

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

June 25, 2023 – Pentecost 4

Welcome to Worship

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

Email sascha12@sympatico.ca to get the Zoom link.

Prelude

Opening Hymn: *Listen What I Say* – WRITTEN BY ROGER PILE

God really loves us and wants us to shine.
If we turn to Jesus, everything will be fine.
When we're feeling lost, they can show us the way.
If we listen, things will turn out OK.
(clap, clap) God shows (clap, clap) the way.
(clap, clap) We listen (clap clap) OK.

1. God told Noah, go build me an Ark.
Build it quick, 'cause it's gonna get dark.
Noah said to God, I don't hear what you say.
I see no clouds, gonna do it my way.

2. Jesus told Simon, throw your nets over here.
The fish'll swim right in, everybody stand clear.
Simon said to Jesus, I don't think you're right.
The fish aren't biting, we've been trying all night.

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3. God told Jonah, got to listen what I say.
To go to Nineveh, tell the people my way.
Jonah didn't listen, thought that God was a fail.
By the time he got it, he was inside the whale.

4. Jesus told the merchants, I have had enough.
My temple is for prayer, not for selling your stuff.
The merchants didn't listen, they wanted to stay.
Jesus turned their tables, then they all ran away.

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(clap, clap) God shows (clap, clap) the way.
(clap, clap) We listen (clap clap) OK.

5. God and Jesus speak to us every day.
They comfort when we hurt, rejoice when we play.
All we have to do is make the choice
To open our hearts, and listen to their voice.

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Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to St. Andrew's on this 4th Sunday after Pentecost. 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

We prepare ourselves now for worship. First by centring ourselves. Take this quiet moment to focus on your breathing... in and out. Notice how you feel, held by your chair, or couch, or the floor on which you sit. You are held also within Holy Love.

Holy God, we come to worship this morning brought together by your Spirit. It is your Spirit who teaches us to pray and helps us be your faithful ones. We ask now for the presence of your Holy Spirit: come to us as wind and fire, as bubbling laughter, as healing touch, or as the still small voice of peace. We acknowledge your presence as we invite this Holy Light. [*light candle*]

Sung Response: VU 374 *Come and Find the Quiet Centre, vs. 1*

**1. Come and find the quiet centre in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes, that we can see
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.**

Nurturing Safe Space

Every one of us is welcome in this space. We are blessed as a community, to be created in our diversity of ages, skin colours, sexual identity, gender, all the diverse ways in which our minds understand our world, all of us are beloved children of God, and we are welcome.

Acknowledging Traditional Territory

We acknowledge that we are worshiping, here, at St. Andrew's United Church, on the traditional lands of the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek and the Wahnapietaeping First Nation. For thousands of years, the Indigenous have cared for the land even as the land cared for them. We also acknowledge a painful colonial history of the Christian Church with the First Peoples of this land, and our call to heal the hurts, to make right the broken relationships caused by the Church. May we be guided by the wisdom of their traditions, taught by Creator and Creation that the circle of life is embraced and embracing. May we carry on this wisdom. Let us live into right relations with love and respect.

Call to Worship

In days of trouble, we call out to God. In times of distress,
we ask how we can help.

When hope feels forgotten, we wonder why it must be this way. In times of division, we ask what can be healed.

In these days, we turn to each other, and listen for God.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray, God of sparrows and elephants, of earth and sky, of the great and the small, wonder with us about transformation and division.

Wonder with us about the peace we imagine and the disruptive peace about which Jesus spoke. Wonder with us today and always, loving us and caring for us through every question and possibility. We pray this, along with 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: MV 157 *I Am a Child of God, vs. 1*

1. I am a child of God,
I am a glimpse of God's new creation.
I am a child of God, I am a child of God.

Time Up Front

BRAVE STRONG DETERMINED LOVING GENTLE KIND

(Display on separate cards the words above that describe Jesus.)

(Recall familiar Jesus stories that illustrate each word.)

(Read verses 24-25 from Matthew 10)

"Disciples are not better than their teacher, and slaves are not better than their master. It is enough for disciples to be like their teacher and for slaves to be like their master." (CEV)

Think about those words... We are not better than our teachers, rather, we are to be "like" our teachers. Think about the things you have learned from people older and wiser than you.

