

BEACHBURG PASTORAL CHARGE
United Church of Canada
March 7th, 2021
St. Andrew's ~ 9:30 am Trinity ~ 11:00 am
Lent 3B

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

As long nights give way to light and winter sleep to fresh beginnings,
we come today to be reminded of God's love for us.

Like the green shoots of renewed life, stirring beneath the soil,
we welcome an awakening of God's word in our lives.

In this time of reflection and repentance,

we affirm our identity, we claim our security, as children of God.
Come, children of God, let us worship God.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, who equips us for the journey, but even more, accompanies us along the way,
bless us as we enter into your story, that we may know with our hearts and feel with our minds,
that we may become more fully enlivened in you. Amen.

Hymn: "Come, Children Join to Sing"

- 1 Come, children, join to sing: Hallelujah!
Praise to our Servant King: Hallelujah!
Let all with heart and voice, saved by God's gracious choice,
now in this place rejoice: Hallelujah!
- 2 Come, lift your hearts on high: Hallelujah!
Let praises fill the sky: Hallelujah!
Christ calls his people friends, the helpless he defends,
a love that never ends: Hallelujah!
- 3 Praise yet our Christ again: Hallelujah!
Raise high the joyous strain: Hallelujah!
The whole creation o'er let all God's love adore,
singing for evermore: Hallelujah!

Extinguishing the Third Lenten Candle

As we slowly dig ourselves out of isolation, we must be attentive to the things that clamors for our attention. Long hours of binge watching the TV, our cell phones that wake us from our sleep, those annoying voices that scam call us at all hours telling us we are wanted by the CRA, all excessive noise that occupy our time.

Where is the time and place to listen for the still, small voice of God? Sometimes it seems that God would have to speak in a whirlwind to be heard above the clamor! Listen now. There is a place of quiet rest, and it is the place where God dwells within you. Close your eyes. Be aware of the place. In Lent we journey to the parts of ourselves known only to God, beneath the clamor. Let the story of Jesus reach us there. Let it teach us wisdom in our secret hearts. (*Silent time.*)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge those still small voices that are extinguished by an uncaring world (*A candle is extinguished.*) Let us pray:
All: Draw us together in your love, O God. May our restless minds listen to your still soft voice that calls to us, as we continue to search until we find our comfort in you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Minute For Mission

Ministry of Music – St Andrew's

Prayer of Confession

There are some things I can only share with you, O God, decisions I have made that I regret,
bringing brokenness into my living.
I offer my brokenness to you, risen Christ, as confession.
I open myself to you, cleansing Spirit, asking for renewal and for wisdom.
Hear the prayers of my deepest self in my silent prayer (*a time of silent prayer*)

Words of Assurance

Thank you, loving God, forgiving Christ, transformative Spirit,
for you have put a new heart within me.
You didn't turn away but embraced my deepest self, loving who I am and
restoring your image within me, promising to never abandon me but to
always sustain me.
Thank you. Loving God. Thank you!

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Mark 10:13-16

The Little Children and Jesus

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Matthew 21:12-17

Jesus at the Temple

¹² Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. ¹³ "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,'^[a] but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'^[b]"

¹⁴ The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

¹⁶ "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, "'From the lips of children and infants

you, Lord, have called forth your praise'^[c]?"

¹⁷ And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Meditation - Who Is This Man? The One Who Loves Children
[Lent3]

Let us suppose, for a moment, that the Premier came to Pembroke. Suppose, after he met the mayor and the city council, toured the hospital, and had his picture taken at the Seniors Club, he was being interviewed in the little park surrounding the war memorial. Suppose he's standing there, a Canadian flag blowing in the breeze in the background, looking into the TV cameras and saying some really important things, when, all of a sudden, a two-year-old breaks away from her

mother standing on the sidewalk, runs across the grass to Mr. Ford, and throws her arms around him. What will happen next?

The TV crew will show signs of major distress for moving too slowly to prevent this disaster. Security people will grow out of the lawn. Mr. Ford's interview will be suspended, and everything will grind to a halt.

But what will happen after that?

The mother, embarrassed, will retrieve her daughter, and scold her, perhaps; Mr. Ford will smile kindly, joke about what happened, and then the filming will begin over again.

What will not happen? What we will not see, I think, is Mr. Ford calling a halt to the interview, reprimanding the film crew for trying to stop the little girl, and sitting down on the grass to play with her. That's not the way the world works.

Children are great—most people would agree with that—but often they don't matter much to the way things happen in the real world. You may have noticed, important people don't usually like to be bothered by little children. If you don't believe me just google "Get the baby out of here"

The disciples of Jesus, of course, had pretty much that same opinion. Adults were important, teaching big crowds of people was important, but—children? Jesus had no time for children. He had much weightier matters to concern him.

