

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
April 30, 2023 – 4th Sunday of the Easter Season

Welcome to Worship

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

Email smiletoday9@proton.me to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Opening Hymn: VU 747 *The Lord's My Shepherd (all)*

1. The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me,
the quiet waters by.

2. My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
even for his own name's sake.

3. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

4. My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

5. Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me,
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling place shall be.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's – 4th Sunday of the Easter season. Social Hour is on Zoom every Sunday night at 7pm. To get your Zoom link, email Diane. Her email is above. The link was also sent with NEWS on Thursday.

Lighting a Candle for Ruth Buell

On April 13, another saint of St. Andrew's United Church passed into glory. A dear friend to many, Ruth Ann Buell died. Born in Toronto, she was very involved at St. Andrew's. As we celebrate the 50th Birthday of St. Andrew's Place, we give thanks that Ruth was the President of the General UCW, and a dedicated member of the choir. Pat Martin recalls how wonderful a support to her Ruth was in those times, especially, the kinship and ministry enjoyed together in "Unit C" of the St Andrew's UCW.

She was active in the larger community, loved needlepoint and knitting. She leaves behind family and dear friends who will dearly miss her. We give thanks for those from St. Andrew's who faithfully visited Ruth in recent times as her health declined, including Rev. Catherine who sang hymns with her. She was 93 years old, and such a blessing to so many. We lift up this prayer: Comforting Creator, we know that you have already welcomed your child, Ruth, into your Holy embrace. Be with her family and those friends with whom she shared such love, envelope them in love and peace and care. We give thanks for her dedication to Church and Community, and for the care that surrounded her in her most vulnerable times. Amen.

Lighting a Candle for Howard Simpson

Howard Simpson, a faithful servant and dedicated member of the St. Andrew's Community of Faith, has found peace in the fullness of God's Love. We give thanks for his 92 years of living, and his kindness offered to all who knew him, but, most of all, his love for his family, especially as "Poppa" to his grandchildren.

Howard and Sandra were avid travellers, having travelled extensively with their dear friends, David and Audrey Chapman, to Portugal, Ireland, the Grand Canyon, and finally to Hawaii. There is a story told of that trip to the Grand Canyon: David Chapman so wanted to fly over the Canyon, so Howard went with him, a dream fulfilled. Howard stayed by his friend's side, holding David's hand in his most frail moments.

Howard's kindness and care will be remembered by so many. Many of us know how active Howard's wife, Sandra is in the church and community, and particularly in the area of fun-d-raising. Howard would always be seen on-the-ready at St. Andrew's Yard Sales, ready to help – repair jobs, or really anything that Sandra needed done. Among too many memories to list here, people will also recall Howard's role as "chief water provider" at Bel Canto concerts, stationed behind pitchers of water and glasses, and signalling when water was needed.

Howard will be dearly missed! We give thanks to our Creator for 57 wonderful years of loving partnership shared by Sandra and Howard, and the beautiful family they raised, as well as a Church community who were so blessed to have Howard's kind spirit and handy skills. So, we offer this prayer:

Thank you, God, for your servant, Howard. He has blessed us so richly. We pray that you will surround Howard's family, especially Sandra, as well as children Kimberly, David, and Douglas and their families, including Poppa's grandchildren Maddison and Nate. Holy Love, we ask that you bring comfort also to Howard's extended family, David and Laura, and children William and Amelia, as well as nieces and nephews and all of Howard's dear friends. May the memories flow among all who were blessed by him, in laughter and tears. Amen.

There will be a Celebration of Howard's Life on Saturday May 6 at 11am and a Reception to follow at St. Andrew's United Church, 111 Larch Street, Sudbury. All are welcome.

Inviting Holy Light

O Sacred Fire, be our light and our way. Illumine the path of hope and wholeness that we might venture forth with courage and confidence. Point us toward the One whom the faithful call the Light of the World. It is in his name that we light this candle. Amen. [candle is lit]

Sung Response: VU 368 *Holy Spirit, Truth Divine, vs. 3*

3. Holy Spirit, power divine,
fill and nerve this will of mine.
Boldly may I always live,
bravely serve, and gladly give.

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

We acknowledge with gratitude and with repentance for our role as a colonizing church and people, that we live and gather on the traditional territory of the Atikameksheng Anishnabek and Wahnipitae First Nation. We give thanks for those who have come before us and their stewardship and care for the land, and as a people of faith we pray for and commit ourselves to the cause of reconciliation for all peoples in the love of their Creator. Amen.

Call to Worship

As a good shepherd with their flock of sheep,
so is God's loving care.

As a mother with a newborn child,
so is God's loving care.

As a teacher concerned for a struggling student,
so is God's loving care.

As a cheerful care aide with an elderly person,
so is God's loving care.

Nothing can separate us from God's loving care.

We find strength in that love, fulfillment in that love, freedom in that love, acceptance in that love, and joy in that love. And so, we are ready to worship and give thanks to God for that love.

