

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
May 21, 2023 – 7th 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 402 *We Are One*, vv. 1, 2, 4

1. We are one as we come, as we come, joyful to be here,
in the praise on our lips there's a sense that God is near.
We are one as we sing, as we seek, we are found;
and we come needful of God's grace as we meet together in this place.

2. We are one as we share, as we share brokenness and fear,
in the touch of a hand there's a sense that God is here.
We are one as we care, as we heal, we are healed;
and we share warmth in God's embrace as we pray together in this place.

4. We are one as we hear, as we hear, heart and hand unite;
in the word we receive there's a sense that God is light.
We are one as we leave, as we love, we are loved;
and we seek justice in God's ways as we move together from this place.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's – 7th 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 in the credits at the end of this worship service, and on the YouTube page you are looking at if you are worshipping from home. The link was also sent with NEWS on Thursday.

Inviting Holy Light

I invite you to take a couple of slow, big breaths, not into your chest, but into your stomach, your diaphragm. In... out. As you continue to notice your breathing, the oxygen cleansing your vital organs, I invite you to notice how your different body parts feel. You could start with your feet, how are they feeling? Notice them. Give thanks for what they do for you.

As we light this candle, may we be ever mindful of the holy rhythms of life – the gentle darkness that brings rest, and the energy of sunrise and its light that catalyzes. The light of Christ, grounding us in peace, energizing us into faithful living. May the Christ light reveal for us Christ's love, in us and all around us. May we share that love in all we do. [candle is lit]

Sung Response: VU 312 *Praise with Joy the World's Creator*, vs. 4

4. Praise the Maker, Christ, and Spirit, one God in community,
calling Christians to embody oneness and diversity.
This the world shall see reflected: God is One and One in Three.

Nurturing Safe Space

Each and every one of us is welcome in this space. Whether you feel joy or sadness today, feeling together or scattered, confident or questioning, you are welcome. Whatever our age, or skin colour, or sexual identity, gender, age, we are, in all diverse ways that our minds understand our world, all of us are beloved children of God, and we are welcome. This is a come-as-you-are worship. I invite us into this worship space as watchers of the word, as participants in the struggle, as agents of God's light and love, as revelers in the joy, and as members of an inclusive body. Let us worship God together. Let us open our eyes, ears, hearts, and minds to the divine's loving presence among us.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

People have lived on this land for thousands upon thousands of years. This land on which we gather is the traditional land of the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek and the Wahnapiatae First Nation. We worship the Creator on this land and acknowledge with respect the thousands of years of ceremony and relationship that are etched in footprint, fire, and faithfulness on the soil and rock that surrounds us. We also recognize the painful legacy that Churches brought to this land and its people, with skewed understandings of the Love of Jesus that caused great harm. We as St. Andrew's Community of Faith commit ourselves anew to the work of working towards right relationships, with one another, but especially with Indigenous sisters and brothers and right relationship with the Creator.

Call to Worship

Sometimes we wonder who we are. The path before us is not always clear.

God calls us all beloved.

Some tell us who we are or what to do. Some just journey with us on the road.

God calls us all beloved.

Some come to the cross, finding purpose and meaning in the Christ.

God calls us all beloved.

Some come to the circle, sharing their dream and love of the Creator.

God calls us all beloved.

In this place, in this time, we gather to worship

God, who calls us all beloved.

Opening Prayer

We invite you to meet us here, Holy One, in this space, whether we are in a sanctuary or a home space that we have set apart in our week as an opening for your Spirit into our hearts and homes. In a world that is aching and divided, may our prayers be a gentle and soothing gift, offered in your name and in the spirit of your gathered ones across time and space. And now we offer to you together a modern version of the prayer that Jesus taught...

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.

Hymn: VU 357 *Tell Me the Stories of Jesus, vs. 1*

1. Tell me the stories of Jesus I love to hear;
things I would ask him to tell me if he were here:
scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

Time up Front

Recap of the Season until now through my Stoles:

Advent and Christmas, Epiphany (white), Lent, Maundy Thursday & Good Friday (red), Easter (white), Easter Season, Ascension

Jesus appeared to his friends several weeks after he had died. He said some things to his disciples. Then, he was taken up and disappeared in a cloud. His friends stood there, staring into the empty sky. Suddenly two men appeared—in white robes! They said, "You Galileans!—why do

you just stand here looking up at an empty sky? This very Jesus who was taken up from among you to heaven will come as certainly—and mysteriously—as he left.”