I wonder, that day, as Jesus stood teaching the crowd—I wonder, did the children somehow suspect that Jesus would welcome them? Were the children pulling on their mothers' arms, trying to slip around the disciples, so they could get to Jesus? I wonder if they knew, somehow, the way they would be received if only they could get there?

Of course, getting there was the problem. The disciples knew it just wasn't supposed to happen, and they were going to see that it didn't.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but Jesus is busy just now. We can't let you interrupt him. And—he's got no time for children, anyway. Please, just stay back behind that line in the sand, there. Thank you."

"No, sir, you're not allowed to bring children to Jesus. That's one of the rules around here. If you want to talk to him—just you, —he might have a few minutes in about—oh, a half an hour."

"Hey, you! Little boy, over there! Get back behind that line. You're not allowed over there where Jesus is!"

And, of course, the story could have ended that way. The disciples could have pulled it off. They could have—but they didn't. They didn't, because Jesus just happened to look around, and saw what was happening. And when he saw what was happening, he was visibly upset.

Some translations of the Bible say that he became “indignant.” Others use the word “angry.” Angry at whom? Angry at the disciples. Angry because they had it all wrong. Angry because they should have known better.

So what does he do? He stops teaching, turns his back on the crowd, and welcomes the children. He welcomes them without reservation: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” [Mark 10:14b]. The Kingdom of God belongs to—children? What sort of nonsense is that?

Let’s face it: how can children qualify for the blessings of God’s Kingdom? They don’t really understand about God, they don’t know how God wants us to live or what they should do to please him. They can’t present offerings or make statements of faith. Why would the Kingdom of God ever—ever—belong to children?

Exactly. Unless.... Unless, perhaps, the Kingdom of God is not something that you earn at all. Could it be that the Kingdom of God is like a gift that is offered, just for the taking? Could it be that the Kingdom is something that you receive through simple faith and trust and openness? Could it be that simple trust, and not our great accomplishments or our great intelligence, is the key?

Could it be that the best image of the Kingdom of God, properly received, is a two-year-old running and throwing her arms around Jesus, or a five-year-old shyly handing him a

picture he has just drawn—and by doing so suggesting, without a word being spoken, “I love you, and I trust you”? Could it be that is how God’s Kingdom comes?

If so, then children are miles ahead of the rest of us in being able to qualify.

Of course, that’s exactly what Jesus goes on to say: “I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it” [Mark 10:15]. No one enters the Kingdom, says Jesus, except little children—and those of us who learn how to be like them.

What a thing for Jesus to say. He has just turned society’s most cherished wisdom on its head. And he knew exactly what he was doing.

So now the children are coming to Jesus. The Bible says, *People were bringing their children to Jesus...[Mark 10:13]*. We’re not told who the “people” were. Tradition says that it was mothers. The original Greek of the New Testament actually implies that it may have been fathers—or perhaps, even older children, bringing the younger ones. It really doesn’t matter much; probably all three of those things were taking place at the same time. What matters is that the children came, and Jesus welcomed them.

So the children are coming to him. What will Jesus do?

What does it say? He took the children in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them [Mark 10:16].

And that is what his Church, when it has been faithful, has continued to do, in many different ways, ever since. A big part of what the Church is called to do is simply allow children to be blessed by Jesus. And while the world as a whole still may not prize children the way Jesus does, much of the modern world does treat children differently, because of him.

Archeologists have discovered a piece of papyrus from the city of Alexandria, in the year 1 BC, on which is written a letter from a man to his wife back home in some other city. The letter assumes that the man's wife, who was pregnant, will, by the time she receives the letter, have given birth to their child. The man writes this: "If it was a male child, let it live; if it was a female, cast it out." In the pagan world of that day, little girls were often unwanted, and were abandoned somewhere to die. But the early Christians refused to hear tell of that, and opened the first orphanages. Children were blessed from the very beginning because of Jesus.

Robert Raikes lived in eighteenth-century England, in the days when poor children did not qualify for an education. When children were not working in mines or factories, they mostly spent their time on the streets. Someone should be teaching them to read and write, Raikes argued, and so he set up classes for them. Because he was a Christian, his classes not only taught

reading and writing, they also taught the children about Jesus. And because the classes were held on Sunday, the only day when children were not required to work, he called his project “Sunday School.” And although this pandemic has set us back we still have Sunday School today. It is still a place where children learn about Jesus and experience his blessing.

And, in the Church, we baptize children. The sacrament of baptism is one further way that Jesus continues to bless children.

And it is our hope and prayer that children baptized in this place will grow into young adults who will one day choose Jesus for themselves, and welcome Jesus into their hearts, and live their lives in his service.