Opening Prayer

God of love, we come trusting that your love has the power to defeat evil in the world. Jesus shows us that your love defeats even the power of death. You are with us through the darkest valleys so that we are not afraid. We worship you with glad hearts, praising you in the name of our Risen Lord, praying with the breath of your Spirit in us. Renew our strength and courage to face whatever each day holds, so our lives will bring you honour and glory now and always. We pray this along with the traditional version of the prayer that Jesus taught...

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn: MV 126 *Are You a Shepherd, vs. 1*

1. Are you a shepherd, good shepherd who leads us,
safely through danger while calming our fears?
Are you a father who shelters and feeds us,
shares in our laughter and wipes away tears?

Yes, you are shepherd, parent and teacher,
but you are greater than all that we know.

Holy and living, loving and giving,
God, you are with us wherever we go.

Time up Front – Knowing the Voice of the Shepherd

Have the kids close their eyes, have first a stranger call out one child's name, ask if that is your mom or dad... "no"

Then have a parent call out their name ... "I know that voice."

Do this in turn for each child ...

(Name), ask is that their mom or dad? Then their parent...

This image, this metaphor that Jesus offers, is all about knowing the voice of the Shepherd. Sheep know the voice of the shepherd. We know the voice of our family, our parents, or our grandparents, an auntie or an uncle. We learn to recognize the voice of a parent or a loved one or someone in the congregation that cares, we have a connection.

We are invited as children of God to listen for the voice of Jesus in life. The voice of Jesus! What would Jesus' voice sound like? What kinds of things would Jesus say if he were here today? Would he be mean? Grumpy? Would he ignore you if you said, "Hey Jesus!"?

What are ways that we can listen to the voice of Jesus in the world and what might that sound like?... We could ask a "wondering" question: I wonder what the voice of Jesus might sound like?

Maybe we don't know the voice of Jesus like a parent or a grandparent. Probably the voice of Jesus in our world brings a message of kindness or compassion. That person who is really welcoming and warm.

Hymn: MV 126 *Are You a Shepherd, vs. 3*

3. Great, gentle shepherd, forever beside us,
lead all your children in paths that are right.
Great, loving parent, wise teacher you guide us.
We want to love you and bring you delight.

Yes, you are shepherd, parent and teacher,
but you are greater than all that we know.
Holy and living, loving and giving,
God, you are with us wherever we go.

Scripture Readings (Genevieve Gibbons)

Psalm 23 (The Message translation)

Let us pray, God of green pastures and still waters, quiet our hearts and minds as we listen to the Scriptures. By your Spirit, deepen our understanding so that we come to know you more fully, and follow your Word more faithfully. Amen.

God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to your word, you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through the Valley of Shadow,
I'm not afraid when you walk at my side.
Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing.
Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life.
I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.

John 10:1-10 (The Message translation)

Jesus said, "Let me set this before you as plainly as I can. If a person climbs over or through the fence of a sheep pen instead of going through the gate, you know that that person is up to no good—a sheep rustler! The shepherd walks right up to the gate. The gatekeeper opens the gate to him and the sheep recognize his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he gets them all out, he leads them and they follow because they are familiar with his voice. They won't follow a stranger's voice but will scatter because they aren't used to the sound of it."

Jesus told this simple story, but they had no idea what he was talking about.

So he tried again. "I'll be explicit, then. I am the Gate for the sheep. All those others are up to no good—sheep rustlers, every one of them. But the sheep didn't listen to them. I am the Gate. Anyone who goes through me will be cared for—will freely go in and out, and find pasture. A thief is

only there to steal and kill and destroy. I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.

Please pray with me: God, in whom we find shepherding love, may we feel, hear, and see this love in our lives. May words and actions joyfully testify to the abundance of your faithful love for us and for all. Amen.

Message: “A Case for being likened to Sheep”

Choir Anthem: *Lead Me, Lord*

Lead me, Lord, lead me in my righteousness,
make thy way plain before my face.

Lead me, Lord, lead me in my righteousness,
make thy way plain before my face.

For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only,
that makest me dwell in safety.

For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord, only,
that makest me dwell in safety.

Minute for Mission: “Mambud’s Story”

We don’t always know the extent of the good that we do even when we are giving generously. When we make a gift, we hope to have an impact but often can’t foresee how many lives we touch or how far our care extends. Mambud Samai’s story is a tangible example of how your gifts through Mission & Service send ripples of compassion across continents.

Mambud, a pastor, lives in Sierra Leone, where an estimated 27,000 citizens became amputees during the civil war that raged between 1991 and 2002. To support amputees he visited in rehabilitation camps after the war, Mambud turned to soccer, his country’s favourite sport. He founded a soccer league for amputees called the Single Leg Amputee Sports Club of Sierra Leone to help restore hope. Now 350 members strong, the league isn’t just about helping amputees overcome discrimination, restoring their pride, and providing therapeutic support. As if these alone aren’t amazing.

Two years ago, Mambud decided he wanted to make an even bigger difference. So, he flew all the way to the Asian Rural Institute (ARI for short), a unique school in Japan that your Mission & Service gifts support. Thanks to generous supporters like you, ARI trains thousands of leaders like Mambud from all over the world to grow food, tend livestock, and be effective change agents in their community.

