

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
January 16, 2022 – 3rd Sunday of Epiphany, Sacrament of Communion

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, November 8th.

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

Prelude

Hymn: VU 218 *We Praise You, O God, vv. 1, 3*

1. We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

3. With voices united our praises we offer
and gladly our songs of thanksgiving we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing,
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise!

Nurturing Safe Space

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

This land on which we gather is the Traditional land of the people of Wahnapiatae First Nation and of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. On this land in 1850 a Treaty, a promise was made called the Robinson Huron Treaty, which our government never honoured, and still has not made right. Neither has our United Church of Canada nor other historic churches made things right... yet. May we earnestly work for reconciliation. The First Peoples of this land have lived and thrived here for thousands of years. We give thanks for the land and its people and we pray that, in our worship and in our daily lives, we may honour the traditions and respect that is held for this land.

Inviting Holy Light

We prepare to worship by grounding ourselves in grace and love. Love is the air we breathe, the seat and ground that hold us. Breathe in God's love with a deep breath, not into your chest but stomach.

Light to soften the shadows. Light to warm the air. Light to warm our hearts. Light of presence, refining light, light of Christ. We invite Holy Light as we prepare for worship. *[Dave lights candle]*

Call to Worship

We come electronically* but gathered, yearning, seeking, anticipating.

We come yearning for teaching. We come seeking wholeness in our brokenness. We come anticipating connection by Spirit weaving.

We come to be emboldened by following the Way of Jesus.

We come like a tossed salad of variety—different histories, different geographies, different ages, different abilities, different perspectives—but we come together as one.

In our unity and in our wonder, we come in prayer:

We open ourselves to you, O God—our whole selves, our flawed and quirky, incomplete but striving selves. Awaken us to discover the unique service you've placed within us.

Encourage us to relish the opportunities for helping and for healing.

Opening Prayer

God of many gifts, you offer us so many things: food and drink, everlasting life, gifts for ministry, shelter from danger. Above all: overflowing love! In this time of worship, open us to your Spirit, that we might experience and celebrate the many gifts you give us. Amen.

Welcome and Announcements (*Alison W-S*)

What a wonderful, but challenging, journey this life is these days, isn't it? We are so glad that you joined us today. Today, "us" is a team of people behind the scenes as well as those you will see as you worship with us from your sacred space, whether you are in a kitchen, office, living room, or bedroom.

Dave and I gratefully acknowledge our musicians, Graham and Debby Laporte. That was wonderful Prelude, Debby and Graham, and we are all blessed to have been part of it. Thank you for sharing your gift of music. Our heartfelt thanks to our God for all the gifted people who you don't see, Mallon Appianing and Roger Pile in the sound booth. Again, we are blessed. Our thanks go to Colin and Betty Clark for preparing the Communion elements for worship. I will be reading the Scriptures today. And we must express our gratitude to Torrin Maag, and Ralph and Deb McIntosh who stepped into leadership last Sunday at the last minute to ensure that we were able to worship.

For our online congregation, please gather your Communion elements and if you like, type the first name only in the comments box on YouTube for the Prayers of the Community.

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 phone or email me in the church office so I can get to know you better manager. I can also sign you up to receive our weekly e-newsletter, St. Andrew's NEWS.

We also have a Virtual Fellowship time tonight at 7. As always, you can get your Zoom link to join that time of connecting by sending an email to Diane. That email address will be part of the credits after this worship.

Hymn: VU 271 *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, vs. 1*

1. There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in God's justice which is more than liberty.

A Moment for Seeking Grace

Today's worship invites us to consider abundance. Scripture tells us that God always gives us what we need, and more. I invite you to consider a time when you didn't feel blessed with what you needed to face a challenge.

Think about that moment of crisis or anxiety. Think about how you felt, what you said, how you responded. If you didn't take a moment to listen for God's wisdom, often a whisper drowned out by our anxiety in the moment, now consider what Jesus has to say to you now.

[silence, then play singing bowl]

God, in our desire to have enough in times of anxiety, we hoard, we collect, we worry. Forgive us, Restless God, so we might be restored to wholeness and abundance; so we can share what we have with others.

Words of Assurance

God delights in us, you and me, so much so that God will not rest until we are at peace. God will not remain silent, but calls each of by name, saying, 'You are my Delight.'

God's steadfast love extends to the heavens, and reaches down to touch our hearts. Thank you, God, for liberating us from fear and isolation. Amen.

