

## WORSHIP AT ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

October 24, 2021

### *Love your Neighbour who doesn't THINK LIKE YOU*

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 371 Open My Eyes, vv. 1 &**

1. Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me;  
place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3. Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
open my heart and let me prepare love with thy children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.  
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

#### **Welcome & Announcements**

Welcome to this sacred space, St. Andrew's United Church in Sudbury Ontario, where again we are blessed by the gift of being able to come together, in person and online, all one Body of Christ. We are also blessed to have the musical leadership of Tracey LeGrand this morning. Thank you for again sharing your generous spirit and talent to help us worship.

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.

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

#### **Inviting Holy Light**

There once was a person named Jesus who did wonderful things and they said, "He is the light of the world." In his light the light of Christ, we gather. [*light the candle*]

#### **Nurturing Safe Space**

How do we collectively make this safe and nurturing space at St. Andrew's? Open hearts... open minds... and open ears eager to hear stories in all their vibrant diversity. We remember the teaching of Jesus to unconditionally love absolutely everyone we encounter. We seek Holy Spirit and Love to help us nurture safe space in this place where all can participate in worship and life regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

#### **Acknowledging Traditional Territory**

We gather today on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. We are grateful to be allowed to use these lands for growing spiritually and worshipping. To all who have been here for thousands of years before us across Turtle Island, we honour the struggles and the lives of those who gave themselves for it.

We are mindful of an infinity of footsteps of those who long called this land home, the unfolding of bundles, the undoing of colonization and the opening of this land to allow treaty to come alive. We affirm our relationship to each other and to the land. We acknowledge and pay respects to the Indigenous nations and ancestors of this particular land, the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikemesheng Anishnawbek, who call this territory home. Let us work earnestly for Reconciliation.

## Call to Worship

Come, let us together experience God's goodness  
with all our being.

**Taste, and touch, see, and hear, smell, and wonder, know, and may we believe.**

Know that in this place God will hear the cries of every voice and every heart.

**God, let us proclaim together your goodness!**

## Opening Prayer

Let us pray: Loving God, we come to this place seeking healing, seeking new life, and seeking wholeness. Help us to throw off the cloaks of our limited imaginations, that we might find ourselves forever in your presence.

## 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.

## Prayer for Grace

Today's focus Bible story is about a person who was blind and suffered, alone while people ignored him out on the street.

Day by day people passed Bartimaeus by. But one day, he heard Jesus coming by; people told him to be quiet, not to make a disturbance. He yelled, he cried out that he wanted to see. People passing by were even more annoyed, but he just yelled louder. He was not going to be quiet. Jesus was there.

And Jesus saw him. Jesus talked to him, and, wow, suddenly Bartimaeus was no longer Blind Bartimaeus, he could see.

In school, when someone is talking and we yell or interrupt, we are told to be quiet, wait our turn. We can kind of relate to Bartimaeus – we need something. But there is a difference, isn't there. Bartimaeus never got a chance to be heard. Us, well, we will have our turn. We have people who care. When we really, really need help, God is there.

Holy God, we are blessed because we have eyes to see the wonders of your beautiful world. But, sometimes, we do not see with the eyes of our hearts. God, hear us.

**Teach us, Lord, to see with our hearts.**

1. When I meet someone who is hurting, do I remember Jesus' words and ask, "What do YOU need me to do?" God, hear us.

**Teach us, Lord, to see with our hearts.**

2. Sometimes people hide their pain from others. Can I see behind the smile and bring them Jesus' healing touch? God, hear us.

**Teach us, Lord, to see with our hearts.**

3. I need healing too. Do I trust that God will answer my prayer with what is best for me? God, hear us.

**Teach us, Lord, to see with our hearts.**

## Assurance

Even before we come before God seeking grace, we are forgiven.

**Thank you, God!**

## 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 Reading

### **Mark 10:46–52 (Genevieve Gibbons)**

I'm going to tell a story based on the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, beginning at verse 46. It speaks about the courage of a person whom the community treated as invisible, and how God's unconditional love shown in Jesus saw him, listened, and cared. It is entitled "I Can See!"

Every day blind Bartimaeus would hold out his begging bowl as he sat by the side of the road near the town of Jericho. Bartimaeus knew this town well. When it was springtime, he could tell by the feel of the warm breeze and the scent of the harvested wheat and barley. When it was autumn, he could tell by the crisp chill of the air and by the smell of herbs, and grapes, and later the olives that farmers brought to market in their creaking carts. Bartimaeus knew everything that happened on that road. He heard the merchants in their booths hawking their fresh produce. He heard the buyers and sellers haggling over the price of every item, from the most expensive tapestry to a handful of lentils. He heard the bleating sheep and goats being herded into their stalls. And he heard the children laughing and squealing in delight as they ran and played with each other. Yes, Bartimaeus knew his town, but he longed to see what he could hear, smell, and feel.

Now Bartimaeus had heard stories of how Jesus could cure all kinds of illness. And Bartimaeus made up his mind that if ever Jesus came to Jericho, he would ask for his help.

Then one day, Jesus came. Bartimaeus heard the noise of a great crowd of people coming along the road. He heard their whispering, laughing, and excited voices. "What is it? What is it?" he called out. "Tell me what you can see."

"Haven't you heard?" answered someone. "Jesus is passing this way, and we're all watching for him. He is coming right now."

Bartimaeus' heart began to beat faster. He could not see, but there was nothing wrong with his voice! Bartimaeus began to shout, "Jesus of Nazareth, help me. Please, help me!"

Now the crowd was surrounding Jesus.

"Jesus of Nazareth," Bartimaeus raised his voice even louder, "please be kind to me!"

