

WORSHIP AT ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

September 19, 2021

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 227 *For the Fruit of all Creation*

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcome to September worship at St Andrew's United Church in Sudbury Ontario. Welcome to you joining us online, and those of you who are worshipping in person, following all the important COVID protocols.

I want to say a special welcome to our musician Helena Cheu as well as our reader today, Betty McFarlane.

I am so grateful for all the people who have contributed hours behind the scenes to make this worship possible, all of us directed by God's Spirit.

If you are new here, please note the credits at the end of this worship on screen with contact information – Facebook, our website, email and just a traditional phone call to us to say hello and allow us to get to know you. 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 centre ourselves now, focusing on our breathing. In... out. We welcome grace... we let go of the minutiae of the day. The warmth of darkness gives way to the enlivening of light. Still focusing on the rhythms that guide our living, we light the candle to symbolize that Christ, holy presence is with us. *[light the candle]*

Nurturing Safe Space

We as Christ's Community seek to nurture among us safe place that welcomes and includes all people, that all can participate in the life and work of the regional council regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Here we are worshipping 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 Anishnawbek 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

Today, in this moment, in every moment, we are offered life. Now it is before us – God's call to a new world, to a new way of seeing God's world more as God sees it. Let us, now, take our first steps together into a fresh new week, with God as our guide. Let's go on the adventure together.

Opening Prayer

God, your world of mercy, hope and peace is present right now, as we gather. Remind us, encourage us, teach us and be with us as we imagine, explore, and celebrate what it means to be your people in your world.

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 340 Jesus, Friend of Little Children (vs. 1)

1. Jesus, friend of little children, let me be one too;
take my hand, and ever keep me close to you.

Time Up Front

Bowls or baskets with different kinds of fruit are placed at the entrance to the worship space and on the communion table. Instead of labelling the fruit with their names, there is a big label called "Wisdom" and on each piece of fruit the words: "actions" "words" "choices".

Dave brings the basket forward – sits with it – and slowly identifies each kind of fruit, then says the following:

Where does it all come from? Can an apple come from a pear tree? Can grapes come from an orange tree? The kinds of seeds (cut apple in half) that are planted determine the kind of fruit that grows. God wants us to be wise and plant seeds of peace with our words, actions, and choices. The fruits of God's Wisdom, they bring peace and love for everyone, especially those who suffer, those who feel alone, those who are treated unfairly. We are God's garden, our God's love shows in the words, actions and choices that we make – the fruit. Mmm... *Dave takes a bite from one of the fruits.*

This a say after me prayer: God give us your wisdom to speak, to act, to make choices. All that we do and say brings peace. Amen.

Hymn: VU 340 Jesus, Friend of Little Children (vs. 2)

2. Teach me how to grow in goodness, daily as I grow.
You have been a child, and surely you must know.

Scripture Readings (Elizabeth McFarlane)

Mark 9:31-37 (New Revised Standard Version)

A reading from the Gospel according to Mark where Jesus calls his followers to pay attention to the child, and, perhaps the most vulnerable among us.

...Jesus was teaching his disciples, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest.

He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

James 3:13-4:3 (NRSV)

Wisdom from above is gentle. James offers more advice about how to live a virtuous life. After the past week of election advertisements, I wonder what vision for our country Jesus might guide us to vote for?

Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be boastful and false to the truth. Such wisdom does not come down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures.

Let us pray: Loving Creator, hold us close when we fear or do not understand. Open us to the ones who need a note of your welcome through us. May our own frailty make us more gracious – and may we rejoice that in caring for others, we welcome you. Amen.

Message: “Bringing wisdom from above down to earth”

Message will be posted on the website when it is available.

Hymn: MV 157 I Am a Child of God, vv. 1, 3, 5

1. I am a child of God,
I am a glimpse of God’s new creation.
I am a child of God, I am a child of God.
3. I am an angry voice,
I am compassion and consternation,
I am an angry voice, I am an angry voice.
5. I am a song of joy,
I am the moment of jubilation,
I am a song of joy, I am a song of joy.

Invitation to the Offering

First of all, I want to thank you for your submissions of the “names” you give Jesus when he asks, “Who do you say that I am?” Take a look at them... We are a diverse group, and Jesus means different things to each of us, but we all follow. Gratitude nurtures Generosity. How full is your heart right now? This is a moment when we can count our blessings, recognize that we are

created to express our thankfulness in the things we do, the generosity of both our time and sharing our wealth. Take a moment to count your blessings... [silence]

Thank you for your time, your prayers and your donations! If you give to the larger holy work of God through our United Church of Canada by donating to Mission and Service, thank you for that too! You will find links to the different church websites at the end of this worship, so you can learn about what we are up to and how you can help.

Offering Hymn: VU 540 *Grant Us, God, the Grace of Giving*

Grant us, God, the grace of giving, with a spirit large and free,
that ourselves and all our living we may offer faithfully.

Offering Prayer

Let us pray: Let us be slow in our yearning to hang on to our blessings, and quick to share them with the hungry, the lonely, the forgotten, and the hurting of our world, that our gifts might become a kind of first fruits for those whose lives are so empty. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayers of the Community

God, today we pray for the vulnerable of the earth. The earth itself, the air that is being filled with toxins, the animals of sea and land, the flora and fauna.

God, hear our prayers;

and in your love, answer.

Too often, in too many places, people have no choice and are made vulnerable to pain, disease, violence, and death. Today we pray for the vulnerable of the earth. For the victims of tyranny, famine, and war, we pray (a time of silence).

God, hear our prayers;

and in your love, answer.

For refugees and asylum seekers (a time of silence).

God, hear our prayers;

and in your love, answer.

For children who live in families and homes that are not safe places (a time of silence).

God, hear our prayers;

and in your love, answer.

For children without access to books and to learning, for children everywhere. (a time of silence).

God, hear our prayers;

and in your love, answer.

God, you know each of us by name and are with each of us in every moment of our lives. We offer to you our personal prayers in this silent moment for those people and situations of concern to us (silence)

God, hear our prayers;

and in your love, answer.

Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 375 *Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness (Refrain only before verse 1 and after verse 4)*

Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow thro' the wilderness, calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, Wind, Wind on the sea.

1. You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
and over the eons you called to each thing:
wake from your slumbers and rise on your wings.

2. You swept through the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
and when they were blinded with their idols and lies,
then you spoke through your prophets to open their eyes.

3. You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.

4. You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams,
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes,
with bold new decisions your people arise.

Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow thro' the wilderness, calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, Wind, Wind on the sea.

Blessing

Let us go to walk the road of service.

We will feed others with God's hope.

Let us go to break down the walls of resentment.

We will join the Servant of the world in embracing the refugees of despair and fear.

Let us go to teach kindness in our world.

We will gather up our sisters and brothers, and rest in the Spirit's peaceful lap.

Benediction Hymn: VU 424 *May the God of Hope, vs. 1*

1. May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.
May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace,
singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new,
faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Postlude

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. ©2021 Wood Lake Books Inc.

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