

WORSHIP AT ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

February 27, 2022 – Transfiguration

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Social Hour Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

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

Prelude

Hymn: MV 1 *Let Us Build a House, vv. 1, 2, 3*

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

2. Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

3. Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat;
a banquet hall on holy ground, where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Inviting Holy Light

We are on holy ground, now, here in this sanctuary, there, also where you are joining us online.
Take a moment to breathe, to feel, to be present. Encountering the holy is more often subtlety
than grandeur. Listening attentively for a still small voice, being open to visions/feelings. In wonder
and gratitude, we invite Holy Light amongst us. *[light candle]*

Nurturing Safe Space

We are all children of Creator God. This is space created in the name of Jesus, the one who
unconditionally welcomed all people into God's abundance. Spirit, create in us that radical
community where every neighbour experience love and welcome.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Lands that have sustained countless peoples from time immemorial to the present. We gather as
a people of faith seeking to find ways to live with justice and respect with all those who call these
lands home, we are called to honour the land, to live with respect in creation...to love and seek
justice for all peoples. To that end, we acknowledge gratefully that here we worship on the
traditional territories of the Wahnapiatae First Nation and the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek. We
recognize the long history of our First Nations and Metis peoples. Let us, all of us, Treaty people,
commit ourselves anew to the work of healing, justice and reconciliation.

Call to Worship

From a cloud, just as within a crowd, God speaks to us.

**Calling us to be lovers of justice,
to share hope with the broken.**

On mountaintops, and in neighborhoods, Christ calls to us.

With a word, and with wonder, molding us into who we are.

On the playground, at a workstation or in a coffee shop,
the Spirit whispers in our hearts.

**Gathering up our fears, as well as our dreams,
and offering them to God. Let us worship.**

Opening Prayer

Through clouds of wonderment, of uncertainty, of anxiety, sometimes, we hear your voice, O God, proclaiming the presence of Spirit in the midst of our day-to-day living. We pause and become mindful. We pause and listen to the voice within and around. We pause and worship the astounding glory of your presence.

The Prayer Jesus Taught

We pray this along with the prayer we were 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.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's worship – physically in the sanctuary, but also much of the congregation online. We are one Body in Christ.

Betty McFarlane will be reading the Scriptures this morning. Thank you, Betty. Today is exciting! We are welcoming Jean Claude Parent to worship today. He's been a regular visitor in the office when we were open, and now he's joining the church today.

Thank you to all those who supported the Samaritan with your prayers and by donating to Coldest Night of the Year. It was a tremendous success!

We also have a Virtual Social Hour tonight at 7 with hosts Bev and Diane. 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: MV 156 *Dance with the Spirit, vs. 1*

1. Dance with the Spirit early in the mornin',
walk with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

Welcoming a New Member by Profession of Faith – Jean Claude (J.C.) Parent

Candidate comes forward

Minister: The church is a community of people with varied gifts, united by the Holy Spirit. We gather to celebrate God's presence, to discern God's truth, and to follow the way of Jesus. By our baptism we are made members of Christ's church. We exercise this membership in the denomination to which we belong, which for us is The United Church of Canada, and within the context of the St. Andrew's United Church community of faith. We are now to welcome into this congregation one who is already a member of the church of Jesus Christ.

Presentation of Candidate

On behalf of the St. Andrew's, I present the J. C. Parent whom we welcome into the membership of this community of faith:

Commitment of New Member

Minister: J. C., will you join with us as together we celebrate God's presence, live with respect in creation, love and serve others, seek justice and resist evil?

Candidate: I will, with God's help.

Congregational Commitment

Minister: Dear friends in Christ, let us pledge to J. C. our support and care.

Congregation: As your brothers and sisters in Christ, we rejoice in the gifts you bring to us. We pledge to you our love and our support. With God's help, we will together live out the mission and ministry of Christ's church.

Professing our Faith Together – A New Creed (VU 918)

We are not alone, we live in God's world.

We believe in God:

**who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:

**to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death,

God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Welcome

Congregation: In the name of Jesus Christ, we welcome you to the privileges and responsibilities of membership in this congregation. We give thanks to God for your witness among us.

Time up Front

Endings... Beginnings. They happen all the time in life – endings and beginnings. Even COVID has had endings and beginnings – for awhile we had to stay home, then that ended and we were back at school. We are carefully trying to live normally again.

We begin working on homework, then we finish it. Some endings are sad. Some people die, but we hear that they too have a beginning, a mystery that we can't see but we believe. Have you had a sad ending in your life? It's hard. It's important to talk about it. Have you ever had a baby born around you? That's exciting. Today, we had a special person join our church. That is a beginning for him, and for us as his community.

Finally, this a last Sunday of one season, and next week we begin a whole different season in the church. Lent. In all these changes, Jesus is with us.

This is a repeat after me prayer: God, bless our church, and J.C. Thank you for seasons that begin and for seasons that end. And then seasons that begin again. And on and on it goes, but you are always with us. Christ is with us. Thank you. Amen.

Hymn: MV 156 *Dance with the Spirit, vs. 2*

2. Move with the Spirit early in the mornin',
walk with the Spirit throughout the long day.
Work and hope for the new life a-bornin',
listen to the Spirit to show you the way.

Scripture Readings (*Betty McFarlane*)

Exodus 34:29-35 – Contemporary English Version

Moses came down from Mount Sinai, carrying the Ten Commandments. His face was shining brightly because the Lord had been speaking to him. But Moses did not know at first that his face was shining. When Aaron and the others looked at Moses, they saw that his face was shining, and they were afraid to go near him. Moses called out for Aaron and the leaders to come to him, and he spoke with them. Then the rest of the people of Israel gathered around Moses, and he gave them the laws that the Lord had given him on Mount Sinai.