Here in church, we talk a lot about "kind", "loving" and "gentle" like Jesus.

But Jesus says that it is important also to be "brave", "strong" and "determined" like him.

I'm going to hold up a word, I would like someone to tell me an example of a situation in life when you can show that...

Ok – "Brave" ...

This is a repeat after me prayer:

Thank you, God, for our teachers;...our parents and aunties and uncles and grandparents...who teach us many things... Thank you for our teachers at school who are special, too... Thank you for Jesus,...who teaches us to love love love...and then to love love love some more. Amen.

Hymn: MV 157 *I Am a Child of God, vs. 5*

5. I am a song of joy,
I am the moment of jubilation,
I am a song of joy,
I am a song of joy.

Scripture Readings (Donna Mese)

Psalm 86 – VU p. 803

***Refrain:* In the day of my trouble I call unto you for you will answer me.**

Turn your ear to me, O God, and answer me, for I am poor and in misery.

Preserve my life for I am faithful; save your servant for I trust in you.

Be merciful to me, my lord, for I call to you all day long.

Gladden the heart of your servant, for to you I lift up my soul.

For you, my lord, are good and forgiving, and great in mercy to all who call on you.

Give heed, O God, to my prayer, and listen to my cry of supplication.

Refrain: In the day of my trouble I call unto you for you will answer me.

Among the gods there is none like you, my lord, nor can the deeds of any be compared to yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and bow before you.

They shall glorify your name, my lord,

For you are great and do marvellous things; you alone are God.

Refrain: In the day of my trouble I call unto you for you will answer me.

Matthew 10: 27-39

Jesus said, "What I say to you in the darkness, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, announce from the rooftops. Don't be afraid of those who kill the body but can't kill the soul. Instead, be afraid of the one who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Aren't two sparrows sold for a small coin? But not one of them will fall to the ground without your God knowing about it already. Even the hairs of your head are all counted. Don't be afraid.

"Therefore, everyone who acknowledges me before people, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But everyone who denies me before people, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

"Don't think that I've come to bring peace to the earth. I haven't come to bring peace but a sword. I've come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. People's enemies are members of their own households.

"Those who love father or mother more than me aren't worthy of me. Those who love son or daughter more than me aren't worthy of me. Those who don't pick up their crosses and follow me aren't worthy of me. Those who find their lives will lose them, and those who lose their lives because of me will find them.

Let us pray: God of compassion and mercy, we give thanks that you journey with us into the future. Open our hearts as we listen prayerfully to your Holy Stories, and give us courage and conviction as we live according to the way Jesus taught us. We seek to follow, so Creator, Christ, Spirit, lead our hearts so that they find their way home in you. Amen.

Message: *Strange Family Values*

Questions to Reflect on

In brief, discipleship means leaving behind conventional approaches to kinship, career, and social harmony... The good news of the Gospel may be for everyone — but discipleship isn't. [www.saltproject.org]

Barbara Brown Taylor says about "discipleship": if we're honest with ourselves, most of us are less like "disciples" and more like "friends of the disciples." ["Friends of the Disciples", p. 76. A sermon by Barbara Brown Taylor in the book, *Preaching in the New Millennium*, ed. Frederick J. Streets. © 2005 Yale University.]

What do you think? Are you a "disciple" or a "friend of a disciple"? *Why* do you think that?

Choir Anthem: VU 556 *Would You Bless Our Homes and Families*

(Congregation joins in the singing on verse 4.)

1. Would you bless our homes and families,

Source of life who calls us here;

in our world of stress and tension

teach us love that conquers fear.

Help us learn to love each other

with a love that constant stays;

teach us when we face our troubles,
love's expressed in many ways.

2. When our way is undemanding,
let us use the time that's ours
to delight in simple pleasures,
sharing joys in gentle hours.
When our way is anxious walking
and a heavy path we plod,
teach us trust in one another
and in you, our gracious God.

3. From the homes from which we're nurtured,
with the love that shapes us there,
teach us, God, to claim as family
every one whose life we share.
And through all that life may offer,
may we in your love remain;
may the love we share in families
be alive to praise your name.