Jesus kind of passed the baton to his disciples. Have you ever run a race and passed a baton? (pull out baton) Can you show me how it works? Now I have the baton, can I pass it to one of you and you can run around this whole sanctuary?

Can we have a prayer? This is a repeat after me prayer:

Thank you for the gift of Jesus... Thank you for the love he teaches... and the reminder that we are his friends too... Help us to share that love... with everyone we meet. Amen.

Hymn: VU 357 *Tell Me the Stories of Jesus, vs. 2*

2. First let me hear how the children stood round his knee,
and I shall fancy his blessing resting on me;
words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
all in the love light of Jesus' face.

Scripture Readings (Freda Wilson)

John 17:1-11 (NRSV Updated Edition)

Let us pray: God, the words you speak have power: power to create, power to disturb, power to heal. Help us to hear your word for us today. Amen.

This is a Reading from the Gospel of John. Here we listen in as Jesus prays to the Creator, whom he calls Abba, Father, but actually he addresses God more intimately, like saying, Daddy. He prays for the faithful around him, that God might take care of them, that all might be one.

Jesus prayed, “Abba, Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.

“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Message: “Unity in Our Diversity” (What does *that* mean?)

Anthem/Hymn: MV 171 *Christ Has No Body Now but Yours*

(Choir sings verses 1-3. Congregation invited to join in at verse 4.)

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.

Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

1. No hands but yours to heal the wounded world,
no hands but yours to soothe all its suffering,
no touch but yours to bind the broken hope of the people of God.

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.

Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

2. No eyes but yours to see as Christ would see,
to find the lost, to gaze with compassion;
no eyes but yours to glimpse the holy joy of the city of God.

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

3. No feet but yours to journey with the poor,
to walk this world with mercy and justice.
Yours are the steps to build a lasting peace for the children of God.

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

4. Through ev'ry gift, give back to those in need;
as Christ has blessed, so now be his blessing,
with ev'ry gift a benediction, be to the people of God.

Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work,
to serve with the joy of compassion.

Reflecting on "Unity"

Special thanks to Bev Chapman for crafting this Reflection in collaboration with Suzanne Nykilchyk.

In recent years it has become obvious that we live in an increasingly divisive world, marked by violence, persecution, deprivation, inequality, and war. It can all seem overwhelming and leave us at a loss as how to respond. And yet we are called to embrace hope and seek unity. How can we answer this call? It's often easier to start small.

What are some ways in which we can promote unity within our local United Church congregations? Within Sudbury? What might be a concrete step we can take as the St. Andrew's Community of Faith?

What are some obstacles that we might face, either within ourselves or when reaching out to others?

Sit with those obstacles, and offer them prayerfully to the Creator, be open to baby steps you can take to get past them. How can you equip yourself, spiritually, for this work?

We invite you to share your thoughts on our Graffiti board, questions, concerns. We will leave the Graffiti board up for a few weeks.

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Your Generosity Matters: Real-Time Relief Really Makes a World of Difference

We are in the midst of one of the worst hunger crises in 40 years. Millions of people around the world are going hungry every night. today I'm (Alexa) chatting with Thivan Hoang, the United Church program Coordinator for Sustainable Development and Humanitarian Response about how your generosity helps our United Church to respond to emergencies including the current hunger crisis.

Thivan, I'm really glad to be with you today. Can you tell me how Mission and Service and our Emergency Response efforts have been helping both here in Canada and around the world?

So Mission and Service is supporting Global Partners in their response to food insecurity in their communities. When a hurricane hits Cuba, or the super typhoon hits the Philippines, Partners mobilize quickly to respond in the communities with food hygiene kits psychosocial support and shelter so partners are best placed to respond to, and understand, the needs of the community best.

