

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
April 16, 2023 – 2nd Sunday of the Easter Season

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: VU 352 *I Danced in the Morning (all)*

1. I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came from heaven and I danced on the earth;
at Bethlehem I had my birth.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

2. I danced for the scribe and the pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
they came with me and the dance went on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

3. I danced on the Sabbath and I cured the lame;
the holy people said it was a shame;
they whipped and they stripped and they hung me high,
and left me there on a cross to die.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

4. I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
they buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

5. They cut me down and I leap up high;
I am the life that will never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he.

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the dance, said he,
and I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's. This is the 2nd Sunday of the Easter season. Social Hour on Zoom every Sunday night at 7pm. To get your Zoom link, email Diane. Her email is in the credits at the end of this worship service. The link was also sent with NEWS on Thursday.

Inviting Holy Light

Light.

Hope.

Light.

Love.

Light.

Never-ending presence.

Light.

A guide for the way ahead of us.

The Light of Christ.

The Light of Christ. Thanks be to God!

[candle is lit]

Sung Response: VU 368 *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine, vs. 1 (sing twice)*

1. Holy Spirit, truth divine,
dawn upon this soul of mine.
Voice of God and inward light,
wake my Spirit, clear my sight.

Nurturing Safe Space

In all we do as St. Andrew's United Church, may we celebrate the uniqueness, the quirks, the differences of one another. Such diversity, and may we nurture the beauty that God has created in each – diversity of Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation. That diversity reflects the mystery of a Creator whose wisdom is beyond anything we can imagine.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

Each part of creation reveals unique aspects of God the Creator, who is both in creation and beyond it. All parts of creation, animate and inanimate, are related. All Creation is good.

We sing of the Creator, who made humans to live and move and have their being in God. In and with God, we can direct our lives toward right relationship with each other and with God. We can discover our place as one strand in the web of life.

We acknowledge that where we worship is on Indigenous Land, the traditional lands of the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and the Wahnapiatae First Nation. We recognize that the legacy of our church has been a painful one, and that we, individually and collectively, have healing work to do. With thankfulness and respect for the First Peoples and Metis of this land, together may we work towards right relations with neighbours, Creation and with our Creator.

Call to Worship

When doors were shut, and the world was kept out,
resurrection found the disciples.

When the church gathers, and the world waits outside,
resurrection finds us.

When fear grew, and new questions were found,
resurrection found the disciples.

When faith leads us to new questions about life,
resurrection finds us.

When suffering remained, and the city was hostile,
resurrection found the disciples.

When Christ gathers with his followers in living worship,
resurrection finds us. Come, let us worship God!

Opening Prayer

God of great surprises and unbounded joy, your voice echoes in our hearts into our uncertainties and wonderings: Breathe deeply, take good heart, and do not be afraid. Now, we pray together version of the Prayer Jesus taught that might speak to us in our modern time...

The Prayer that Jesus Taught

Loving Creator we honour you, and we honour all that you have made. Renew the whole world in the image of your love. Give us what we need for today, and a hunger to see the whole world fed. Strengthen us for what lies ahead; heal us from the hurts of the past; give us courage to follow your call in this moment. For your love is the only power, the only home, the only honor we need, in this world and in the world to come. Amen.

Hymn: MV 89 *Love is the Touch, vs. 1*

1. Love is the touch of intangible joy;
love is the force that no fear can destroy;
love is the goodness we gladly applaud:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Time up Front

Thomas not as “doubter”, rather, a **curious person** who wanted to see for himself what others had already seen. Recall what it is like when everyone is talking about an exciting event that you were not at. Insist that Jesus welcomed Thomas’ questions and ours.

There is no honest question God/Jesus cannot handle. Thomas was the disciple who cared enough to interrupt Jesus when he did not understand what Jesus was saying (John 14:5). He really wanted to understand Jesus.

Finally, upon seeing Jesus’ wounds after the resurrection, Thomas replies, “My Lord and my God!” That was his statement of faith.

It’s good to ask questions. Thomas wasn’t the only confused, questioning disciple after Easter. Other confused disciples – Mary at the empty tomb.

Look at this artwork (on-screen) showing that scene – look at the friends of Thomas around, imagine how they felt. Perhaps some are impatient, that Thomas missed his chance, why is Jesus paying attention to him rather than me?

In honour of Thomas, brave enough to ask a question, and to be able to touch, let’s ask questions: What kinds of questions might we ask of Jesus if we were Thomas?

For example: What was it like to be dead? Was it scary? Did you know what was going to happen, or did you (Jesus) accept dying having faith that God would raise you from the dead?

Do NOT answer any of them – even if you can. Instead promise to deal with them during the coming weeks.

This is a repeat-after-me prayer:

God, thank you for being with us

In good times and difficult ones.

Be with us on this journey through Easter.

