

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH
September 24, 2023 – Doing Discipleship

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: MV 1 *Let Us Build a House*, vs, 1, 4, 5

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell
and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

4. Let us build a house
where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

5. Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace;
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.

Welcome and Announcements

Welcome to Doing Discipleship, Welcome Jill Strapp and Ron Ewart from Toronto United Church Council, and thank you to the Steering Team who have dedicated themselves to guiding this year long journey. (Introduce members quickly?)

Next week, Blair will be bringing his artwork. Bring cash.

Social Hour is on Zoom every Sunday night at 7pm. To get your Zoom link, email Bev. 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.

As We Invite Holy Spirit and Light

We centre our bodies and spirits now. We breathe.

Fit us in somewhere in the big picture –
the work of art that you're creating, O God.

Stand us where you want us to stand.

Put us next to whom you will.
Use our gifts for you works, whatever that may be.

Breathe your Spirit into us.
And lead us into the places where you are at work.

Weave us into your holy and wondrous tapestry so that in your hands,
we are turned into everything you want us to be.
In Christ's name we pray.
Amen.

[light candle]

Sung Response: MV 12 *Come Touch Our Hearts*, vs. 3

**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.**

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

For Thousands of years, Indigenous peoples have lived and journeyed on this land, weaving their identity and their spirituality intimately with the land. As we worship this morning, we remember that European colonization came about, largely, because of the Doctrine of Discovery – a flawed understanding that ignored the Indigenous presence on the land.

**We affirm that Indigenous peoples have lived on these lands, Turtle Island, for millennia. We are Treaty people, called to honour the Robinson Huron Treaty made here in 1850.
We seek a new path of healing grounded in God's love. We seek transformation.**

As we worship and have conversations today, we gratefully acknowledge that we are on the Traditional Territories of the Wahnapietaeping First Nation and the Atikemeksheng Anishnawbek. In gratitude for this new path, may we journey together towards reconciliation.

Call to Worship

We gather,
hoping for a glimpse of the holy:

the One who brooded over Creation,
who engulfed a bush in flame,
who made a path through the waters,
who rolled away the tombstone.

We gather,
hoping for a whisper of the truth:

the Word who first spoke in the silence,
the voice who raged with prophet's zeal,
the host who sang of peace on earth,
the teacher who blessed humble and poor.

We gather,
hoping for a touch of compassion:

the tenderness that shaped the human body,
the caress that opened eyes of the blind,
the soothing hand that brought healing calm,
the warmth that embraced lonely and lost.

We gather,
in the presence of mystery:

of One who is
revealed and hidden,
known and unknown,
mother of Creation,
human God-with-us,
living Word,
eternal Spirit,
Three and One.

**Breathe into us
hope, faith and joy.
Breathe into us
compassion, truth and holiness.
Breathe into us
reconciliation, justice and peace.
Breathe newness of life
as we worship today.**

Opening Prayer

Let us pray, God of immeasurable grace, bless us with spirituality as deep as the ocean. Call us to a discipleship as bold as the saints'. Compel us to a justice as daring as the Redeemer's love, in the name of our Impossible Hope, Christ Jesus, along with a more contemporary version of the Prayer 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.

Scripture Reading (Freda Wilson)

Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1, verses 10-12 (Common English Bible)

This reading is part of the opening chapter of Luke's story about Jesus and the disciples. Jesus has offered final words to his friends, and disappears.

While he was going away and as they were staring toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood next to them. They said, "Galileans, why are you standing here, looking toward heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you saw him go into heaven."

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem—a sabbath day's journey away.

Anthem: A New Creed

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Reflecting: Reflection on being the people of God (Jill & Ron)

- What do you value most about the life and work of St. Andrew's United Church?
- Describe a time (a moment, an experience) when you felt the presence of God at work at St. Andrew's United Church.

Offering Moment

Dave invites people to bring forward their hearts to place them on the dais. If you're not able to come forward, please raise your hand and we will come get them.

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

God of transformation, we thank you for your continued promise to care for and sustain all Creation. Help us to follow your example, raising our concern and care for one another and all of Creation. Amen.

Prayers of Community

Eternal One, we give thanks for the conversations and sharing that have happened during this worship. Sharing and listening; glimpses of your work in and around us. Thank you, Loving God.

