**ST. ANDREW’S UNITED CHURCH**

**March 12, 2023**

Welcome to Worship – 3rd Sunday of Lent

Join us for a Zoom Virtual Coffee Time at 7:00 p.m.

Email smiletoday9@proton.meto get the Zoom link.

**Prelude**

**Opening Hymn: VU 710 *Shall We Gather at the River***

1. Shall we gather at the river, where bright angel feet have trod;

with its crystal tide forever flowing by the throne of God.

Yes, we’ll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river;

gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

2. Ere we reach the shining river, lay we every burden down;

grace our spirits will deliver, and provide a robe and crown.

Yes, we’ll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river;

gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

3. Soon we’ll reach the shining river, soon our pilgrimage will cease,

soon our happy hearts will quiver with the melody of peace.

Yes, we’ll gather at the river, the beautiful, the beautiful river;

gather with the saints at the river that flows by the throne of God.

**Welcome and Announcements**

Welcome to everyone, in person and online, on this 3rd Sunday of Lent. Together in Spirit. 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**

Christ, walk with us, shine in the darkness, guide our path. Circle us with truth and love. Come, share in our tears and laughter. Help us to be just and courageous. Creator, be our light. Christ be our companion on the journey. Spirit, keep us along the way of right relationship. *[lights candle]*

**Sung Response: 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.

**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 acknowledge that this sacred space, your sacred space wherever you participate in the service from, is on traditional land cared for by First peoples. Here at St. Andrew’s, we worship on the lands of the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnipitae First Nation. The First Peoples were stewards of these lands we call Canada since time immemorial, long before Europeans arrived. We also recognize a painful history where Church did not honour indigenous ways, and, in fact caused great harm, often in the name of religion. This was not the ways of truth and love the Christ taught. And so, our journey continues, and our sacred call as St. Andrew’s is to work towards healing and right relationship, with our Creator, with the Nations who have lived here for millennia, and with one another. May we remember that we are not alone in this reconciliation work, we cannot do it alone. God will guide us.

**Call to Worship**

We gather together—

**the seekers, the dreamers, the shooting-star wishers, in hopes of seeing God.**

We gather together—

**the curious, the hungry, the loving, the lonely, in hopes of finding peace.**

We gather together—

**those who are thirsty and those with water to spare, in hopes of finding justice.**

So, come to the well;

**God, we come to your table. Creator, we come to you with thankfulness and praise.**

**Opening Prayer**

In the driest desert, O God, you provided a rock that held a fountain for those who thirst.

**Come, gracious God, and fill us with your love.**

In a place of quarrelling, you provide an answer that holds life for those who hope.

**Come, gracious God, and fill us with your love.**

In a place of wonder, you provide living water for those who seek, wonder, ask questions.

**Come, gracious God, and fill us with your love.**

**The Prayer that 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 639 *One More Step Along the World I Go, vs. 1***

1. One more step along the world I go,

one more step along the world I go,

from the old things to the new,

keep me travelling along with you:

And it’s from the old I travel to the new;

keep me travelling along with you.

**Prayer for Grace**

Shortly we will hear the story of the Samaritan woman; a story about Jesus coming to a well in the heat of day and asks the woman at the well for a drink.

**We might ask ourselves:**

* When was the last time I drew water for someone?
* When was the last time I drew water for myself?

So, with this same open curiosity, we come to this Prayer for Grace, going to the well of God’s love and unconditional forgiveness. Even when we forget our bucket, God will meet us and give us living water. Holy God, we have been on every side of this story – we have been the one who is thirsty and in need of compassion, and we have been the one with a bucket and a deep well.

**So today we wonder:**

* How often have we missed the opportunity to share water with our neighbors?
* How often have we forgotten that we have a bucket and the power to bring change?
* How often have we simply decided that justice and compassion were not worth the work?

Forgive our fragile hearts and remind us that it was you who sat at that well in Samaria in the heat of the day. It was you. It is still you. With hope we pray, amen.

**Words of Assurance**

Family of faith, as hard as it is to imagine: we could lose the bucket, we could hoard the water for ourselves, we could pretend we do not see all who are thirsty, and we would still belong to God. I want you to give yourself a big hug right now, feel the warmth and connectedness with the holy, filled with love, compassion and joy. Let us together say these words of Gospel Good News:

**God’s grace is deeper than any well. We are seen, loved, and forgiven. May this realization change and inspire us. Amen.**

**Hymn: VU 639 *One More Step Along the World I Go, vs. 3***

3. As I travel through the bad and good,

keep me travelling the way I should;

where I see no way to go

you’ll be telling me the way, I know:

And it’s from the old I travel to the new;

keep me travelling along with you.

