

BEACHBURG PASTORAL CHARGE
United Church of Canada
February 21st, 2021
St. Andrew's ~ 9:30 am Trinity ~ 11:00 am
Lent 1B

Minister: Rev. Kevin Moratz
Ministers: The People of the Congregation
Organists: Heather Campbell, 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

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

We come into this space, whether in person or virtually, gathered as a cloud of witnesses.

**We have come, from our living rooms, from our home offices;
or continue to connect on our tablets, or computers.**

Come one and all to gather in spirit and in truth.

**We come in the midst of uncertainty, discovering new ways to
worship as one, leaning into the Spirit's guidance as we share the
good news.**

Across this community and within our family of faith, let us pray as one:

Opening Prayer

**Loving God, with all these constant changes, we feel at sea,
unstable—with our footing insecure. In our uncertainty, we come to
commune with you, Risen Christ. We pray for your strength, for your
humility, for your insight, for your caring.**

**May you heal what fears reside in us so that our hearts may be united
as we begin our Lenten journey. Amen.**

Extinguishing the Candle the First Sunday in Lent

We have come together this morning for renewal—in worship and as a community of faith. We've greeted one another, laughed and chatted about all the things that have happened since last time we met. But now the time of reflection and stillness is upon us. It is the first Sunday in Lent—the season for journeys of the heart.

Be still. Close your eyes if you wish. Listen. We are entering a holy time. The Lenten candles have been lit, but over the next six weeks the light will slowly fade into darkness. For we are retelling the story of Jesus' betrayal and suffering and death. We do this not to be morbid, but because in the story of Jesus' death and resurrection, God is revealed—in the amazing transformation of death into life, in endings transformed into beginnings, and in dead-ends that become a source for new possibilities.

This is the sacred center of our faith—the truth made manifest in Jesus Christ—that God is in each and every one of us, quietly transforming us and the world. In his pain and suffering, Jesus speaks to every pain and loss you have endured and offers you the promise of transformation. It's an old story, but it still has the power to reveal, to heal, and to redeem. Jesus is at the heart of our faith, in the depth of our souls. He is waiting for us, inviting us to leave ordinary time and follow along with him on the journey that brought him to the Cross. Listen in silence, for Jesus is calling you. (Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of injustice in the world. (A candle is extinguished.)

Let us pray:

All: Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, give us strength and courage to make the changes that are needed in our lives. Open our hearts and minds to your steadfast presence and help us to put our trust in you. Amen.

Hymn: *"O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee"*

1 O Master, let me walk with thee
in lowly paths of service free;
teach me thy secret, help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.

- 2 Help me the slow of heart to move
with some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.
- 3 In hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broadening way,
in peace that only thou canst give,
with thee, O Master, let me live.

Minute For Mission

Ministry of Music – St Andrew's -

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

Ever-Abundant God, we open our hearts to you this day, and offer these truths: Today we live in the fear that encompasses us. Today we live with the prejudice that is right in front of us. Today we live with the ignorance that dwells within us. Today we live with the doubt that holds us back. Help us, we pray, that we will find courage in unlikely places, discover the world with new and gracious understandings, move to those places where love is needed, and have faith that you are with us. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Friends, hear the good news that God listens to our prayers, understand our concerns, and holds us close in this time of confession and truth-telling. Know today that we have been given the grace and the courage to go into the world and spread this good news. Amen.

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Mark 1:14-20; Jesus Announces the Good News and Calls His First Disciples

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" ¹⁶ As Jesus walked

beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Mark 1:35-41

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

³⁸ Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

⁴⁰ A man with leprosy^[h] came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹ Jesus was filled with compassion. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Meditation – *A Thousand Days: Beginnings [Lent-1]*

Three years: a thousand days. That's all there is. A thousand soft and gentle dawns, a thousand days overflowing with words and questions, laughing and tears, and—with surprising acts of love and mercy. A thousand sunsets dissolving into a deepening velvet. And then—the end.

The stranger on the shore has a thousand days to live.

*What will he do in those thousand days? What can he do?
What could anyone do?*

Who is this man, anyway?

He is a man with a mission from God—a man sent to touch and change the world. He has been sent into a wasteland to bring life. He has entered into a war zone, to bring reconciliation. He has come as a physician offering healing, as the bearer of grace to those crushed by judgement. He has come as bread to the hungry, and the water of life to those who thirst.

He has come. But no one knows he has come. At least, not yet. And, in fact, there are those who will never know that he has come—even though they meet him, and argue with him, and then finally, gleefully, torture him to death. Some will never know.

But he has come. He has come as a man—a real man, with no obvious identification, just another face in the crowd. Someone who becomes hungry and thirsty the way we do, who becomes weary just the way we do, who needs friends the way we do. Someone who sometimes cries, and sometimes becomes angry, and who struggles with temptation, just the way we do.

And he has only a thousand days to live.

Where will he begin? Where would you begin?

He will begin by finding others to join him—not many others, mind you, just a dozen or so. And not a very impressive bunch. The people he recruits won't do that great of a job, most of the time. They won't understand what he is doing. They will embarrass him, sometimes. They will let him down in his hour of greatest need.

