

BEACHBURG PASTORAL CHARGE
United Church of Canada
October 11th, 2020
Trinity ~ 9:30 am; St. Andrew's ~ 11:00 am
Thanksgiving Sunday - Creation 5

Minister: Rev. Kevin Moratz
Ministers: The People of the Congregation
Organist: Heather Campbell
Pianists: Barry Stephen, Murray Gutz

Our Shared Mission Statement

The congregations of St. Andrew's & Trinity United Churches celebrate and share God's accepting love known to us through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit calls us to discern God's Word as we reach out with concern and compassion to others, seeking justice, healing and hope for the world.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Lighting of the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle knowing that Christ's love shines like a beacon for those of us who are troubled, who are anxious, who are unsure, welcoming us into the presence of our God, who loves us into fullness.

Introit – This Is The Day (please no singing but please feel free to stand)

This is the day (this is the day); that our Lord has made;
We will rejoice (we will rejoice), and be glad in it;
This is the day that the Lord has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day; this is the day, that our Lord has made.

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Our lives are a blessing
and so we give thanks.

Our loved ones are a blessing
and so we give thanks.

This earth is a blessing
and so we give thanks.

Each meal we enjoy, the time we share together, is a blessing.

and so we give thanks.

In thanksgiving, let us worship God, let us pray:

Gathering Prayer

For what we have received, O God, make us truly thankful. For the breath of life, for the tears that fall, for the moments of love, for the times we are not quite sure what to do next. Make us truly thank-full, O God, make us truly thankful. Amen and Amen.

Hymn: "Come, You Thankful People, Come"

- 1 Come, you thankful people, come,
 raise the song of harvest home!
 All is safely gathered in, safe before the storms begin;
 God, our maker, does provide, for our needs to be supplied:
 come to God's own temple, come,
 raise the song of harvest home!
- 2 All the world is God's own field,
 harvests for God's praise to yield;
 wheat and weeds together sown,
 here for joy or sorrow grown;
 first the blade, and then the ear,
 then the full corn shall appear:
 Harvest-giver, grant that we
 wholesome grain and pure may be.
- 3 Even so, God, quickly come, to your final harvest home!
 Gather all your people in, free from sorrow, free from sin;
 there forever purified, in your presence to abide:
 come, with all your angels, come,
 raise the glorious harvest home.

Minute For Mission

Ministry of Music – Village 4 – Just A Little Talk With Jesus

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

Creator God, carve out a wider place in me where gratitude might grow. In my heart, in my eyes, in my ears, in my mind, even through my fingers and toes, carve out a cavern so I might feel and see and hear and know and touch, even carry, thankfulness. Bless me with forgiveness for the times I focus solely on what I do not have, what I do not yet own, and what I have yet to achieve.

Forgive me for neglecting what you have granted me. Push me, though I may stumble, forward in generosity, in joy, in service, in determination, so others would have what is truly needed, essential to life. God, above all, I seek your peace, not just for me, not just for my church or community, but for all of your creation. In Jesus' name let me live and follow, this Thanksgiving season and always. Amen.

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Matthew 6:25-33

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

²⁵ "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life^[e]?

²⁸ "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Meditation – "Anxious"

If we were to read today's biblical text outside of the church, the words sound extremely different from what they sound like in the comfort and protection of our sanctuary. Imagine reading this text on the floor

of the New York Stock Exchange: "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth" ([v. 24](#)). It would sure sound different in that context.

Read this passage to someone who is packing up the office after losing their job: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear" ([v. 25](#)). It definitely reads different in that context.

Read this text to someone who has received a life-threatening diagnosis: "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today" ([6:34](#)). All you can say is Amen to that!

On Thanksgiving, isn't it odd to hear today's recommended Gospel reading that talks about anxiety and worry, and not about thanksgiving? At this time of the year, we offer thanks for family, for food, for shelter, for health, for favourable weather, for peace, and for a whole raft of other blessings, But it's a bit jarring to hear Jesus tell us, "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' " (Matthew 6: 32, *NKJV*)

In this text, Jesus' words reveal an uncomfortable truth about gratitude. We know how close beneath the surface anxiety lurks. We're thankful for the food we have today, but will there be enough tomorrow? We thank God for our good health, but how prepared are we for an unknown illness? We give thanks for peace and freedom, but this political election south of the border has even us here in

Canada thinking about just how vulnerable we are on account of that very freedom?

Unless we're awfully complacent, or completely clueless, we're aware of life's fragility. As one comedian said recently, "One of two things is guaranteed in this life, Either we die, or we get very, very, very old"

The Gospel words about worry remind us how quickly things can change. So even as we sing (or hum) our thanksgiving songs, a part of us wonders, "Will we have anything to thank God for tomorrow, or the next day?" There is a part of us that wonders if God can be trusted to love us and care for us—tomorrow And so for some of us, these words about not being anxious, shake us up They may go so far as to spoil the mood of Thanksgiving. Why, just saying, "Don't worry about these things," makes us a little anxious.