**Scripture Readings (Betty McFarlane)**

**First Reading: Exodus 17:1-7 – NRVSUE**

“Give us a drink,” the Israelites ask. God hears them, readily responds, and calls Moses to bring forth water from a rock. But do the people know what they truly thirst for? From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink.

The people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.”

Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?”

But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?”

So, Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”

The Lord said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.”

Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

**Second Reading “The Visitor at the Well” – A paraphrase based on John 4:5-42**

Imagine you’re in the desert. It’s lunchtime, you’re thirsty, and the sun is high in the sky. You leave your home to draw water from the well. It’s hot, but it’s even hotter when you have nothing to drink.

When you arrive at the well, you find a man sitting there. He’s alone, looks tired, and asks you to give him something to drink. The man is not Samaritan like you, and so you ask him, “You’re a Jewish man. Why would you ask a Samaritan woman for something to drink?”

The man answers, “If you knew who I was, you would have asked me for living water.”

You say, “Look, you don’t have a bucket, and this well is really deep. Where would you get that living water anyway? This well goes back to our ancestor Jacob. Do you think you are better than him?”

The man smiles. “Everybody who drinks water from this well will be thirsty again. But I can give people a spring of water inside of them that will never run dry.”

You consider this. You answer softly, “I would like some of that water. I would like never to be thirsty. But most of all, I would like to stop coming here to this well every day to draw water.”

The man says, “Well then, go call your husband.”

“I don’t have one.”

“You don’t now. But you’ve been married five times before.”

You gasp. “You are a prophet!”

You decide to ask him more questions to gain some of his wisdom for yourself. “My people say this mountain is the place to worship. Your people say that Jerusalem is the place to worship. So, who is right?”

He tilts his head. “We worship what we know. You worship what you don’t know yet. Soon we will all worship God in spirit and in truth.”

You say, “I know that the Messiah, God’s chosen one, is on the way. And when he comes, he will help us understand.”

His eyes hold yours. You couldn’t look away if you tried. “I am that chosen One,” he tells you.

You have to tell someone, so you leave your jar at the well, and you run into the city and tell everyone you find, “Come and see someone who told me everything I have done. I think he might be the Messiah.”

The people ask this mysterious stranger to stay two more days. And when it’s time for him to be on his way, the people thank you. “Because of you, we will never be thirsty again. Thank you for coming to us. Thank you for deciding that it was time for you to leave the well.”

Will you pray with me… God of conversation, we come to you today thirsty—thirsty for hope, thirsty for good news, thirsty for a glimpse of you. So today we pray, move in these words like a current. Give us the courage to wade into your story with open eyes and open hearts. Give us the courage to drink this moment in. We are listening. We are grateful. Amen.

**Message: “The Courage to Ask for Help”**

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

**An Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe that a glass of water given to us by a stranger can taste like justice.**

**We believe that honest conversation has the power to change us.**

**We believe that all God’s children have a voice and something to say.**

**We believe that Jesus loves the outcast, the ignored, the shamed, and the abandoned.**

**We believe in asking questions.**

**We believe in curiosity.**

**We believe in giving people a drink.**

**May we be brave enough to give people a drink. Amen.**

**Poem – read by Bev Chapman**

Seeking: Will you give me a drink? (anything and everything)

I’d give you a drink,

a warm cup of tea with lemon and mint,

a confetti cannon, roses from the garden,

my favorite sweatshirt, a bed to lay in,

homemade bread, a hand to hold.

I’d give you my full attention.

I’d give you my phone,

and say, put your number in.

I’d give you the melody line,

a standing ovation,

a sense of security.

I’d give you anything and everything

if it made you believe

that you were enough.

**Choir Anthem: *As the Deer Pants for Water***

1. As the deer pants for the water,

so my soul longs after you;

you alone are my heart’s desire

and I long to worship you.

You alone are my strength, my shield,

to you alone may my spirit yield;

you alone are my heart’s desire,

and I long to worship you.

2. I want you more than gold or silver,

only you can satisfy;

you alone are the real joy-giver

and the apple of my eye.

You alone are my strength, my shield,

to you alone may my spirit yield;

you alone are my heart’s desire,

and I long to worship you.

3. You’re my friend and you are my brother,

even though you are a king;

I love you more than any other,

so much more than anything!

You alone are my strength, my shield,

to you alone may my spirit yield;

you alone are my heart’s desire,

and I long to worship you.

**Minute for Mission**

It takes a village to raise a child, and the congregation St. Andrew’s United Church, staff, parents, students, social agencies, and the general public work tirelessly to support Sudbury Secondary School with donations to the Value Vault.

These generous donors have helped students meet their basic needs, enabling them to focus on their education. At any time of the year, especially during holidays and throughout the pandemic, members have answered calls to supply school supplies, hygiene and toiletry products, non-perishable foods, gift cards, bus passes, treats, and even small appliances. They also hand deliver items to the school.