After graduating from the nine-month program at ARI, Mambud returned to the soccer fields of Sierra Leone with a new goal: to develop teaching farms where people can learn to grow food sustainably and support themselves financially by selling that food at market.

Mambud and members of the Single Leg Amputee Sports Club of Sierra Leone now run an educational farm, and there are plans to convert more of Sierra Leone’s fertile land into gardens and teaching centres. In a country where the average person lives just 43 years, Mambud’s extraordinary leadership and the skills he learned in Japan save lives. From Canada to Japan to Sierra Leone—Mambud’s story is just one example of how your gifts do a world of good.

If [Mission & Service](#) giving is already a regular part of your life, thank you so much! By supporting leaders like Mambud with education and training, your generosity helps change lives around the world. Thank you!

Offering Moment:

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want”: the words of the Psalm celebrate God’s overflowing goodness and mercy in our lives. We offer God our gifts so God’s goodness and mercy will keep flowing into the world God made.

Dedication Hymn: VU 537 *Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands*

1. Your work, O God, needs many hands
to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve
unless our gifts we share.

2. Because we love you and your work,
our offering now we make:
be pleased to use it as your own,
we ask for Jesus' sake.

Dedication Prayer

God with a tender heart, we thank you for the care you offer to us as our Shepherd. Bless the gifts we offer so they will spread your abundant love to lives in need of caring. Bless our lives so that we may care for the world as we follow Jesus, day by day. Amen.

Prayers of Community

Wise and generous God, shepherd of our lives, we are thankful this day for all you provide to sustain us. You call our weary souls to rest when the world seems busy. You bless us with the promise of new life as pastures around us turn green, announcing another spring. You gather us around tables of friendship to draw strength from one another. Thank you for signs of your goodness and mercy we can treasure each day.

Loving and Listening God, shepherd of the world, we bring you our prayers for others, friends and enemies, neighbours and strangers alike. We pray for people who are struggling with illness, loneliness, grief or sadness: *Silence*

Holy One, lead your children beside still waters,
and walk with us through shadowy valleys.

We pray for people in countries and communities where it is not safe to live out their faith or express their views openly. *Silence*

Holy One, lead your children beside still waters,
and walk with us through shadowy valleys.

We pray for victims of discrimination and acts of hatred, and those who fear violence day by day. *Silence*

Holy One, lead your children beside still waters,
and walk with us through shadowy valleys.

We pray for journalists and advocates for justice who live under threat for telling the truth. *Silence*

Holy One, lead your children beside still waters,
and walk with us through shadowy valleys.

We pray for churches, local organizations and businesses that face difficulty reorganizing and the pressure of economic challenges. *Silence*

Holy One, lead your children beside still waters,
and walk with us through shadowy valleys.

We pray for our families, friends and for ourselves, as well as those in the news whose situations tug at our hearts. We lift all those situations that worry us, up to you in silent prayer now... *Silence*

Holy One, lead your children beside still waters,
and walk with us through shadowy valleys.

All these prayers we offer to you, along with our commitment to be your messengers of love and peace in our families, our communities, our world. All this we pray in the name of the Risen One, your Beloved whom we call Jesus. Amen.

Closing Hymn: VU 593 *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love (all)*

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.

1. Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet,
master who acts as a slave to them.

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.

2. Neighbours are rich and poor,
varied in colour and race,
neighbours are near and far away.

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.

3. These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love,
all are neighbours to us and you.

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.

4. Kneel at the feet of our friends,
silently washing their feet,
this is the way we should live with you.

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love,
show us how to serve
the neighbours we have from you.

Blessing

Go in peace, sure that the Good Shepherd walks beside you.
May God lead you to places of rest and renewal;
may Christ give you courage on the journey;
may the Holy Spirit fill your hearts with joy and generosity;
and may the blessing of God, Creator, Christ and Spirit,
dwell in your hearts this day and always.

Blessing Hymn: MV 209 *Go, Make a Difference, vv. 1, 2*

Go make a difference,
we can make a difference,
go make a difference in the world.
Go make a difference,
we can make a difference,
go, make a difference in the world.

1. We are the salt of the earth,
called to let people see
the love of God for you and me.
We are the light of the world,
not to be hidden but to be seen.
Go make a difference in the world.

Go make a difference,
we can make a difference,
go make a difference in the world.
Go make a difference,
we can make a difference,
go, make a difference in the world.

2. We are the hands of Christ
reaching out to those in need,
the face of God for all to see.
We are the spirit of hope;
we are the voice of peace.
Go make a difference in the world.

Go make a difference,
we can make a difference,
go make a difference in the world.
Go make a difference,
we can make a difference,
go, make a difference in the world.

Postlude

Inviting Holy Light written by Laura Turnbull, *Gathering*, Lent/Easter 2023, p. 43. Used with permission.

Call to Worship written by David Sparks, *Gathering*, Lent/Easter 2023, p. 43. Used with permission.

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