Amen.

Hymn: VU 89 *Love is the Touch, vs. 4*

4. Love is the Maker and Spirit and Son;
love is the kingdom their will has begun;
love is the path which the saints all have trod:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Scripture Readings (Sophia and Benjamin Le Grand)

First Reading 1 Peter 1: 3-9 (The Message Translation)

Let us pray: O God, open our eyes and move our hands to receive your peace. Help us to hear the blessing you offer in our lives so that we might reach beyond fear and feel joy. Amen.

What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master, Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now! God is keeping careful watch over us and the future. The Day is coming when you'll have it all—life healed and whole.

I know how great this makes you feel, even though you have to put up with every kind of aggravation in the meantime. Pure gold put in the fire comes out of it proved pure; genuine faith put through this suffering comes out proved genuine. When Jesus wraps this all up, it's your faith, not your gold, that God will have on display as evidence of his victory.

You never saw him, yet you love him. You still don't see him, yet you trust him—with laughter and singing. Because you kept on believing, you'll get what you're looking forward to: total salvation.

Second Reading: A paraphrase based on John 20:19–31 – “Jesus Appears to the Disciples”

On the first day of the week, Sunday, the disciples gathered in a locked room for fear of what would happen to them because of their known relationship with Jesus. This was the Sunday following the crucifixion, Easter Sunday.

Suddenly, Jesus appeared among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Jesus could see the look of bewilderment on their faces as they said to one another, “Do you see what I see?” Jesus began to identify himself by showing them the crucifixion marks on his hand and his side. Upon seeing his marks, the disciples rejoiced that Jesus was here with them.

Isn't it just like Jesus to show up when all seems hopeless, when we think we are at a dead-end?

Jesus said again to the disciples, “Peace be with you.” He then reminded the disciples that it was through a relationship with God that he did his work. Just as Jesus was in the world to do God's work, they would be sent into the world to continue Jesus' work. Jesus then shared the spirit of peace with them, which would remain with them and give them power to continue sharing Jesus' love and life with others.

One of the disciples, Thomas, wasn't present for this meeting with Jesus. The other disciples told Thomas that they had seen Jesus. Thomas was reluctant to believe. He had doubts, just like we do from time to time. He told his friends that unless he sees the nail marks and puts his hand in Jesus' side, he will not believe.

Approximately one week later, the disciples found themselves in the same locked room, and this time Thomas was with them. Jesus appeared and said, “Peace be with you.”

He then directed the conversation to Thomas. “Thomas, see my hands. Put your finger here and place your hand into my side. Thomas, it is time to stop doubting and believe.”

Thomas replied, “My Lord! My God!”

Jesus looked at him and said, “You have believed because I am here. Blessed are those who believe but have not seen.” Jesus' miracles are written throughout the New Testament so we may come to know Jesus – the Messiah, the Christ – and have life with God.

Will you pray with me? People of God, fearful and faithful, doubting and dutiful, the Holy Spirit of God breathes life, healing and forgiveness into us. Receive God's peace and wholeness. In trust and joy, we receive God's peace. Amen.

Message: "Do We Want the WHOLE Jesus?"

Hymn: VU 166 *Joy Comes with the Dawn (all)*

Joy comes with the dawn;
joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb
and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

1. Weeping may come;
weeping may come in the night,
when dark shadows cloud our sight.

Joy comes with the dawn;
joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb
and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

2. Sorrow will turn,
sorrow will turn into song,
and God's laughter make us strong.

Joy comes with the dawn;
joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb
and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

3. We will rejoice,
we will rejoice and give praise,
to the One who brings us grace.

Joy comes with the dawn;
joy comes with the morning sun;
joy springs from the tomb
and scatters the night with her song,
joy comes with the dawn.

Minute for Right Relations: "Tobacco Tie"

I want to share with you briefly a learning of mine in recent years, as well as others of us here at St Andrew's. Tobacco...

Tobacco is one of four sacred medicines (along with Sage, Cedar and Sweetgrass). Tobacco always comes first. Tobacco is used in ceremony and ritual, as an offering of gratitude or respect, and to lift up prayers. It is offered before harvesting other medicines. Tobacco should always be handled with respect and with a good mind.

The Tobacco Tie – how and when to offer it:

When asking an Indigenous elder or knowledge keeper to share a teaching, lead ceremony, offer advice, or to share a song or prayer, it is appropriate to offer tobacco. If the person accepts the tobacco, they are agreeing to help. Offering tobacco is a respectful way of asking for assistance and should never replace proper remuneration.

How to Make a Tobacco Tie

It is preferable to use traditional ceremonial tobacco. If you are unable to find traditional tobacco, it is fine to offer loose tobacco. (You may purchase traditional ceremonial tobacco online or in some Indigenous shops or you may purchase loose tobacco from a tobacco store).