For me Personally, this thanksgiving has been an anxious time as I struggle to deal with those close to me as they fight a life threatening illness so this scripture today hit close to home forcing me to remember what I have a tendency to forget.

That everybody worries and everybody experiences stress. It is part of the experience of being human. The danger lies in what I have called, in another sermon, 'catastrophic thinking' This is worry taken to the extreme, worry that can destroy us.

Dr Rachel Naomi Remen tells many memorable stories in her book, *Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal* In one of her stories, she asked one of her patients to describe her husband. The woman

laughed and told a story about a visit they made to Hawaii.

An organized and frugal man, her husband had reserved compact rental cars on each of the four islands, months in advance. On arriving on the Big Island and presenting their reservation to the car rental desk, they were told that the economy car they had reserved was not available.

Alarmed, she watched her husband's face redden as he prepared to do battle. The clerk didn't seem to notice "I am so sorry, sir," he said "Will you accept a substitute for the same price? We have a Mustang convertible" Barely appeased, her husband put their bags in this beautiful white sports car, and they drove off.

The same thing happened throughout their holiday They would turn in their rented car and fly to the next island, only to be told that the car they had been promised was not available. Each time they were offered a substitute for the same price, and each time the substitute was an upgrade, far nicer than the car they had requested.

It was amazing, she said, After the Mustang, they had been given a, a Lincoln Town Car, a Lexus RX and finally, a Mercedes, all with the most sincere apologies. The vacation was absolutely wonderful, and on the plane back, she turned to her husband, thanking him for all he had done to arrange such a memorable time. "Yes," he said, pleased, "it was really nice" Then, much to her amazement he added, "Too bad they never had the right car for us." She said that he was absolutely serious.

What do you do with people like that? Some people can see the dark

side of any cloud, even one with a silver lining. They are worriers. They fume, they fret, they are chronically stressed out. They even worry about not worrying enough.

This passage about worry grounds us in the reality of this world. So long as a family, an individual, or a nation hinges gratitude upon "stuff"—even good, necessary for life "stuff," even "stuff" that we may rightly call blessings, there's always that underlying fear that maybe tomorrow it won't be there. "Stuff" is notoriously fickle and unstable!

Author Sarah Ban Breathnach, whose bestselling book, *Simple Abundance*, praises the virtue of a grateful attitude, was once—in her own words—an “angry, envious workaholic and perfectionist, who compared [herself] to others and resented what seemed to be missing.” Finally, Ms Ban Breathnach got sick and tired of being sick and tired.

She realized that she had been focusing on what was wrong in her life, not what was right. She sat down and recorded everything she had to be grateful for. She ended up with a list of 150 blessings. Her 151st blessing was her changed outlook on life.

This passage assures us that God cares even for the birds and the wild flowers, and graces them with loveliness. God doesn't freeze the flower in timeless perfection. The day comes when flowers fade, die, scatter their seeds for another year, and are finally gathered for fuel.

Is God's care any less real because the flower isn't eternally fresh? God graces our lives with the loveliness of his blessings: everything

from delightful food to joyous family reunions, to a land of peace and liberty. And, no, as we have seen those blessings aren't frozen in time, either. Like flowers, they have their own season. They may wither for a time but they will return.

And so do troubles. Troubles come, and pass, and new ones take their place, as surely as weeds in the flower garden. And God is still good. God still loves us. His love is as constant as the wild flowers are fleeting. His will for us never changes. His kingdom still draws near to us, in every whispered prayer, in every bite of bread and every sip of wine.

When Jesus asks us to "look" at the birds of the air and to "consider" the lilies of the field, he is not asking us to imitate sparrows and flowers. He is rather asking us to peer more deeply into that alternative reality called the kingdom of heaven.

New Testament scholar Robert Tannehill reminds us that the verbs here—"look" and "consider"—are exceptionally strong. Jesus wants us not merely to glance at, mull over, or note quickly, but to *look ... really look*.

If we look long enough and hard enough at the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, suddenly there will break into our imagination, a slice of that alternative reality, a world not of tooth and claw but a world of providential care, a world in which the One who created it delights in tending the garden and nourishing the creatures.

What if we were to live in that world? What if we live, not in a world where we have been abandoned to our own devices, but in a world of divine abundance, a world where "your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" ([v. 32](#)), a world not ruled by insecurity and fear, but a world in which God gives gift after gift after gift? How we view ourselves and our lives depends upon which reality we believe we are living in.