**4. Let us reach beyond the boundaries
of our daily thought and care
till the family you have chosen
spills its love out everywhere.
Help us learn to love each other
with a love that constant stays;
teach us when we face our troubles
love's expressed in many ways.**

Minute for Mission: *The Path Toward Healing*

Rev. Alexa Gilmour, United Church of Canada Mission & Service:

Thank you, your gifts through Mission and service enable the church to continue to live into our commitments to Healing and Reconciliation today. I'm chatting with the Rev. Murray Pruden, National Executive Minister for Indigenous Ministries and Justice, to discuss the journey and the path forward. Murray, I'm really glad you're here today.

Murray: It's a pleasure to be here.

Alexa: I wonder if you might be able to tell us a little bit about the Healing Fund and perhaps a story about the impact of that fund.

Murray: The Healing Fund Program, which is coordinated by one of my staff members in our units, is quite significant for our Indigenous communities. In this path, as the title says, for healing last year, in November, we supported a theatre project. It was a story based on residential schools. Local members were in residential school in Edmonton and so this is part of their story in their uprising against the residential school systems as children. To see it being played out by their local community members, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. And in the roles, actual youth playing the roles of the young boys. It was just remarkable but just uplifting to see that we can support our communities in this way, that we're able to share these stories. And this is this is the gift of healing creatively. If we don't share these stories, we don't heal as well. If we can create more of these programs where we have these proper partnerships and relationship-building and dialogue amongst our youth, they are the ones who are going to tell us what the needs of the church are for generations to come.

Alexa: I'm reminded of a, I think it was a Mission & Service funded activity, where youth, as you said, were reclaiming their language through superhero videos. And do you remember that project I do?

Murray: I do, and I'm very I was happy to see that, and you know, I hope to see more of these types of programs come up. As well, we also helped and supported a very long-gated project with them, with the Mohawk nation and with the with the Mohawk language Bible. We want to be as good as a relation and neighbor to all those that are willing to walk with us.

Alexa: Your gifts for Mission & Service will help support important programs for healing learning and teaching. Your Generosity Matters.

Offering Moment

Dave gives the Offering Moment.

Dedication Hymn: VU 538 *For the Gift of Creation*

**For the gift of creation, the gift of your love,
and the gift of the Spirit by which we live,
we thank you and give you the fruit of our hands.
May your grace be proclaimed by the gifts that we give.**

Dedication Prayer

We offer our gifts to you, as well as our lives, Loving God, so they might find their way to those who need your grace, your hope, your joy, and your peace in their lives. Amen.

Prayers of Community

(Someone lifts a container of oil and pours it upon a stone.)

Oil has long traditions of use for healing. We pour this oil on this stone to remind us that this, too, is the house of God. As we bring our prayers for healing, know that God is here.

For all who struggle with grief or fear, anger or pain, hear our prayers... *(silence)*

For all who face a crossroads, a time of choosing, hear our prayers... *(silence)*

For all who find it hard to come into the presence of God, or who have found the church non-receptive and ungracious, hear our prayers... *(silence)*

For all on journeys home, for all setting out on new ways, for all who feel trapped and unable to move, hear our prayers... *(silence)*

May the spirit be poured on us all. *(Pour oil upon the stone again.)*

Amen.

Closing Hymn: MV 171 *Christ Has No Body Now but Yours, vv. 1, 3, 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.**

**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.**

Blessing

As you leave this place, remember that you may be the only grace someone will meet this week.
We go, to share God's graciousness with all.

Remember you may be the only love someone will encounter this week.
We go, to be the love of Jesus for all.

Remember you may be the only peace someone will find this week.
We go, to share the Spirit of hope and reconciliation with all.

Blessing Hymn: VU 633 *Bless Now, O God, the Journey, vs. 1*

**1. Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.
The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.**

Postlude

Inviting Holy Light from Seasonal Resources Pentecost, *Celebrate God's Presence: A Book of Services*, p. 204. © 2000 The United Church Publishing House. Used with permission.

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Dedication Prayer and **Blessing** written by Thom M. Shuman. © Thom M. Schuman, July 20, 2020. lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com

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