

BEACHBURG PASTORAL CHARGE
United Church of Canada
February 28th, 2021
St. Andrew's ~ 9:30 am Trinity ~ 11:00 am
Lent 2B

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

Introit - "The Joy of the Lord"

The joy of the Lord is my strength, the joy of the Lord is my strength,
The joy of the Lord is my strength, the joy of the Lord is my strength.

He heals the broken hearted and they cry no more, He heals the broken hearted and they cry no more, He heals the broken hearted and they cry no more, the joy of the Lord is my strength.

He gives me living water and I thirst no more, He gives me living water and I thirst no more, He gives me living water and I thirst no more, the joy of the Lord is my strength.

The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

On this second Sunday of Lent,

we come seeking God.

In this time of uncertainty in our lives,

we come seeking God.

Quieting our minds, opening our hearts,
and waiting for the divine mystery to make itself known,

we come to worship God.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, as we continue the Lenten journey, remind us that with your love, we have the strength to follow you. As we worship this day, surround us with your presence. Make yourself known to us in what we express, in the songs we sing, and in the prayers we offer. Reveal yourself in the people around us, that we might be reassured that we are not alone on this journey. As we follow you, we are aware that you call us to places we may not always want to go. Be with us and forgive us our hesitation. Renew our resolve and show us the courage to travel with your Son and our Christ, as we seek to grow in faith. Amen.

Hymn: "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"

- 1 O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of God's grace.
- 2 Jesus! the name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace.
- 3 He speaks, and listening to his voice, new life the dead receive,
the mournful broken-hearts rejoice, the humble poor believe.
- 4 My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad the honours of your name.

Extinguishing the Second Lenten Candle

In this brief space of time this morning, we leave behind the world of home and work and school—the world where we have our lists of things to do, activities to participate in, tasks to complete. We come here this morning seeking something else. We come here seeking a shift—from the ordinary to the sacred, from doing to being. I invite you to close your eyes. Let go of your list. Recall that it is the season of Lent. Remember the parable of the sower. The sower throws the seed . . . and where it lands determines if it will grow or not grow. Think of it this way: think of the season of Lent as the sower, the time when seeds of faith are thrown with special intensity, as a time when God calls to us in a low, voice. Be still and know that I am God (Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain that hatred for fellow humankind can bring to this world. (A candle is

extinguished). Let us pray:

All: Loving God, as we journey through this holy season of Lent, may we be open to your presence. Give us the strength to make the changes that are needed in our lives and the courage to take on the work of transforming your world with love. Amen.

Minute For Mission

Ministry of Music – Jesus The Healer

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

O God, You who are always doing a new thing,
we confess that we sometimes close windows
against the fresh air of new ideas,
against the noise of other people's worries,
against the winds of change.

God of every place and time,
we confess that we often draw the curtains
against people who are different,
against world news or community concerns.

Forgive us our insulation in our locked homes,
our shuttered churches,
the security systems on our hearts.
Open up our lives,
and let your Spirit blow through. Amen.

*The 116th (Vs. 1 and 2) Psalm states:
I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.*

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Mark 2:1-12

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. **2** They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. **3** Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. **4** Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. **5** When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, **7** "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? **9** Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? **10** But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, **11** "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." **12** He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Meditation – Who Is This Man? Forgiver and Healer [Lent-2]

They have been crowding around the door of the little house for hours, now. If you are the last to arrive, it may be too late. They have come to see the man who is standing just inside.

They have come to see him, to hear him—perhaps, even, to reach out and touch him.

They don't know who he is, but there have been stories. Stories of healings. Evil spirits, fevers, leprosy—leprosy, even—driven out. Healed. Gone. Maybe the stories are true. Maybe they're not. Maybe some, at least, are true. Maybe even one is true. Suppose....

Suppose one story of healing is true. Then whatever this man has, they want it. So they have come, pushing inside as they are able, closing ranks against anyone who would try to squeeze through to the front.

If you are not yet a part of the crowd, you might as well not bother coming.

But they are still coming. Crippled people, broken people leaning on crutches. The word is out. Look, there's even some poor fellow being carried on a mattress by his friends. It's too bad, because they are just wasting their time. Perhaps we should warn them that no one is going to let them through.

Oh, maybe someone will. No, I guess not. It's a solid wall of people, and no one will give an inch. It's a shame, really. But then, perhaps the Teacher wouldn't help him, anyway. Perhaps he wouldn't, or maybe—let's face it—maybe he couldn't.

