
becomes the grace which nurtures those
who welcome the forgotten,
those who become justice so all might find welcome and home.
Gather us home, Lord, from our far-flung places,
so we can join every sister and brother around your Table of Grace.
Gather us home. Gather us home.
Amen.

Prayer After Communion

Let us pray: thank you, Resurrected One, for this feast of life.
We are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life.
We are sent forth into this world to live your way and share your joy.
We are now commissioned to feed as we have been fed,
forgive as we have been forgiven, love as we have been loved.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 418 Go Forth for God

1. Go forth for God, go to the world in peace;
be of good courage, armed with heavenly grace,
in God's good Spirit daily to increase,
till in the kingdom we see face to face.
Go forth for God, go to the world in peace.
2. Go forth for God, go to the world in love;
strengthen the faint, give courage to the weak;
help the afflicted; richly from above
God's love supplies the grace and power we seek.
Go forth for God, go to the world in love.
3. Go forth for God, go to the world in strength;
hold fast for good, be urgent for the right;
render to no one evil; Christ at length
shall overcome all darkness with his light.
Go forth for God, go to the world in strength.
4. Go forth for God, go to the world in joy,
to serve God's people every day and hour,
and serving Christ, our every gift employ,
rejoicing in the Holy Spirit's power.
Go forth for God, go to the world in joy.

Blessing

The God who has reconciled us to one another,
as well as the Holy Community, sends us forth.

**We will go to gather the broken
as we bring healing in our hands.**

Jesus, who has shaped us into new people
with his grace-filled hands, sends us forth.

**We will go to welcome those we have ignored,
drawing the stranger into a warm embrace.**

The Spirit, who teaches us how to look at others
with the eyes of love and hope, sends us forth.

**We will go to become one with those tossed aside,
to be the community of hope for which they have searched.**

Benediction Hymn: VU 575 *I'm Gonna Live*, vv. 1 & 4

1. I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

4. I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

Postlude

Call to Worship, Offering Prayer and Blessing by Thom M. Shuman lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com ©2018.

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The Parable of the 'Seed Sower' modified after: *'Parable of the Sower' Children's Lesson • Ministry Ark* and *The Parable Of The Seed And The Sower For Kids | Wildly Anchored // Faith, Family, Homeschool*

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