Hymn: VU 271 *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, vs. 5*

5. For the love of God is broader than the measures of the mind,
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

Scripture Readings (*Alison Warner-Smith*)

1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 (NRSV)

The first reading, a letter by Paul to an infant church in cosmopolitan Corinth, preaching about how God's vision is lived most powerfully in diversity – all of us have gifts, different but each important. Paul said this:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

John 2: 1-11 (NRSV)

A story about abundance and wonder in the Gospel according to John:

There was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So, they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Let us pray: O God, your desire for creation is abundance. May we respond to that abundance message with conviction. Elevate our vision and give us faith broad and wide enough to see your plenty. Amen.

Message: "Still Dreaming, through Us"

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

Offering Moment (*Sylvia Carscadden*)

At the beginning of Advent last year, the Reaching Out Team shared with you about our plans for White Gift giving. This is such an important tradition here at St Andrew's. We know that many of you look forward to seeing who we are going to support at Christmas. As it happened, even though we knew our donations were needed more than ever, we had to change our plans and you found your way to support our community friends most generously.

We decided this year that we would reach out to two schools, Queen Elizabeth II and Lansdowne Public Schools, and Better Beginnings Better Futures. As it happened, we also made a partnership with Church of the Epiphany to provide some supplies to Réseau ACCESS Network. You contributed almost \$3000 to the Advent White Gift giving. Here is how your donations brought joy to our neighbours.

The children and staff at Queen Elizabeth II Public School enjoyed a Christmas dinner in their classrooms. As well, there was chicken on each plate – a treat for many of them – and chocolate milk added in. (The principal Colleen was determined to have chocolate milk.) Our Reaching Out team made a relationship with Taj, the owner of Mary Brown chicken who supplied the chicken at a discount. These pictures were on QE school's face book page. The staff at Lansdowne Public School asked for Grocery gift cards. These helped families to augment their shopping lists. Grocery gift cards were delivered along with several bags of toiletries which they had requested.

At Better Beginnings Better Futures, we dropped off your gifts of toques, towels, and gift cards. Genevieve Gibbons, who coordinates the Community Closet, was there when Marcel and Rhodine brought the box of gifts. She was so pleased to receive them. This community service agency supports many families, and we have a close connection to them through Genevieve who is a member of our faith community.

We reached out to Réseau ACCESS Network early in Advent asking how we might help them. They supplied a list of needed items and our friends next door at the Church of the Epiphany collected many items on the Réseau ACCESS Network list. We topped up their list with a few items namely gift cards for Pizza Pizza and Tim Hortons. Mardel and Rhodine delivered several bags of requested items to Réseau ACCESS Network.

Once again, here is a big thank you. Thank you for your timely responses, for your generosity with your donations. Thank you for caring about others, for caring for children who are having such a hard time. Many of the children we supported this Christmas depend on their school to provide them food. Your generosity is so valued. The Reaching Out team is working with community agencies to connect with our neighbours. These partnerships allow your givings to make a difference in the downtown through a coordinated effort with our partner friends.

St. Andrew's is known in the downtown agencies to be a friend. We appreciate your support of our mission work – loving our neighbour who is often the stranger in our midst. Thank you so much.

(Dave) Thank you for gifts to St. Andrew's and to The United Church of Canada, through Mission and Service, does marvellous ministry near and far, collaborating so that the most vulnerable feel God's love – that is thanks to you. Thank you.

Now let us come to offer our talents, our skills, and our very being as an offering to do God's work in the world, as we also share in the Gifts given us, the Bread and the Cup.

Dedication Hymn: VU 101 *Songs of Thankfulness and Praise, vv. 1, 2, 4*

1. Songs of thankfulness and praise Jesus Christ, to you we raise,
manifested by the star to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem in your birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

2. Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding guest, in your Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine, changing water into wine;
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

4. Grant us grace to see you, Lord, mirrored in your holy Word;
with your grace our lives endow, grace to imitate you now,
that we like to you may be at your great epiphany,
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

Dedication Prayer

Sometimes, we believe the gifts we offer do not matter. But when they are combined with all the other gifts – of healing, of hope, of compassion, of your heart – they can become rivers of grace

and justice flowing through the lives of everyone around us. We offer our gifts to you in this hope, as we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sacrament of Communion

As we come to this table, we are reminded that this is the table of Jesus Christ, a banquet prepared for everyone. All who seek to be nourished and sustained in the journey of faith, all who seek wholeness and compassionate paths to peace and justice, are welcome here.

May the God of steadfast love be with you!

And also with you!

Here, we will find refuge in our God.

Here, our hearts may be offered for healing and hope.

