

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
February 5, 2023
Sacrament of Communion – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Welcome to Worship
Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m.
Email smiletoday9@proton.me to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Opening Hymn: MV 82 *Bathe Me in Your Light*

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.
3. Bathe me in your grace, O One of Spirit's longing;
teach me of your gentle ways that fill the soul with strength.
Guide me on the pilgrimage that leads to truth and wholeness,
fill me with your promise of a love that knows no length.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to everyone, in person and online. Together in Spirit. We are particularly happy to have Lisa Long from Réseau Access Network here today. She will be talking to us over a light lunch about what our partners at Réseau Access Network are doing. I warmly invite you to join us in the 111 Lounge, or, if you are at home, we will be streaming on Zoom and the link you need was in the NEWS sent out on Thursday. If you can't find the link, drop us a note in the Comments section of your YouTube, make it clear who you are, and we will send you a Zoom link. Next week we will be marking Have a Heart Day during our regular worship, and afterwards, as we enjoy a little treat, we will be invited to sign Valentine's Cards to send to our federal government and MPs to make right our system that for so long has harmed First Nations Children.

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 Facebook page, YouTube channel, or website, or email our office manager so you can receive our weekly e-newsletter. We also have a Social Hour on Zoom, every Sunday night 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 is also at the end of the video and is on our main YouTube page.

Inviting Holy Light

Grounding ourselves, breathing. In the beginning, God created light; In Jesus, God's light is revealed; God calls us to be the light of the world. Come, you who are light for the world, let us worship God. [*lights candle*]

Sung Response: VU 82 *A Light is Gleaming (Chorus only)*

A light is gleaming,
spreading its arms throughout the night,
living in the light.
Come, share its gladness,
God's radiant love is burning bright,
living in the light.

Nurturing Safe Space

We are all children of God, loved in our uniqueness, regardless of age, ability, race, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity. In this space, all are welcome. May we as a community of Faith work towards making our spaces truly safe and welcoming, as our Creator pours love extravagantly upon each of us.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We begin worship by acknowledging that the lands where we gather today have been places of gathering for First Nations people as they camped and travelled across the land for generations beyond our knowing. Before people arrived from across the seas, these Nations lived, loved, raised children, and made a living. They lived in harmony with all that the Creator had made. As we gather today, we recognize those traditional sojourners in this land, particularly those on whose traditional lands we worship here at St. Andrew's, the Wahnapiatae FN and the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek. We give thanks for them and for the lands on which we meet. We acknowledge that our history has come at a great cost to the indigenous community, and we commit ourselves to be partners in healing and reconciliation with understanding and intention.

Call to Worship

To a society that lives in the shadowed recesses of doubt and fear,

God calls us to be light.

To a world where every greed is fed until there is no taste to life,

God calls us to be salt.

To a time when loyalties are discarded as easily as the clothes we wear,

God calls us to be faithful followers of Jesus; let us worship.

Opening Prayer

After the quiet dark of night, Light of the world guide us. Source of Life, point us towards the way of righteous living, always seeking right relations with you and with our neighbours. Gentle God of night, and bringer of dawn's light, we come to praise you with our whole heart and mind. Amen.

Scripture Readings (Donna Mese)

Psalm 112, VU p. 834 – Refrain sung by Choir only

Refrain: The just shall trust in God alone.

Blessed are those who fear God,

who greatly delight in God's commandments.

Their descendants will be mighty in the land,
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

**Riches and plenty shall be in their house,
their righteousness enduring forever.**

They are a light in the darkness for the upright,
being gracious, compassionate, and just.

**It goes well with those who lend generously,
who conduct their affairs with justice. Refrain.**

For the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be kept in remembrance forever.

**They will not live in fear of bad news;
with resolute heart they trust in God.**

Their heart is steady, they do not fear;
in the end, they will see their enemies' downfall.

**They distribute freely to the poor,
their righteousness enduring forever;
they will hold up their heads in honour. Refrain.**

Matthew 5:13-19 (New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition)

This week, we consider how we are the salt of the Earth and how we shine a light into the world. The under-lying theme of the texts is that of purpose. How are we called to fulfill God's purpose as disciples?

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one iota, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Prayer after Scripture

Light of the world, be our light today. Creator of life, preserve our life this day. Light of the world, we praise you with our hearts, songs, and minds. Amen.

Message: Curses and Blessings

The message will be posted on the website when it is available.

Offering Moment

Thank you for sharing both your talents and treasures. 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 all you do!!