Who knows? Maybe someone just made up all those healing stories. Maybe not one of them is true.

After all, there's no such thing as a person who can actually heal somebody else—just by touching that other person, or

saying the word, or whatever. Nobody can do that. Since the world began, no one has ever been able to do that. But people say that he can. I wonder....

Who is this man, anyway?

Who is this man? No one really knows. He grew up in Galilee—a backwoods town, if ever there was one—but, more than that, we're not sure. He's a bit of a mystery—a stranger, from Galilee. He's got a few people working for him now—fishermen (of course, we are familiar with them)—but more than that, we just don't know.

Oh, yes, we do know one other thing. We do know what happened when he called the fishermen to come and join him. He called them right out of their fishing boats—and they left their boats and went with him. Right then: not the day after, or next week, but right then. Leaving their boats and their nets on the beach. That part is really strange. It's almost as if they trusted him the moment they saw him. Trusted their lives to him.

It's almost like he is the man with the irresistible invitation. Now it seems he's also the man who can heal people. Or is he? Who knows? Let's watch and see what happens.

We could have been there that day. We could have been a part of that crowd, finding out for ourselves, for the first time, who Jesus was and is. What would we have learned if we had been there? Let's just rejoin the crowd and see what it feels like.

There's that man on the mattress again. His friends look pretty determined. They are going to get him in somehow. But, of course, there is no way. No one in that crowd is going to let them through.

Wait. What are they doing? They're carrying him up the stairs on the side of the house. A lot of good that will do them. There's no door up on the roof, unless.... Unless....

Of course! Unless they make a door in the roof. That's what they're going to do. Look! They're lifting off the tiles in the middle.... Careful! Don't drop any!... And they're going to take some ropes and lower him down through the hole.

Now what will happen? What will the Teacher do?

Maybe he'll pretend he doesn't notice. Or maybe he'll get upset. Maybe he'll feel like they're trying to put pressure on him, and he'll be angry.

No.... He's not angry. But surprised, maybe. It's not every day you get people coming to see you through the roof. But the Teacher isn't angry. In fact, he looks quite pleased.

“You really do have faith in me, don't you?” He's speaking to the man, but also to his friends looking down from above. “You really believe I can help, don't you?”

Then his eyes meet the hope-filled eyes of the man on the mat in front of him. The crowd is quiet now, attentive. What is about to happen?

The Teacher is speaking: "My son, your sins are forgiven."

The crowd is shocked. They can hardly believe their ears.

Why is that such a shocking thing for Jesus to say? Maybe because it's not what the man expects to hear: his problem, he thinks, as they all think — his problem, his only problem, is that he's paralyzed. It sounds as if Jesus has missed the point.

But Jesus' words are also amazing for another reason: no ordinary human being can say those words, ever, and actually mean them.

You see, it makes no sense whatever for me to say to you that I forgive your sins. If you, let's say, walk up to me and punch me in the face, I can say I forgive you for that, if I want to. But if you assault your neighbour next door, I can't forgive you for that. The neighbour you have hurt is the only one who can forgive you. It has nothing what so ever to do with me.

There is, of course, one other possibility. If you assault your neighbour next door, God could forgive you for what you did. Why is that? Because God is the one who has made the rules. God is the one who decides what is right and what is wrong, and what happens in the end to those who do wrong things. God is Ruler over all. So if God chooses to say you are forgiven, you are.

But no human being can ever forgive you for what you do wrong to your neighbour, unless—there is one other possibility—

unless that person is God himself, or at the very least, has the right to speak with God's authority.

"Who can forgive sins but God alone?" That's the immediate question of the religious teachers in the crowd that day. Exactly. They are right to ask that question. They are right to expect an answer. And they are right to be deeply troubled by what they have just heard. Either this man is speaking words that insult God—committing blasphemy, a crime worthy of death—or else.... Or else....

Maybe they didn't hear him properly. Maybe they misunderstood. They will wait and see if he takes back his remark in the next sentence.

But he doesn't. In fact, he repeats what he said with unmistakable clarity: "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take up your mat, and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat, and go home" [Mark 2:8b-11].

And the man does.

What's that all about? Who is this man, anyway?

He's someone who can heal another person who is paralyzed. They've just seen that. But he did that, he says, to prove

something else. He did it to prove he has the right to forgive sins.