Theologian Arthur C. McGill once said that it does no good to command people to be generous and unselfish, because "whether people serve themselves or serve others is not in their power to choose. "This is decided," said McGill, "wholly in terms of the kind of world in which they think they live, in terms of the kind of power that they see ruling the roost. In New Testament terms they live or die according to the king that holds them and the kingdom to which they belong."

So Jesus invites us, through the birds and the lilies, to see truly the world of loving providence in which we live. Once we have seen that, really seen it, then we can turn back to the world of Covid and cash, even a world of crosses and tyranny, and go out in faith and confidence that ultimately, all manner of things shall be well. Thanks be to God.

Let me conclude with the lyrics of a simple, common sense song by singer/songwriter, Jimmy Dean. The song reflects a feeling of gratitude. It's called "Drinking From My Saucer", aka "My Cup Runneth Over"

I never made a fortune and it's probably too late now
But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow
And as I go along life's journey, I'm reaping better than I sowed
I'm drinking from my saucer, cause my cup has overflowed

I ain't got a lot of riches, and sometimes the going's tough
but I've got a friend in Jesus and that makes me rich enough
I just thank God for his blessings and the mercies he's bestowed
I'm drinking from my saucer, cause my cup has overflowed

I remember times when things went wrong, and my faith got a little
thin
but then all at once the dark clouds broke, and the sun peeked
through again
so Lord help me not to gripe about the tough rows I hoed
I'm drinking from my saucer, cause my cup has overflowed

And if God gives me strength and courage, when the way grows
steep and rough
I'll not ask for another blessing, I'm already blessed enough
And may I never be too busy to help another bear his load
I'll keep drinking from my saucer, cause my cup has overflowed
May you be blessed with a "cup runneth over" Thanksgiving

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Dedication of Offering

Everything we have and are; everything we can be;

everything good in our lives is a result of God's love and grace.

We present our gifts as a way of participating in the ministry of proclaiming that love.

Praying that God will Use them. Multiply them and Transform them.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

God of all blessings, source of all life, giver of all grace: We thank you for the gift of life:

for the breath that sustains life,

for the food of this earth that nurtures life,

for the love of family and friends without which there would be no life.

We thank you for the mystery of creation:

for the beauty that the eye can see,

for the joy that the ear can hear,

for the unknown that we cannot fathom filling the universe with wonder,

for the expanse of space that draws us beyond the definitions of our selves.

We thank you for setting us in communities:

for families who nurture our becoming,

for friends who love us by choice,

for companions at work, who share our burdens and daily tasks,

for strangers who welcome us into their midst,

for people from other lands who call us to grow in understanding,

for children who lighten our moments with delight,

for the unborn, who offer us hope for the future.

We thank you for this day:

for life and one more day to love,

for opportunity and one more day to work for justice and peace,

for neighbors whom we are called to love,

for your grace and one more experience of your presence,

Let our thanksgiving be expressed,

not only in feasting but in sharing;

not only in passive enjoyment, but in active service,

not only in annual observance, but in our daily attitude.

And because your concern for wholesome living embraces every person upon this earth, we pray for others especially those who are close to our hearts today

We also for those devastated by hurricane delta and the continuing wildfires.

And finally for ourselves....for your promise:

to be with us, to be our God, and to give salvation.

For these, and all blessings, we give you thanks, eternal, loving God,

through Jesus Christ who taught us to pray saying Our Father.... Amen.

Hymn: "Count Your Blessings"

1. When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Refrain:

Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God has done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your many blessings, see what God has done.

2. Are you ever burdened with a load of care?
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,
And you will keep singing as the days go by. Refrain

3. So, amid the conflict whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend,
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.

Commissioning and Benediction

Postlude

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October bulletins are sponsored by: Raymond & Ruby Bell in loving memory of D.N. & Fannie Bell and Dr. David Nelson Bell.

And by: St. Andrew's Unit 1 UCW in loving memory of passed members.

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CD of Sunday's Service available--contact Jean at 613-582-3597.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anyone wishing to sponsor bulletins for 2020/2021 please contact Betty at 646-2120 or 582-7174.

Although food donations are not being accepted at this time, let us continue to think of others that are less fortunate through our financial donations.

Service Times

Oct thru December Trinity ~ @ 9:30 a.m., St. Andrew's @ 11 pm.

Prayer List: Let us keep the following people in our prayers for healing at this time.

Terry Ellis, Rob Marson, Murray Anderson, Bernie Lemke, Leanne Caniff, Audrey Gutz, Lorna Stevenson, Ruby Bell, Freda Kinnear, Elaine Moore, Lola Byce, Bill Douma, Keith Johnson, Nora Bennett,

Please contact me if there is someone that you would like to add to our list for special prayers or you feel is in need of a pastoral care visit. I would request that you please ask the person's permission before submitting their name to be put in the bulletin. *Rev. Kevin*