

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
October 23, 2022 – 20th After Pentecost

Welcome to Worship

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 23.

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

Prelude

Opening Hymn: VU 649 *Walk with Me, vv. 3, 4*

Walk with me, I will walk with you
and build the land that God has planned
where love shines through.

3. Young Mary Magdalene was sure
her life could be much more,
and by her faith she dared to let
God's love unlock the door.

Walk with me, I will walk with you
and build the land that God has planned
where love shines through.

4. And when you share your faith with me
and work for life made new,
the witness of your faithfulness
calls me to walk with you.

Walk with me, I will walk with you
and build the land that God has planned
where love shines through.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's worship. We invite you to let us know who that "Saint" in your life has been. You can send us a photo and we will make a collage, both digital on screen and physical one here. Please add a short description of what your saint means to you, if you like. Or, you can email Alison in the office and simply give her the name(s) of your "Saint." We will make sure all your "Saints" are celebrated on Oct 30, All Saints Sunday.

Those at home or 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 our phone number. You can contact us in many ways to say hello and allow us to get to know you. We have a Virtual Social Hour every Sunday night on Zoom. Please email Diane to get your Zoom link. The email address is in the credits. All are welcome.

Inviting Holy Light

Life can feel like a bit of a race. We can get tired.

As we gather to worship, we try to leave that burden with our Creator.

We breathe deeply – taking in the divine love that created us, that cares for us... we breathe out the unhelpful need to succeed, to win, to matter.

Here, on this sacred ground, you and I matter, because of who we are.

Breathe, connect with your body, your thoughts.

Notice how you feel – your muscles, your emotions.

Notice, connect. To worship, we bring all of us to the altar of God's love.

Welcome Holy Spirit.

[light candle]

Sung Response: MV 20 God of Still Waiting, vv. 1 & 3

1. God of still waiting, God of deep longing,
God of the heart's true rest:
hold us in fathomless peace,
guard us with unwaning love.

3. Word who comes to us,
Word who lives with us,
Word who disturbs and heals:
silence our chattering fears,
waken our unconscious faith.

Nurturing Safe Space

We are all children of God, loved in our uniqueness, all backgrounds, gender identities. Here we are invited to consider how diversity is a strength, a refraction of Holy Light in all its rainbow colours. Let us make this space radically hospitable for all.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Here we are worshiping on the traditional land of the 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 to the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, this land where the Robinson Huron Treaty was made in 1850, and never honoured by Canada. Implied in this acknowledgment is our responsibility to work towards honouring those ancient and sacred Treaties, thankful for the Land cared for by First Peoples long before European immigrants came to this land. May we work towards the healing of broken relationships, Reconciliation and just sharing of the land.

Call to Worship

We did not first seek God.
God first came looking for us.

We do not find God.
It is God who finds us.

Come, let us free ourselves
of expectation and responsibility.
Let us find God here in our worship today.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, we come into your presence with singing we come, with unique strengths and weaknesses; together, your children. Thank you for the creation, in your love, of a space where we are accepted as we are, where we can breathe, be honest, learn, and grow. Thank you for meeting with us here. Thank you for brothers and sisters in the faith. Teach and empower us to live together, to serve the gospel and change the world in life that does not die, and love that does not end. Thank you, God...

The Prayer Jesus Taught

... this we pray along with a modern version of the Lord's Prayer:
Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother, Holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come, We pray that your good will be done, Let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, Give it to those who have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, From each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence Beyond the evil of our days — Come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: Forever your name is All in One. 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

Look at the screen at this artwork from Jesus Mafa. This is called the Pharisee and the Republican. Look at the two people. Start with the one in back – how do you think he is feeling? This is from story Jesus told – about praying with the right attitude. The one in the back was not feeling very good about himself. He had made many mistakes and he was sorry for it. But I wonder if he was a bit hard on himself.

Very different for the guy in the front. He was a religious leader. He thought he was fantastic. I am a leader. I am pure and I pray all the time. God must love me so much. What is that word we use to describe how you when you don't brag. You know you are a good person but you don't yell it out to the world all the time. You are a "humble" person. That guy in the front, not very humble. This man thinks that he is always right, that his ways are the best ways, and that very few people are as fine as he is. Jesus says that God is not impressed with this attitude. Now we know that Jesus was all about being humble, and caring. Don't you wish you could just give that person in the back a hug? I do.

This is a repeat-after-me prayer: Dear God,...help me to love me, for you made me special...but, help me to love other people too... Help me to see...that you made us to care for each other... Thank you for making me, me...Thank you for this community...that makes me better... Amen.

Hymn: VU 340 *Jesus, Friend of Little Children, vs. 3*

3. Never leave me, nor forsake me; ever be my friend;
for I need you, from life's dawning to its end.

Scripture Readings (*Suzanne Nykilchyk*)

2 Timothy 4:6-18 – Common English Bible

A letter attributed to Paul, written by a person near the end of their life. A mentor who is reflecting on a full, challenging life, gathering those around him who were a blessing. Imagine that you are at such a time for yourself, being washed in memories and reflections, giving thanks for all the blessings that God has given you. Listen to the sound of water being poured out, our lives poured out as a gift from God to our world.

I'm already being poured out like a sacrifice to God, and the time of my death is near. I have fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith.

Do your best to come to me quickly. Demas has fallen in love with the present world and has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Get Mark, and bring him with you. He has been a big help to me in the ministry. Also bring the scrolls and especially the parchments. Alexander, the craftsman who works with metal, has really hurt me...watch out for him, because he opposes our teaching.

No one took my side at my first court hearing. Everyone deserted me. I hope that God doesn't hold it against them! But the Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that the entire message would be preached through me and so all the nations could hear it.. To God be the glory forever and always. Amen.