So, this not quite emergency response, but through Mission and Service as well and through our membership with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Manitoba Council for international Cooperation, partners are doing the long-term work to address food insecurity and hunger in their communities. For example, through Conservation Agriculture and agro-ecology, the National Council of Churches of Kenya are providing conservation and agricultural training to small holder farmers, particularly women farmers, and connecting them to more experienced women farmers, that provides mentorship and support. They are also linking farmers to market so they can sell what they grow at a fair price. The impact of this is that farmers can earn income to support their children's education and other household needs, and improve their family's nutrition.

With the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, they've been able to address gender-based violence within their communities, so issues such as early child marriages are prevented. Because of food security, people are able to farm, able to earn income so that they don't have to send their girl children for early marriages because they can't afford to feed them anymore. It's a significant impact, that folks over here can help by donating through Mission and Service.

I'm amazed at how when we all pull together in one part of the world we can effect change, globally. Your gift to Mission and Service will help address both the immediate and long-term emergency response efforts. Thank you!

Offering Moment

Dave gives the Offering Moment.

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

Almighty God, we bring gifts of time, talent, and treasure and offer them that you might be glorified. Bless all that we offer, that it might be for the stewardship and the nurture of your beloved creation and of your children. By our gifts, may your presence in this world be made known. By our gifts, may we embody your grace and love towards all that you have made. Amen

Prayers of Community

God of the generations in time and eternity, we turn to you in these quiet moments to offer you our thanks and our hopes for our lives. This morning we give you thanks for all those people who have shown us your face and taught us to follow you through the loving example of their living faith. We are grateful for their wisdom and courage which continue to inspire us.

Thank you for our life together in your church and the saints we've known here. May the light of Christ shine through our lives, too, so that we offer light for the world you love as witnesses to your purposes.

Christ of Compassion in action, in you we receive our call to live with purpose. From you, we learn how to love those around us. With you, we find strength to face each new day. So today we offer our prayers for those facing challenges these days and seek your guidance to respond to their cries.

We pray for those brought to mind by news headlines this week for situations of violence and deprivation, danger and devastation... [Silence]

We pray for families going through difficult times, for all who are sick or in sorrow, for all who are lonely or despairing... [Silence]

We pray for those agonizing over important decisions and responsibilities, for those in leadership roles and for those who care for the most vulnerable... [Silence]

Healing and Encouraging Spirit, this Sunday, we pray for the work of healing and reconciliation in Canada, between indigenous peoples and those who are ancestors of settlers, immigrants long ago and more recent. Heal lives limited by misunderstanding, and bring hope for just resolutions to problems of long-standing.

Increase in us all the spring of generosity we need to create communities of dignity and mutual respect wherever we live on this land we call home.

Creator, Christ and Spirit, move with us into the week ahead, Remind us each day to live according to your will and purpose in all our relationships for we want to bear witness to the love we met in Jesus, our teacher, Christ and friend. Amen.

Closing Hymn: MV 12 *Come Touch Our Hearts*, vv. 1, 2, 3

1. Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,
from failing embers build a blazing fire;
love strong enough to overturn injustice; to seek a world more gracious,
come touch and bless our hearts.

2. Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;
create a space for spirit to grow in us, let life and beauty fill us,
come touch and bless our souls.

3. Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;
help us to open doors of understanding, to welcome truth and wisdom,
come touch and bless our minds.

Blessing

Go out from this place full of the tenderness taught by Jesus. Go out into the world, carrying with you the abundance of God's grace and love. Let Love overflow as blessings to all those whom you meet. Go, for Christ is out in the world, still calling us to life and love.

We go now: with the Grace of Christ Jesus; with the love of God; and within the communion of the Holy Spirit, today and always. Alleluia! Amen.

Blessing Hymn: MV 145 *Draw the Circle Wide*

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

1. God the still-point of the circle,
'round whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever,
in God's gracious arms.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

2. Que nos couers touchent les horizons,
enveloppant chaque lieu;
notre amour sans fin répondra
à l'appel de Dieu.

Traçons un grand cercle. Traçons le plus grand.
C'est notre seul chant, nul n'est solitaire,
debout solidaires, traçons un grand cercle.

3. Let the dreams we dream be larger,
than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door.

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.

Postlude

Inviting Holy Light adapted from a prayer written by Jim McKean. *Gathering*, Lent/Easter 2023. Used with permission.

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