Students are also in need of all types of clothing, especially including winter coats and boots, handmade mittens, hats, and scarves. But they often need pants and shirts, shoes, sneakers, and other indoor clothing.

Students enrolled in the Life Skills Program participate in a variety of hands-on learning experiences such as Breakfast Club, Snack Program, gardening, and The Value Vault. The students help sort and organize the donated items for the Value Vault.

Here is a list of the current needs (also listed in the News this week). All students are welcome to use the Value Vault. Usually, an announcement is made over the school PA system that the Value Vault is open, at which time students can pick up what they need. Thank you for supporting the Sudbury Secondary School Value Vault.

**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!!

**Dedication Hymn: VU 539 *God of All Good (vv. 1, 2)***

1. God of all good, our gifts we bring to you,

use them your holy purpose to fulfil;

tokens of love and pledges brought anew

that our whole life is offered to your will.

2. We give our mind to understand your ways,

hands, eyes and voice to serve your great design;

heart with the flame of your own love ablaze,

till for your glory all our powers combine.

**Dedication Prayer**

**As One closer than our breathing, and as One knowing of our needs before we ask, bless the gifts we bring today, O God. Through us, use them in the love and service of others.**

**Prayers of Community**

Gracious God, we know that we have something to say and that there is good news to share. We know that you have promised peace everlasting, and we can lift our voices to proclaim such possibility. But, we are also full of doubt that our voices are strong enough or loud enough. We quarrel with God, like Moses, that no one will listen. There must be someone else that will speak. There isn’t always an Aaron to be your voice. Sometimes, we know we must use our voices. It has to be us that speak up.

We must find the courage, like the woman at the well, to break through our insecurities and the expected boundaries to give voice to what matters most.

Gracious God, we will never feel quite ready. We will always stumble over the words and question how we use words to bring about the change you imagine. As we find the courage to speak, we turn to you, Gracious God, to listen for what most needs to be said. We are listening. *(silence)*

God of shared desire, we entrust these prayers and our voices to you in the hope of love, compassion, peace, justice, and faith. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: MV 87 *Water Flowing from the Mountains***

1. Water flowing from the mountains.

Water flowing o’er the earth.

Water comes to us, so precious.

Living water gives us birth.

Drink deep this source of life. Drink deep and know.

For living water sings, and living water brings

the love that makes our spirit grow.

2. Water rushing down the rivers.

Water rushing to the sea.

Water comes to us, so precious.

Living water makes us free.

Drink deep this source of life. Drink deep and know.

For living water sings, and living water brings

the love that makes our spirit grow.

3. Water springing from the dry place.

Water springing in the sun.

Water comes to us, so precious.

Living water for each one.

Drink deep this source of life. Drink deep and know.

For living water sings, and living water brings

the love that makes our spirit grow.

**Blessing**

God knows your story and is listening for your voice. Go out into the world in peace, to share the living water that God gives to us so freely, and in so doing, to restore others to hope and life. Amen.

**Blessing Hymn: MV 144 *Like a Healing Stream***

1. Like a healing stream in a barren desert,

Spirit water bringing life to dusty earth,

God is trickling through our lives as in a dream unfolding,

promising revival and rebirth…

like a healing stream.

2. Like a gentle rain on a thirsty garden,

Spirit water come to nourish tiny seed,

God is bubbling through the soil to coax a new creation,

yearning for an end to want and need…

like a gentle rain.

3. Like a river strong with a restless current,

Spirit water rushing on to distant shore,

God is carving out a channel in a new direction,

calling for an end to hate and war…

like a river strong.

4. Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,

Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,

God is working in our hearts to shape a new tomorrow:

God will always challenge and provide!

Like a mighty sea, like a river strong,

like a gentle rain, like a healing stream.

**Postlude**

**Inviting Holy Light** from *The Holy Light*, Wild Goose Publications, www.ionabooks.com, adapted by Dave Le Grand.

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

**Acknowledging Traditional Territory** written by Ruthanne McLagan, *Gathering*, Lent/Easter 2023, page 29. Used with permission.

**Call to Worship, Prayer for Grace, Prayer after Scripture, Affirmation of Faith,** and ***anything and everything* poem** written by Rev. Sarah A. Speed, © A Sanctified Art LLC, sanctifiedart.org

**Exodus 17:1-7** from New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

**John 4:5-42 paraphrase “The Visitor at the Well,”** **Opening Prayer, Scripture Introductions, Dedication Prayer, Prayers of Community,** and **Blessing** adapted from *Seasons of the Spirit, Fusion*. Lent, Easter, Year A. March 12, 2023. © 2023 Wood Lake Books Inc.

**Minute for Mission** written by Jacqueline Warner-Smith, with input from Sudbury Secondary School.

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