Luke 19:9-14 – Common English Bible

Jesus told this parable to certain people who had convinced themselves that they were righteous and who looked on everyone else with disgust:

"Two people went up to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself with these words, 'God, I thank you that I'm not like

everyone else—crooks, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give a tenth of everything I receive.’

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He wouldn’t even lift his eyes to look toward heaven. Rather, he struck his chest and said, ‘God, show mercy to me, a sinner.’

I tell you, this person went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee. All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up.”

Let us pray: God, as we hear these words from scripture, be present to us in words of affirmation and love. Be near us in the constant challenge to overcome our arrogance and pride. Help us to be led by your grace to find humility in ourselves this day. Amen.

Message: Swimming in God’s Love

Time for Quiet Reflection

Taking time to consider: Who is the “Saint” who made a difference in my life?

- Those in the sanctuary can add the name and a short piece about who they are/were, those online can send their “Saint” and perhaps a photo/blurb about them to crazycat@cyberbeach.net

Hymn: MV 178 *Who Is My Mother?*

1. Who is my mother, who is my brother?
All those who gather round Jesus Christ:
Spirit-blown people born from the Gospel
sit at the table, round Jesus Christ.

2. Differently abled, differently labelled,
widen the circle round Jesus Christ:
crutches and stigmas, culture’s enigmas,
all come together round Jesus Christ.

3. Love will relate us, colour or status
can’t segregate us round Jesus Christ:
family failings, human derailings,
all are accepted round Jesus Christ.

4. Bound by one vision, met for one mission
we claim each other round Jesus Christ:
here is my mother, here is my brother,
kindred in Spirit, through Jesus Christ.
Amen!

Minute for Mission

Rebuilding after Loss: Lisa’s Story

Nothing prepares us to lose the people we love most in the world. Lisa’s husband Steve was in and out of palliative care for years. “It was a difficult journey. He wasn’t ready to leave this life,” Lisa says. “The week before he died, he said, ‘I’ll surprise you yet. You’ll see me walking around that circle with my cane.’ But that didn’t happen.”

After Steve died, Lisa attended a widows’ support circle facilitated by ORA, a Mission & Service partner. ORA, named after a Maori word meaning “life,” helps people move through grief and loss using workshops and support circles. “Hearing the stories and wisdom shared, the laughter and the tears, brought me to a place where I felt comfortable in sharing a bit of my own pain and my own journey. And there was this sense of solidarity in our pain. Because being a widow is a different kind of loss than losing a parent, a child, or a friend,” Lisa says. In the widows’ group, there was an understanding that surpassed words.

“The support helped me work through things like ‘What do I do with the wedding ring now?’ Do you still wear it? Do you not wear it? And on a practical level, do you change the sheets because you can still smell your partner on the sheets? The first time you have to check that box on the government form, that you are no longer a Mrs. but a widow, I just burst into tears. ORA, just like other outreach ministries we have, is a tangible way of showing faith in action.”

Your gifts through Mission & Service help people like Lisa rebuild their lives after loss. “At one of the most difficult times of my life, your generosity through Mission & Service provided care, love, and comfort. Indeed, we are not alone. We live in God’s world. Thank you for your support,” says Lisa.

Here is a scripture to reflect on as we hear this story – Matthew 11:28-30:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Offering Moment

Your donations will help St. Andrew’s to partner with people who help the most vulnerable downtown. Giving to the United Church of Canada’s Mission and Service allows us collectively to reach out to Ukraine and other places needing love and community. Thank you for sharing your time, talents, and treasures.

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.

Dedication Prayer

Loving God, you have blessed us beyond measure. Help us to remember people in need and be willing to share. When we are the ones in need, help us be willing to receive. We recognize that giving and receiving are two aspects of one thing: love. May we be love and be loved. Amen.

Prayers of Community

I invite to close your eyes. Let us focus again on our breathing, breathing in slowly, breathing out slowly, aware only of our breath. (Pause.) Envision a warm light surrounding you and me. (Pause.) Imagine that we are being held and gently rocked to and fro in that light. (Pause.)

That light is God’s love, and we are so held.

Feel that love holding you and me as we pray together:

Loving God, sometimes we forget your presence. Sometimes we think everything depends upon us, and we know our inadequacy. Thank you for being present and for loving us. Thank you for being present everywhere and loving all people. Help us to see with new eyes and love with new hearts, and serve you with joy and light.

We pray for a hurting world, that people can experience, in difficulty and pain: your arms around them; your eyes seeing them; your everlasting presence, their, our, home.

Today we hold in love and prayer our world, near and far. Those who so desperately need your grace, your peace, your love. Family and friends whose situations weigh on our hearts. Tired souls yearning for comfort and care. Those who are filled with worry, anxiety, seeking a word of hope in uncertain times. Those who face health issues, financial woes, relationships broken, perhaps even toxic. Hold them in your healing Love, God. In silence we offer to you those situations that are of concern to us. *(silence)*

Help us to share this good news and to do it in ways that the messenger of love is congruent with the message of love. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 567 *Will You Come and Follow Me, vv. 1, 2, 5*

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
5. Christ, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

Blessing

To quote the letter writer to Timothy:

Go and fight the good fight of life. Trust that you can finish the race because God is with you. Go with this blessing: God will always be with you. May the Love of God surround you and I. The Peace of Christ attend us. The Holy Spirit hold each of us lovingly every day to come. Amen.

Blessing Hymn: VU 510 *We Have this Ministry, vs. 1*

1. We have this ministry and we are not discouraged;
it is by God's own power that we may live and serve.
Openly we share God's word, speaking truth as we believe,
praying that the shadowed world may healing light receive.
We have this ministry, O God, receive our living.

Postlude

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