The face of Moses kept shining, and after he had spoken with the people, he covered his face with a veil. Moses would always remove the veil when he went into the sacred tent to speak with the Lord. And when he came out, he would tell the people everything the Lord had told him to say. They could see that his face was still shining. So after he had spoken with them, he would put the veil back on and leave it on until the next time he went to speak with the Lord.

Jesus on the Mountain – A paraphrase based on Luke 9:28–36

Peter was worried. More than once now Jesus had talked about dying. Every time Jesus brought it up, Peter protested. “Don’t be silly,” he would say. “If you are the beloved Son of God, God will keep you safe. Look at the power you already have! God will give you more! Some day you will wear a crown like a king!”

But Jesus shook his head. “Stop it! I’ve heard all that before. It’s a lie.”

Peter was puzzled and hurt. Why was Jesus so angry? What was wrong with expecting good things?

Peter was glad when, a few days later, Jesus asked him to go for a long walk. James and John came too. It felt good to have some time alone with Jesus. They walked until they came to a mountain.

In many of the old stories, people climbed mountains to be close to God. It was on a mountain that God spoke to Moses and whispered to Elijah. Peter wondered if this was why Jesus was leading them up a mountain. Would God speak to them? Show them the way? Would there be smoke and fire? Angels? Voices? Peter did not know what to expect, but he felt sure something amazing was going to happen.

When they reached the top of the mountain, something amazing did happen. Peter, James, and John could hardly believe their eyes. Two figures appeared out of nowhere and began to talk with Jesus in low murmurs. It was Moses and Elijah! Then Jesus began to glow with light – the light of creation – the light no darkness can put out.

This was what Peter had been waiting for! “How wonderful this is,” he blurted out. “Why don’t I build some tents for all of us so we can stay here longer?”

Maybe Peter did not want to leave that glorious light and return to ordinary life with all its troubles. Or maybe he was remembering the story of how his ancestors escaped from slavery in Egypt and lived in tents in the desert. God had gone with them as a pillar of fire and cloud all the way to the promised land.

Suddenly a mist wrapped itself around Peter, James, and John. Peter could see nothing. He could hardly tell up from down.

Then a voice spoke familiar words. “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.”

When the fog cleared, Jesus was standing there alone. Looking the way he always looked. Perfectly ordinary.

“What just happened?” asked Peter. “What did it mean?”

“Peter,” said Jesus, “listen to me. You call me the Messiah, the anointed one, the Christ, the one you have all been waiting for. You call me the Son of the Living God. You think you know what this means. You think it means power and glory and crowns and thrones. But you are wrong. I am here to do the work of God. And when has that ever been safe?”

Peter was very quiet.

“Do you still want to follow me?” asked Jesus.

Peter thought about this. “Will you stay with me?” he asked.

“Always,” said Jesus.

So, Peter followed Jesus back down the mountain.

Let us pray: Holy Mystery, God of our endings and our beginnings, nurture in us faith to feel you near. Give us the courage to share the good news of your revealing love. Amen.

Message: “Endings. Beginnings.”

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

Questions for Quiet Reflection

- What might you do this week to create space for an encounter with glory?
- What will you need to let go?

Hymn: MV 82 *Bathe Me in Your Light, vv. 1, 2*

1. Bathe me in your light, O God of All, Creator;
let it shine upon my soul with healing and with grace.
Be to me a beacon bright through shadows of life’s wounding,
showing me the way to live in faith, in your embrace.
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.

Invitation to Offering

Our gifts are many and varied, depending on the gifts God first gave us. We give locally, our volunteering and our treasures to bless the ministries of St. Andrew’s. We give globally, towards ministries in Canada and around the world, through the United Church’s Mission and Service. Thank you for all you do, your generosity and joy in giving.

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. *(repeat verse)*

Prayer of Dedication

We have stood on the high crests of hope, and wandered through the valleys of loneliness. And so, we know what peace, hope, grace, and wonder means for us, and can mean to others. As we offer our tangible gifts to you, we also share these blessings with those whom we will meet in the days to come. Amen.

Prayers of the Community

Holy Mystery, we have experienced your glory in things both grand and ordinary: in red earth canyons and the call of an owl; in ancient forests and children on the playground; in a hope-filled birth and a quiet walk on the beach. To all these things, we say, “Glory! Praise be to you!” We

bring to mind those times recently when we were startled by your presence unveiled and free in our midst. (*Dave invites people to ponder moments when they experienced God's presence. After, Dave invites us all to say:*) **“Glory! Praise be to you!”**

Grateful for the experience of your sacred presence, we pray for those who are in need of healing, justice, and peace. Let us quietly pray for those in our community, our country and across Creation who are in need of our personal prayers today... [silence]

May each moment of glory – each embrace of the Sacred More – empower us to be more. And through our faithfulness, may your realm be established among us as it is in the heart of your holy mystery. Amen.

Closing 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.

Blessing

This season closes. Another begins with its own journey, leading to a cross, and through that cross to new life. But there is much we must encounter before we reach that empty tomb. Take these hopes, birthed in the memory of God's tender, firm voice proclaiming that, wherever we are, we are in the presence of the Christ. Amen.

Amen.

Benediction Hymn: MV 216 *Wherever You May Go (Refrain only)*

Wherever you may go, I will follow,
and your people shall be my people too.
Wherever you may go, I will follow,
for I would be faithful, loyal and true.

Postlude

Call to Worship and Prayer of Dedication © 2019 by Thom M. Shuman. lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com

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