Many people around Bartimaeus sternly ordered him to be quiet, but Bartimaeus cried out even more loudly, "Jesus of Nazareth, please be kind to me!"

And then Bartimaeus heard one voice above everyone else's. It was Jesus' voice. Bartimaeus stood up and stretched out his hands to feel his way to Jesus.

Jesus looked at Bartimaeus lovingly and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Oh, Jesus," said Bartimaeus, "you have the wisdom to open our eyes to many wonders of God's way. Please make my eyes see again."

And then Bartimaeus felt Jesus' gentle hands on his eyelids. Bartimaeus stood very still hardly believing what was happening to him. He lifted his head and colours swirled all around. God's beautiful world was full of colour. And then Bartimaeus saw Jesus. Bartimaeus shouted and sang for joy. He could see!

From that day on, Bartimaeus would follow Jesus. Bartimaeus would tell everyone about this wonderful miracle!

Let us pray: May we trust in your love and respond to your presence, when your call cuts against our expectations or plans. Open us to compassion that seeks your way of love, justice, inclusion, and equality for all. Amen.

**Message: “Healing Love”**

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

**Hymn: VU 359 He Came Singing Love, vv. 1, 3, 4**

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.

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.

**Minute for Mission (*Genevieve Gibbons*)**

**Growing Stronger Together: Maina’s Story**

Maina Bai’s mother died when she was a baby, and Maina never went to school. When she was just 10 years old, her father married her off to an older man. By 16, she had a child. A few years after the birth of her daughter, her husband died. When she returned to her maternal home, Maina was married off—again. After a few years of marriage, Maina became a widow again. Single, she faced extraordinary stigma.

Approximately 2.18 million single women like Maina live in the state of Rajasthan, India. Whether they are widowed, divorced, or have never been married, these women are deemed “incomplete” and a disgrace to their families. As a result, many live lives marked by stigma, fear, and violence—simply for not being married.

In 1986, The United Church of Canada partnered with Astha Sansthan, an organization that empowers marginalized individuals to advocate for their needs. In 1999, Astha Sansthan launched the Association of Strong Women Alone (ASWA), which your Mission & Service gifts support. Immediately, 450 single women joined. Today, there are more than 70,000 members. ASWA’s approach is simple: Create a safe space for single women to come together and get the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their lives.

The association has made all the difference for Maina. She can now read and write and is empowering other women to become literate. Because of her leadership, 35 women have enrolled in adult learning. All of them now have grade eight certificates. What’s more, the generational cycle of illiteracy has been broken. Maina’s daughter can not only read and write but is also teaching others to do the same.

*Your Mission & Service gifts empower women like Maina to be agents of change within their communities. Thank you for your generosity.*

## Invitation to the Offering

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: 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. (*repeat verse*)

## Offering Prayer

Let us pray:  
We hear the call of Jesus to rise;  
we hear the call of Jesus to be well.  
We hear the call of Jesus to follow;  
we hear the call of Jesus to care.  
Bless these gifts, O God,  
and bless the lives of those who give  
in your service to the world.  
Amen.

## Prayers of the Community

We come to you with questions, O God.  
Some specific pleas God, from the depths of our hearts, and they really need answers. Often, though, our questions are rhetorical; questions that we simply want to have heard, wonderings in which we wish you to join us.

Why is there pain in our world? Why do some people suffer? Why don't others who do such harm seem not to suffer or hurt? When will injustice end? Can climate change be stopped? Is there hope for tomorrow?

Through all of this, though, we hear you ask us another question: "What do you want me to do for you?" We are at times hard-pressed to answer.

Most of all, O God, we simply want to feel you, your presence seen and felt at every corner of our world – especially for places and people who suffer so much and don't feel heard.

For any who wait in frantic hope, God we pray that there may there be assurance that you do not pass them by.

For any who have needs too great for words, may there be assurance that you hear them, and that your Spirit sighs with them, it is too deep for words.

For any who are struggling with day to day problems, may there be assurance that you are in the struggle.

We pray particularly today for our world, Creation itself that groans for healing. We pray for the people of this world, of our country, our neighbourhood, our family, and yes, we pray for ourselves too. We lift to you the names and situations shared on our prayer list today - hear our prayers in this silent moment...

Through it all, O God, may we follow you, in real and certain hope, that you hold the key to new and everlasting life. Amen.

### **Closing Hymn: MV 79 Spirit Open my Heart, vv. 1 & 3**

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.  
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,  
Spirit, open my heart.

1. God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender.  
All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender.

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.  
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,  
Spirit, open my heart.

3. May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother.  
In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another.

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.  
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,  
Spirit, open my heart.

### **Blessing**

We hear the call of Jesus to rise;  
we hear the call of Jesus to be well.  
We hear the call of Jesus to follow;  
Friends, cry out to be heard,  
giving voice to yours and others' needs.  
In all you say and do,  
seek the kindness of Christ  
and follow with your whole heart.  
Be filled with Spirit  
and be led into the daily challenges  
of life by Spirit's rare and enduring beauty.  
Go in peace, and live into wholeness,  
now and always.  
Amen.

### **Benediction Hymn: MV 82 Bathe Me in Your Light, vs. 2**

2. Bathe me in your love, O Source of Awe and Wonder;  
help me walk the sacred path of harmony and peace.  
May I be attentive to the musings of your presence,  
drinking from the well of hope that brings the heart release.

### **Postlude**

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**Inviting Holy Light** written by Scott Martin, *Gathering*, Pentecost 2, page 30. Used with permission.

**Call and Response Prayer** after Prayer for Grace by Suzanne Nykilchyk.

All other prayers today come from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Pentecost 2. © 2021 Wood Lake Books Inc.

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