Our church must always be a place where children are blessed by Jesus—and a place where they know that they belong. It must always be a place that is child-friendly. It must always be a place where we, like Jesus, are prepared to set aside the “important” things we have planned so we can welcome children and bless them. Faithfulness to Jesus requires that we do no less.

I wonder: did the older children, on that day so long ago, remember some part of what happened when Jesus blessed them? Did they ever realize that they were the illustration to Jesus’ sermon, and that the adults were told they had to become like children to receive the Kingdom of God?

Perhaps they did. And—perhaps they were in that other crowd, cheering for Jesus just a few weeks later, on that day we now call Palm Sunday.

Perhaps, that day, they followed Jesus further than their parents did. After the parade was over, the adults who had been cheering for Jesus apparently went on about their business, and thought little more about him. But as Jesus went on to enter the Temple, with his enemies closing in on him and plotting his death, the children were still with him.

Matthew's Gospel says this: But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple area, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant. "Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him. "Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read, 'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise?'" [Matthew 21:15-16].

The children were still with him. The children still loved him. The children knew who it was who had blessed them.

Children usually do.

Who is this man? Do you know? Two weeks ago, he was the man with the irresistible invitation. He was also the man who could command the wind and the waves to be still. Last week he was the man who could heal sickness, and forgive sins. This morning he is the man who loves little children.

Who is this man? Do you know him? As we journey through Lent let us continue to find out. Thanks be to God.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Dedication of Offering

Jesus is the ultimate Healer, and he asks that we too transform lives. Asking that the hungry are fed, the lonely are befriended, and the broken are restored to wholeness. May these monetary gifts be part of that transformation as We offer them with humility and hope. Let us present our morning offering in prayer.

Steadfast God, we offer these gifts as a sign and symbol of our love for you and as our commitment to live as your people. Though us may these gifts become hope for those who are in despair and peace for those who are troubled. Through us may these gifts encourage compassion for all. Be our beacon and our hope. In the name of the giving Christ, we pray. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Lord, on this third Sunday of Lent, we reflect on how your teachings have shown us how to live and love, and we strive Lord to listen closely as you make known to us the path that will lead us into the future. Like our forefathers and mothers mentored us may we too support the little ones who are to follow.

Lord you are the source of every blessing, and we thank you for all good things this life offers us: For family and love, for health and food, for memory and hope. We thank you for the blessings and love that you bestow upon each one of us.

On the eve of International woman's day, we thank you for the mothers, sisters, partners, for the woman all over this earth who have taken the love that fills their hearts and showered that love on those around them.

We thank you for those women who have unlocked their inner power, to take up the challenges in their lives, to overcome their struggles, to show their immeasurable potency.

We thank you God for the woman who build up your church. Thank you for her heart. May you bless her. Fill her with incredible peace. Wrap her in your love. May she feel confident and worthy. Help her with anything she is

struggling with. Surround her with encouragement. Give her your precious wisdom. May she experience joy today and everyday.

As your children Help us all to share your love O Lord – with our family, the people in this congregation, the people in this community and the people of the world.

To the ones that our close to our hearts, for loved ones who struggle with health issues and grief, (we think especially of Audrey, Ruby Jan, Theresa) and for all those who are not able to worship with us today let us raise a silent prayer so that they too might feel your presence. (silence).

O Lord, secure in the fact that you are our strength and our salvation. we draw upon your strength in the words that you taught us to pray saying ...Our father who art in heaven...

Hymn: "Jesus, Came a Child like Me"

1 Jesus came, a child like me, so the face of God I'd see,
God is not left far away, God is with us every day.

Refrain Live, Jesus, near us, live, Jesus, with us,
live, Jesus, in us, come, live in us today.

2 Jesus came to show us all, ways to answer our God's call -
came to show us how to share, came to live with God's own care

Refrain

3 Jesus came God's work to do, came to live in me and you,
came to turn the world around till God's peace and love are found.

Refrain

4 Jesus came to show God's face,
live God's love, and be God's grace.

God lives now in me, in you, God's at work in what we do. Refrain

Commissioning and Benediction

Let us go forth then, in the power of our Living and Loving God,

Let us go forth with God's Presence deep in our hearts,

so that his power overflows into everyone we meet,

Let us go forth named in Hope and Love, sustained in these challenging

times.

Let us go forth as valiant men and women of justice and peace.

Let us go forth in the Love of Christ. Amen

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

All annual reports are due today. Thank you.

Mission and Service

We believe that as a church our purpose is to live out God's mission in the world. In the United Church of Canada the way we live this out is through our gifts for Mission & Service. Here is a link for more information:

<https://united-church.ca/>

You are at the centre of M&S. On behalf of your M&S enthusiasts, thank you for your Mission & Service giving!

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.

Painchard family, 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*