But this man, with the rag-tag dozen who follow him, will change the world.

There he is now, walking along the shore of the lake. I wonder what he's thinking. He seems to be watching those fishermen. There they are, two of them, out in their boat, casting their net and then dragging it in again, picking out the fish—not that many fish, really—and then casting the net one more time. It looks as if he is waiting for them to come to shore, so he can speak with them.

I don't think they have noticed him. Oh, maybe they have. But they're not ready to come in just yet. They still haven't caught enough to call it a good day.

The stranger stands and watches, as the waves lap on the beach and the sea birds soar overhead. There is time. There is enough time. He will watch, until they are ready to come in.

Finally, the net is pulled, the two men reach for the oars, and powerful arms and long, sure strokes head the boat back to shore. Another day, another load of fish for the market. This

day is like all the others. Nothing much ever changes for fishermen.

But this day, something will. Beginning this very afternoon, their lives will never be the same.

The stranger wades out in the water to meet them, and grabs the rope they throw to him. Then the boat is safely grounded, and they prepare to carry the catch ashore.

“You’re very good at what you do.” The stranger is speaking to them. The older man looks up and grins. He knows he’s good at what he does. And he’s strong, too—and rough and ready and equal to whatever the fishing business throws at him.

“Come and follow me.” The stranger is speaking again—speaking to Simon, the big, tough fisherman.

What is he asking? He wants Simon to follow him.

Who is he, anyway? Does he have a fishing company somewhere? It’s not around here, anyway. Simon has never seen him before.

“Come with me, and I will teach you how to catch people.”

So—what’s all that about? What kind of a joke is this?

Simon laughs—throws back his head, laughs from the heart, at the silliness of whatever this stranger is talking about. Then he turns back to his boat again—almost.

Almost, but not quite. Something about this stranger is irresistible. He is smiling and yet serious at the same time. This is a serious invitation.

“Come with me.”

Simon looks over at his brother Andrew, who is still in the boat. The stranger looks at Andrew, too.

“Yes, you come with me as well. I need both of you.”

In their wildest imaginations, the brothers could never have believed that millions of people, two thousand years later, would know exactly what they decide to do in the next few moments. But we do know.

They look in silence into the stranger’s eyes for what feels like forever, then mutter something to each other about maybe coming back for their fish that night. Then they do the most surprising thing that two fishermen have ever done.

They leave their boats and their nets on the beach, and they go with him.

Now three of them are walking on together.

Who is this man, anyway? And why did they accept his invitation?

Those are two of the most important questions we could ever wonder about: *Who is this man?* and, *Why should we follow him?*

Do you know the answers?

Those are questions we might ask ourselves as we begin the season of Lent. Lent, of course, is the six-week period that leads us up to Good Friday. And Good Friday is the day when this story should have ended with a whimper—perhaps a six-line note on the back page of the *Jerusalem Times*. But, you see, it didn't end that way. In fact, the story is still going on. That's why we're here this morning. And if by any chance we don't know the answers to those questions (*Who is this man?* and *Why should we follow him?*), the next six weeks might be a great time to find out.

As the first disciples followed Jesus down the beach, these were surely the questions they were asking. You see, Simon and Andrew didn't follow Jesus because they knew who he was. No one knew who he was. So why did they do it? And why did they continue to do it when their days became darker and downright frightening, and when Jesus finally came right out and told them that he was going to be killed? Why did they stay with him—and even, at the last when they did run away, why did they keep coming back? What was it about this man that, when he asked you to turn over your life to him, you did it?

If you are someone this morning who has turned your life over to Jesus, why did you do it?

I think if we had asked the disciples that afternoon, they really couldn't have told us why they did what they did. Probably they would just have said there was something about Jesus that they

trusted. And the longer they knew him and served him, the more they trusted him—until in the end, many were actually put to death because they belonged to him. But, except for Judas, there is no sign that any of them ever turned back.

Now, look: over there are two more fishermen, friends of Simon and Andrew, rivals in the fishing business. James and John are in their boat, along with their father, fixing their nets, on this day—just-like-every-other-day. But, of course, it isn't.

Probably Simon and Andrew are whispering to each other as the three of them approach.

“Think he’s going to call them, too?”

“Think they’ll come with him?”

“What’s their father going to say?”

Then Jesus is walking up to James and John, extending exactly the same invitation as he did to Simon and Andrew: “Come with me, and I will teach you how to catch people.”

What will they do? They look at each other, puzzled. They take a few minutes to think about it. They look to see what their father thinks of it all. He is just as surprised and confused as they are. He doesn't want them to go. Clearly, he doesn't want them to go. And, of course, he could forbid them to go, and then they would feel as if they should stay.

The father asks them something, but we can't quite make out what he is saying. Perhaps he is asking them if they know what

they are doing, and if they are sure this is something they really want to do. We can't hear what they are saying back to him, but we can guess: No, they don't know what they are doing. No, they don't really know who this man is. But there is something about him. Something that intrigues them. Something that leads them to trust him. And, yes, they really do want to go.