As we come today, we are grateful for your presence in our church. We give thanks for the rich legacy left by those who have gone before us. We recognize that a lot has changed, in our world, in this community of faith, St. Andrew's United Church, and in the community just outside. Help us to name those changes, some we offer with lament, while other changes, may we lean into prayerfully considering with hope and faith. We humbly pray for your guidance in the new paths you are forging ahead for us.

As we seek Spirit's lead in our individual lives, in our collective life as St. Andrew's, we name our struggles. It might be health issues, it might be financial challenges, or broken relationships. Be with us as we journey through the pain, leaning on our families, our neighbours, this community of St. Andrew's. In silence we offer our prayers for healing and help in our lives... *(silence)*

We are so grateful for this church community, Holy One, this complex array of apartments, places for gathering, shops and offices, and sanctuary collectively called St. Andrew's Place. We use the word United, but sometimes we are not united, here at St. Andrew's, and as we consider our United Church of Canada. We aspire to embrace diversity, to love every neighbour, no exceptions, but there are moments when we falter in our courage and resolve to love as Jesus did. We quietly name the blessings and our concerns as we think about the St. Andrew's Community of Faith in this silent moment... *(silence)*

We ponder now our planet – Mother Earth who has nurtured us. We are so grateful for this fragile ecosystem, but we name the crisis now in prayer and our concern. Give us the wisdom, the cooperative spirit, and courage to make the changes needed. Help us to remember that any meaningful change begins within each of us. We pray for our earth-village. So diverse, and wonderful, and perplexing. Our global community needs your healing, Creator. Grant us your presence and hope, and resolve to build community again in those neighbourhoods of our world where violence and injustice seem to prevail. May we, the benefactors of the major different faiths be leaders in the work of healing, of reconciliation, of righting relationships. Thank you for the gift of Jesus who taught, and who still teaches us that your kin-dom needs to be born on earth as it is in heaven. In silence, now we offer our personal prayers for the world... *(silence)*

Holy Potter, we gratefully offer ourselves, your works of love molded out of courage, peace, justice and irrepressible hope, in the name of the One who guides our path. Amen.

Closing Hymn: MV 171 *Christ Has No Body Now but Yours*, vv. 1, 2, 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.

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: Closing of Table Church

It is time for some of our community to leave us. I invite those remaining to offer thanks for their participation in our first conversation and bless them as they go on their way. I ask those who are leaving to continue to reflect on what has been shared and to pray for those remaining for the next part of today's work.

Those Remaining: Fellow people of the Way, we thank you for what you have shared today. We offer our blessing to you for the remainder of the day ahead and ask for your prayers for our continued work this morning.

Those Leaving: Fellow people of the Way, we are glad to have been part of this beginning to our conversation, thank you for your blessing. We will pray for you as you continue this important work for our community and the kin dom. Go in Peace.

Choral Blessing: *Go Ye Now in Peace*

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Postlude

As We Invite Holy Spirit and Light written by Bonnie Green, 2015, from Toronto United Church Council. Used with permission.

Acknowledgment of Traditional Territory adapted from Emily Perry. *Gathering*, Pentecost 2, p 29. Used with permission.

Call to Worship written by Craig Mitchell, 2018. Found at pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org (for more resources from Craig Mitchell, go to craigmitchell.com.au). Used with permission.

Opening Prayer written by Jennifer Henry, The United Church of Canada, united-church.ca/worship-theme/call-and-vision-worship. Used with permission.

The Prayer that Jesus Taught written by Parker J. Palmer. Found in *Peace Prayers* by Carrie Leadingham, Joanne E. Moschella, and Hilary M. Vartanian. ©1992 HarperSanFrancisco. Used with permission.

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Prayers of Community adapted from a prayer by Rev. Karlene Brown-Palmer found at united-church.ca/worship-theme/call-and-vision-worship. Used with permission.

Thank you to: Rev. Dave LeGrand for leading worship; Ralph McIntosh for his musical leadership; Freda Wilson for reading the scriptures; Suzanne Nykilchuk 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 Nykilchuk for the sanctuary décor; Mallon Appianing and Roger Pile in the audiovisual booth; and Alison Warner-Smith for her coordination.

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