Is that possible? Is it possible that Jesus can actually forgive sins?

Suppose that statement is true. Feel free, for a moment, to doubt everything else the Bible teaches—but suppose that one statement is true.

What does that mean? It means when we are standing in the presence of Jesus, we are standing in the presence of God. No one else who has ever lived has been able to say those words and mean them. No one ever will.

Who is this man, anyway? He is the only person who can forgive sins with the full authority of God. And he does.

Of course, you may say, it's still not clear why Jesus said this in the first place. Why didn't he just say to the man lying in front of him, "Be healed of your paralysis"?

We don't know, but we can guess. Maybe he wanted us to know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he can forgive sins. Then, when we come to him, as we will throughout our life, we can know with certainty that we are forgiven, too. We need to know that beyond any doubt. And we can.

But it is also true Jesus knew something about that paralyzed man's life that we might not be aware of. Jesus knew the man actually had two problems, two needs that needed to be met.

His obvious problem was that he was paralyzed. His hidden problem was that he was sinful. If Jesus was to make him entirely well, both needs had to be addressed.

Did the man's sin cause his illness? No, Jesus doesn't suggest that. What Jesus does suggest is that sin and sickness were so intertwined in his life, as they so often are in our lives as well, that both had to be dealt with if the man was to become well.

This sinful man is paralyzed. This paralyzed man is also sinful. Only Jesus could properly deal with either problem. He chooses to deal with both. The man is forgiven, and healed. He is set free into a whole new life. Only Jesus could ever set him free. And Jesus does.

Who is this man? He is the Teacher with the irresistible invitation. He is the healer of illnesses. He is the forgiver of sins. And it is our privilege to belong to him.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Dedication of Offering

For the love of the world, Jesus offered everything he had, even life itself. In response to this powerful gift of love, let us offer our gifts and our lives to God, as we dedicate our offering.

Loving Provider, we now ask that you bless and grow these gifts to your will and purposes. Amen

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

The LORD upholds all those who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down. (Psalm 145:14)

God of love, hear the cry of those who yearn for love;
fractured families, broken homes
neglected, unwanted, alone.
God of love, hear our prayer

God of justice, hear the cry of those who yearn for justice;
persecuted and oppressed,
exploited, ill-treated, broken.
God of justice, hear our prayer

God of peace, hear the cry of those who yearn for peace;
in battle zones and broken states,
frightened, fearful, anxious
God of peace, hear our prayer

God of healing, hear the cry of those who yearn for healing;
physical and spiritual
hurting, weakened, depressed
God of healing, hear our prayer

God of mercy, Hear the cry of those who yearn for mercy;
convicted, in need of your Grace,
contrite, humble, bowed down,
God of mercy, hear our prayer

May we know
Your peace, Your love, Your justice, Your healing and mercy
This day and all days we ask this in the words you taught us to pray saying:
Our Father, who art in heaven....

Hymn: “Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”

1 'Forgive our sins as we forgive,'
you taught us, Christ, to pray;
but you alone can grant us grace
to live the words we say.

- 2 How can your pardon reach and bless
the unforgiving heart
that broods on wrongs, and will not let
old bitterness depart?
- 3 In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew:
what trivial debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!
- 4 O cleanse the depths within our souls
and bid resentment cease;
then, bound to all in bonds of love,
our lives will spread your peace.

Commissioning and Benediction

We return to the world and our lives outside of these walls refreshed and renewed. We take with us the light of Christ, knowing that this light shines for everyone. This light shines love into places in need of healing. Let us go in peace. 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 next Sunday March 7th. Thank you.

Today we celebrate “Wear Red” Sunday with all donations going to the Good Samaritan Fund. Thank you for your support.

Service Times

Feb - Mar ~ St. Andrew's @ 9:30 p.m. Trinity @ 11:00 p.m.,
Palm Sunday - Communion will be held March 28th
Good Friday- joint service April 2nd will be at St. Andrew's at 10:00 a.m.
Easter Sunday - St Andrew's 11 a.m.; Trinity 9:30 a.m.
St. Andrew's Anniversary Service - May 2nd at 11 a.m. (joint service)
Trinity Anniversary Service - June 13th at 9:30 a.m. (joint service)
Wear Green – March 14th(both churches) - Funds from both will go to the Good Samaritan Fund.

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

Bill Bromell, David Miles, 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*