Let us feast on the abundance of God's grace.

We will sing glad songs as we come to this Table.

You could not rest, Steadfast Love,
until creation had emerged from chaos;
you would not keep silent but spoke the Word which
placed the sun like a burning torch,
caused the moon to shine like the dawn,
crowned the night sky with stars.

Crafted in your image, you delighted in us, your children,
Yet we chose our own self-serving way.

Prophets came repeatedly, to remind us
of your never-ending delight in us,
but we thought their words were of no concern to us.

Then you sent your Child to us, the One who would fill us
to the brim with your gracious hope.

So, with all who praise you
we celebrate the wonder of your steadfast love for us:

Holy, holy, holy are you, Refuge of our hearts.

All creation sings of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who is the same Lord of all. Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, Host of Creation's Banquet, Creator,
Jesus is your signature of love for all to see;
who could have rested in glory,
but instead came hurrying to gather us up in your grace.
He could have joined the world in calling us all sorts of names,
but whispered that we are your beloved children.

As we remember the life he led and offered to all,
as we look for signs of his presence in our midst,
we would proclaim that mystery we call faith:

Christ died, faithful to the very end;

Christ was raised, your righteousness drawn out of the depths of death;

Christ will come, so we will no longer be alone.

Prayers of Community

In the darkness of time, you created all that lives and breathes.
In the darkness of Mary's womb, you nurtured the Christ-child,
For us, bringer of love and hope.

In the protection of darkness, wise ones
followed the star to the Christ-child.

In blessed desert darkness, Mary and Joseph
fled to safety in Egypt with the infant Jesus.

In the stillness of the dark,
we pray for all who need God's presence in a special way—
all who are sick, unemployed,
bereaved, persecuted, or homeless;
all who are demoralized and discouraged,
all whose fear has turned to cynicism,
all whose vulnerability has become bitterness. (silence)

In the embrace of darkness,
we pray for those who are near to our hearts—
colleagues, partners, parents, children, neighbours, friends.
We thank you God for their presence,
and ask you to bless and protect them in all that they do—
at home, at school, as they travel, as they work, as they play. (silence)

In the serenity of darkness, we bring to you, O God,
our fears and concerns, our hopes and our visions.
In your presence, we come face to face with ourselves,
and with the road that lies ahead of us. (silence)

In the solitude of darkness
we find expectant hope for the journey.
We pray now the words that Jesus taught us, saying...

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.

We remember Jesus, who on the night before he died,
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."

Holy Spirit, fill these gifts, the bread and cup,
And fill us with the bread of forgiveness, with the cup of hope.
Flow through us as like the river of life,
so we might flow with yearning for reconciliation.
Grant us your peace, so we might carry this gift to the world.

This bread, though broken, strengthens us to be your people, [*elevate bread*]
who will not remain silent, but will confront injustice;
who will not rest until all the broken are healed.

The cup, dipped into grace's river and handed to us, [*elevate bread*]
sends us forth to be a fountain of life,
where empty longings might be filled with love;
where desolation might be replaced with hope.

And when, at the end of all time, and all is set right,
we will be seated with our sisters and brothers at your Feast,
where we will discover you have save the best until then. Amen.

Let us eat and drink together for our strengthening in the faith,
and for the sake of the world. Join in the banquet, for all is ready.

The bread broken, [Dave and all take bread]
and the cup poured, [Dave and all drink]

Prayer After Communion

**We thank you, God, for breaking into our world
and pouring into our lives and our experiences.**

**We thank you, God, for this meal of thanksgiving
and the stories of love, grace, and hope that it tells. Amen.**

Closing Hymn: VU 489 *When Love Is Found*, vv. 1, 3, 4

1. When love is found and hope comes home,
sing and be glad that two are one.

When love explodes and fills the sky,
praise God, and share our Maker's joy.

3. When love is tried as loved-ones change,
hold still to hope, though all seems strange,
till ease returns and love grows wise
through listening ears and opened eyes.

4. When love is torn, and trust betrayed,
pray strength to love till torments fade,
till lovers keep no score of wrong,
but hear through pain love's Easter song.

Blessing

God sends us out to the lonely, the forsaken.

We will go to gather them up into the heart of love.

Jesus sends us out to throw a party for those
who nibble at the stale crusts offered by the world.

**We will go to sit with those who have no family,
to fill their lives with hope and grace.**

The Spirit sends us forth, as transformed people,
as those who have been given new names.

**We will go to those sunk deep in the muck of life,
who long for new days, for new joy, for new wonder. Amen.**

Blessing 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

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