Communion Hymn: VU 477 I Come with Joy

1. I come with joy, a child of God, forgiven, loved and free,
the life of Jesus to recall in love laid down for me,
in love laid down for me.
2. I come with Christians far and near to find, as all are fed,
the new community of love in Christ's communion bread,
in Christ's communion bread.
3. As Christ breaks bread, and bids us share, each proud division ends.
The love that made us, makes us one, and strangers now are friends,
and strangers now are friends.
4. The Spirit of the risen Christ, unseen, but ever near,
is in such friendship better known, alive among us here,
alive among us here.
5. Together met, together bound by all that God has done,
we'll go with joy, to give the world the love that makes us one,
the love that makes us one.

Dedication Prayer

We can make a difference through our gifts;
we will enact the Word of God in all we do.
We can make a difference through our gifts;
as we try to bring hope to the despondent.

We can make a difference through our gifts;

we will bring love to the unloved.

We can make a difference through our gifts;

we will bring friendship to the lonely.

We can make a difference through our gifts;

we will care for the despondent.

We can make a difference through our gifts;

we will bring freedom to the oppressed.

Loving God, receive and bless our offerings,
and through the Spirit, work joyfully towards your kin-dom vision.

Amen.

Sacrament of Communion

ALL are welcome at this table – all who want to follow Jesus in love and justice. In our diversity, we are welcomed to God's table of abundance, so that we might take the Good News of radical welcome to all that we meet.

May the God of the Table be with you.

And also with you.

This is the fast God chooses for us as we come to the Feast;

that we empty our hearts in service, so they may be filled again.

This is the way God offers to us;

we will sing our praises as we journey to the realm of hope and love.

When you came proclaiming creation,

God of wonder, you brought forth what no eye had seen:

snowflakes drifting in a meadow, hawks floating lazily in the sky.

You whispered what no ear had heard:

whale songs in the deeps, a coyote caroling the moon.

You established what no heart believed:

justice for the most vulnerable, healing for the broken.

Day by day, you called us to your side, but when evening fell, we slipped into the enticing shadows of sin.

God, you sent the prophets to us, relying on the Spirit to give them the right words, but we did not notice the times when we humans chose greed and aspired to be as gods.

Your beloved, Jesus, was born among us, breaking the bonds of greed and hate. So with those who do not fear the good news which he brought, we lift our voices in glad shouts of joy:

Holy, holy, holy are you, God who shows the way.

Creation joins in praises to you.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the One who knows your mind.

Hosanna in the highest!

He came proclaiming your salvation, God of Holiness, your child of salt and light. For those held within the shadow of grief and mourning, he brought light. For those whose lives have crumble around them, he rebuilds their hopes. For those who are separated by the chasms of fears, he stretches a bridge so they can meet each other in harmony. For all who face death's uncertainty, he went into that unknown, coming forth to reassure us that its power had been broken.

As we seek to see him in our midst, as we try to hear your Word of life, we trust in that faith which is mysterious:

Christ died, showing us the way to death;

Christ was raised, showing us the way to new life;

Christ will come, to show us the way to your heart.

Let us remember together that vision of God's reign shown to us in Jesus at table:

he shared food with followers and friends,

with saints and sinners,

with crowds of thousands on the hillside,

and a few friends in an upper room.

On the night before he died,

he had supper with his companions.

He took a loaf of bread, and after giving thanks,

he broke it, and gave it to them, saying:

"Take, eat. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then, he took a cup, and after giving thanks,

he passed it among them, saying:

"Drink this. Do this in remembrance of me."

Through this loaf and cup, Jesus lives within us.

In word and deed, Jesus lives among us.

Prayers of Community

May we be the spice in a world content with status quo; May we be the zest that jolts minds (maybe sometimes our own) focused only on themselves; help us to be the tartness that awakens mouths that speak only platitudes.

Help us to trust your voice, Holy One, in times when our path forward looks shadowy. Sometimes the path is difficult, help us to seek the glimmers of light, may we be that glimmer of light for others when you call us to accompany others through their times of trial.

Sometimes dark is essential, as it offers us time for rest, or wonder as we might look to the twinkling stars. Sometimes, dark brings uncertainty and even fear, God. Be our light, like a nightlight for a child, a lighthouse that warns of danger. Shine through us in times when we are to be that light for others.