Moments later, an older man stands with his hands folded, serious and sad, as his sons walk away from him. Maybe they will be back, he says to himself. Likely they will be back.

But they won't be. John will become the disciple that Jesus most loves. James will one day be put to death by King Herod. But they will not be back. They have given their lives over to Jesus, and they will never change their minds.

Why not? Who is this man, anyway? And why have these fishermen handed their lives over to him?

If we had asked them those questions, they could not have answered us. At least, not yet. Later, they would have been able to. One day, they would even be explaining the story to others. But for now they are still finding out the answers for themselves. For now, they are “disciples”—students—and they are still learning.

The answers would not come easily, because the one they had agreed to follow was no ordinary man. And the longer they knew him, the harder it seemed to be to figure him out.

Like, for example, the day they went out in the boat with him—the four fishermen, and all the others who had joined them by that time. A storm came up—a really scary storm, worse than any storm that any of them could remember—but their Teacher would have slept right through it if they hadn't wakened him. Actually, they said to each other, he wouldn't have made it through at all—none of them would have, because the boat was about to sink.

The really strange part happened after they woke him up. If they hadn't all seen it with their own eyes, none of them would have believed it. He stood up in the boat, and spoke to the wind and the waves, and the storm *stopped*—just like that.

Well, they thought they had been afraid in the storm. Now they were *really* afraid. “Who is this man?” they began asking each other. “Did you see that? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

Who is this man? Do you know? And—*why should we follow him?*

Really, the two questions are linked together. If, like the disciples, we choose to follow him, we will eventually learn who he is. If we learn who he is, we will realize we have no choice but to follow him and trust our lives to him.

Either way, finding the answers to those two questions is life's most exciting adventure—even when the path leads us, as it

must always lead us, to the cross. Let's set out on that journey, during the six weeks of Lent.

Then, on Easter Sunday morning, let's rejoice as people who do know who Jesus is and do know why we belong to him.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Dedication of Offering

These gifts seem so little and the world is so big and so overwhelming right now, yet we offer them to you, O God.

Take what we offer and bless it for your mission of love.

In a world of conflict and pandemic, may these gifts, and we ourselves, become agents of change and transformation, in Jesus' name of self-giving love. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Heavenly father, Be with us this morning as we enter the season of Lent.,

Help us to see this as a journey to cast away our struggles and our demons, in hopes of receiving you more fully into our lives. We ask that you make this Lent a season where we find our way out of darkness and find our way back to you. Let us be true in the devotions we give to you this season.

Today, we raise the names of our friends, family and neighbors that grieve, we pray that they keep their trust in you strong. Remind them, and remind us, that it was never your promise to have a life without grief or pain. Your promise is that you will stand with us, or for us, when we hurt. Your promise is to heal our hearts, when they break. Let us feel your presence again, during this time of Lent.

This morning we raise our celebrations and joys. Help us to see these moments as Blessings from you. Let these moments of smile and laughter provide the strength we need when times get tough. Help us to see the joy in every moment, and that laughter which can turn around our days. This Lent, Help us to find more opportunities to experience the Joys you provide.

We recognize that Lent is a time of temptation and personal struggle. Help us as we fight against the urges and the addictions in our lives that threaten to steal the joy from our life. Help us to fight the urges that threaten our happiness, our health and our relationship with you and others.

Lastly, we pray for those who are close to our heart this morning and ask that for each of those we have raised in prayer, that you provide a person of faith to be with them in their journey and their struggle. Help us to become to others those people who are willing to risk everything to be the face of Jesus for others. Teach us to risk this Lenten season.

We raise these prayers, with words that do no justice to our fears or desires, along with the prayers we have yet to understand or articulate, to you our Lord, who taught us that only one prayer was necessary, the prayer that says....Our Father,....

Hymn: "Jesus Calls Us"

- 1 Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea,
day by day his clear voice sounding,
saying, 'Christian, follow me.'
- 2 Long ago apostles heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for Jesus' sake.
- 3 In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
'Christian, love me more than these.'
- 4 Jesus calls us: by your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all.

Commissioning and Benediction

Let us go now in peace. and place our hope, our hearts and our lives in
God. May we follow the path of love, remembering we make a difference in
times of hope and times of despair. God is always with us. We never
journey alone! Go make a difference!
Be peace. Be hope. Be love. Amen.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**There is a requirement to compile an annual report so we would ask
that each group or committee submit a financial report to Betty by
March 7th. Thank you.**

Next Sunday we will celebrate “Wear Red” Sunday with all donations going to the Good Samaritan Fund

Service Times

Feb - Mar ~ St. Andrew's @ 9:30 p.m. Trinity @ 11:00 p.m.,

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

Linda Habraken, Sandra Woods, Elaine Hawthorne, Paige Atherton, Ezma Weedmark, Rob Marson, Murray Anderson, Bernie Lemke, Audrey Gutz, Lorna Stevenson, Ruby Bell, Freda Kinnear, Mervin 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*