Gather fabric to make your tobacco tie. It is best to use natural fabric – cotton broadcloth is best to use. The fabric should be about 4 inches (or 10 cm) square. Typically, tobacco ties are made with red fabric, but it is ok to use other colours as well.

The person making the request or offering the tobacco should be the person to prepare the tobacco tie. As the tobacco offering is prepared, it is important to think about what you are requesting, and to have a good mind while you prepare the tobacco bundle.

Place a small amount of the tobacco in the centre of the cloth and gather the ends of the cloth together. Tie the tobacco bundle with a piece of yarn, twine or a strip of cloth fabric.

How to Offer the Tobacco Tie

Offer the tobacco tie or pouch when you make your initial request. To make a request, offer the tobacco tie or pouch by holding it in your left hand in front of you – you should not try and place it in the person's hands until after the request is accepted.

Clearly state your request. Be specific and as detailed as possible. If the person agrees to your request, they will accept the tobacco. If they can not fulfil your request, they will decline the tobacco.

If you are asking an Elder or Knowledge Keeper to share knowledge over zoom or other online platform, you should still make and offer the tobacco tie. You can make arrangements to deliver the tobacco tie at a later date.

As we prepare ourselves prayerfully for Holy Week, for this emotional journey, pondering this important indigenous tradition might be our way of carrying First Peoples sisters and brothers in our hearts in our holy journey.

May we be generous in our words and actions. With gratitude for all that this community, St. Andrew's does, the volunteers the staff, the treasures that we collect to help God's kin-dom of justice and love to be realized...let us sing in our offerings.

Offering Moment:

Dave gives the Offering...

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.

Dedication Prayer

(Gestures – hearts... eyes (seen)... hands (hands open palms up)

God of life, our **hearts** have been touched. We have **seen** your grace and feel moved to **offer our hands** in healing and hope. May those who receive the gifts of our **hands** find encouragement and the reassurance of your love. Amen.

Prayers of Community

Resurrection God, full of peace, we pray for those for whom life seems like a locked room. We think of those who feel afraid and unable to move (short time of silence); do not abandon them, or us if we feel among those locked up, afraid, but show the path that leads to life.

God, hear our prayer,
and in your love, answer.

We pray for those who suffer distress through injury or illness, unable to be free of pain or physical restrictions (silence); do not abandon them, or us if we feel among those. Show the path that leads to life.

God, hear our prayer,
and in your love, answer.

We pray for those who are troubled in mind, hemmed in by worries or a lack of confidence (silence); do not abandon them, and us if we feel mentally, emotionally weary. Show the path that leads to life.

God, hear our prayer,
and in your love, answer.

We pray for the people and places with no political or religious freedom. We remember those bound by tyranny or dictatorships (silence); do not abandon them, but show the path that leads to life.

God, hear our prayer,
and in your love, answer.

We pray for leaders and forward thinkers whose ideas are thwarted by ignorance or biased legislation. We recognize our own discomfort with new ideas and ask for greater understanding. (silence); do not abandon them, do not abandon us as we work for change, show the path that leads to life.

God, hear our prayer,
and in your love, answer.

We now offer our own prayers for ourselves, our families and neighbours and our larger global village, in this silent moment. (*silence*)

Do not abandon us, but show the path that leads to life.

God, hear our prayer,
and in your love, answer.

Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 173 *Thine is the Glory*

1. Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where the body lay.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

2. Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb!
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth: death hath lost its sting.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

3. No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.

Thine is the glory, risen, conquering Son:
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

Blessing

The God of resurrection goes with you to ask questions and wonder about this world. The God of resurrection seen in the Risen Christ goes with you to surprise you with wonder and joy. Go into the world, accompanied by God's playful Spirit. We are, after all, Christ's disciples.

We go as witnesses to all that God has done!

Christ is Risen!

Christ is Risen, indeed! Hallelujah!

Blessing Hymn: MV 121 *Hey Now! Singing Hallelujah! vv. 4, 5)*

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah!

Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah!

The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

4. Jesus had power and they took him away.

Hey now, the tomb was empty.

They nailed him to a cross and they killed him one day.

Hey now, the tomb was empty.

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah!

Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah!

The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

5. Jesus loves people and he lives again.

Hey now, the tomb was empty.

Calls us disciples and he calls us his friends.

Hey now, the tomb was empty.

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah!

Hey now! The morning has come!

Hey now! Singing Hallelujah!

The tomb was empty at the rising sun.

Postlude

Call to Worship and **Inviting Holy Light** written by Beth W. Johnston, *Gathering*, Lent Easter 2023, page 43. Used with permission.

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Thank you to: Rev. Dave Le Grand for leading worship; Tracey LeGrand for her musical leadership; Sophia and Benjamin Le Grand for reading the scriptures and Minute for Right Relations; 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.