We offer up prayers for all who need to feel the saltiness of your tears, Creator, we lift up in silence our hearts' concerns for others, near and far, and perhaps for ourselves. (*silent prayer*)

May all who are searching, find community, not necessarily on a hill, but in all the ordinary places, perhaps even in the dark valleys of grief and isolation, may they encounter your unconditional love through other. We pray, saying...

The Prayer that Jesus Taught

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.

Here at the Table of grace, as Holy Spirit proclaims life, we ask you to transform these simple gifts and the people gathered physically and virtually. As we taste the hope in the broken bread, equip us to go out to help break the bonds of injustice. As we are filled with the cup, ignite our hearts that we might shine with hope and love, that we might be as salt and light for all whom we meet. Open our pantry to the hungry, wrapping a naked child in our love, God in community – Creator, Sustainer and Spirit. Amen.

We Share in Communion

Bread of generosity, for all of our journeys. (*Break Bread*)

The Cup of Blessing, the vine of God's covenant with all God's Children. (*Pour Juice*)
These are the Gifts of God, for God's Children. All are welcome. Come for all is made ready.

Choir Anthem: VU 469 *We Gather Here*

1. We gather here in Jesus' name,
his love is burning in our hearts like living flame;
for through the loving son God fashions us as one:
Come take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.
No one is a stranger here, everyone belongs;
finding our forgiveness here, we in turn forgive all wrongs.

2. He joins us here, he breaks the bread,
the One who pours the cup is risen from the dead;
the One we love the most is now our gracious host:
Come take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.
We are now a family of which Christ is the head;
though unseen he meets us here in the breaking of the bread.

3. We'll gather soon where angels sing;
we'll see the glory of our Lord and coming King;
now we anticipate the feast for which we wait:
Come take the bread, come drink the wine, come, share the Lord.

Prayer after Communion

Life-giving God, may we, who share Christ's body, live his risen life; we, who drink his cup, bring new life to others; we, whom the Spirit lights, give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so that we and all your children shall be free, and all creation will live to praise your name. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 481 *Sent Forth by God's Blessing*

1. Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.
The supper is ended, O now be extended
the fruits of this service in all who believe.

The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,
shall blossom in action for God and for all.
God's grace did invite us, God's love shall unite us
to work for the kingdom and answer its call.

2. With praise and thanksgiving to God ever living,
the tasks of our everyday life we will face.
Our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,
embracing God's children of each tribe and race.

With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;
unite us as one in this life that we share.
Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving
give honour to Christ and the name that we bear.

Blessing

Let us go now, beloved, to follow the love of God.

God surprise us by your wonder to lift our voices for love and compassion.

Let us dare to believe that we are people on a mission of healing and grace.

God, help us to feel your encouragement to be a blessing. May we be a blessing with hearts and hands, and know that we are never, ever, alone. 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

Inviting Holy Light written by Sandy Ferguson. Gathering Advent, Christmas, Epiphany 2022-2023, gatheringworship.ca. Used with permission.

Nurturing Safe Space written by Alison Warner-Smith, inspired by Canadian Shield Regional Council *Safe Space Statement*. canadianshieldrc.ca

Acknowledging Traditional Territory, Canadian Shield Regional Council, United Church of Canada. Adapted from *Acknowledging the Land, 2016*. canadianshieldrc.ca

Call to Worship, Opening Prayer, Introduction to Matthew 5:13-19, Prayer after Scripture, Dedication Prayer, Prayers of Community, and Blessing from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*, Advent, Christmas, Epiphany. February 5, 2023. © 2022 Wood Lake Books Inc.

Matthew 5:13-19 from *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Sacrament of Communion adapted from a Communion setting by Thom Shuman, February 5, 2017. © Thom M. Shuman. lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com.

The Prayer Jesus Taught by Parker J. Palmer, found in *Peace Prayers* by Carrie Leadingham, Joann E. Moschella, and Hilary M. Vartanian. ©1992 HarperSanFrancisco.

Blessing adapted from a prayer by Thom Shuman, February 5, 2017. © Thom M. Shuman. lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com

Thank you to: Rev. Dave Le Grand for leading worship; Gordon Brown and Ralph McIntosh for their musical leadership; Donna Mese for reading the scripture; Suzanne Nykilchyk for assisting with liturgy preparation; Jen Bruneau for assisting with graphics for the PowerPoint presentation; Myfawny McIntosh for arranging the Sunday readers; Jen Bruneau, Maureen McGuinness, and Suzanne Nykilchyk for the sanctuary décor; and Mallon Appianing and Roger Pile in the audiovisual booth.
