

BEACHBURG PASTORAL CHARGE
United Church of Canada
March 21st, 2021
St. Andrew's ~ 9:30 am Trinity ~ 11:00 am
Lent 5B

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, (X3), the joy of the Lord is my strength.

He gives me living water and I thirst no more, (X3), the joy of the Lord is my strength.

The joy of the Lord is my strength.

Welcome and Announcements

April 11th Service, Birthdays

Call to Worship

Did you know that this day, the first day of a new week, is a little Easter? When you count up the 40 days that constitute the Season of Lent, you need to leave out the Sundays to make it work. That's because the arithmetic of Lent is such that Sundays are not counted as part of the Lenten season. Every time we gather in worship on Sunday, it is a little Easter—an opportunity to gather in praise and in thanksgiving.

So Our walk through this Lenten time has paused for a moment as we gather in worship—on this Sunday morning—another little Easter.

Welcome to this time, as we draw together in the presence of the One who knows us and names us and who calls us to this community. Let us come into God's presence in prayer:

Opening Prayer

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.

Hymn: "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights"

- 1 Throughout these Lenten days and nights
we turn to walk the inward way,
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,
we live in hope till Easter Day.
- 2 The pilgrim Christ, the Lamb of God,
who found in weakness greater power,
embraces us, though lost and flawed,
and leads us to his Rising Hour.
- 3 We bear the silence, cross and pain
of human burdens, human strife,
while sisters, brothers help sustain
our courage till the Feast of Life.
- 4 And though the road is hard and steep,
the Spirit ever calls us on through
Calvary's dying, dark and deep,
until we see the coming Dawn.

Extinguishing the Fifth Lenten Candle

It's Sunday morning. This week past, with all its demands, is over. The coming week, with yet another round of challenges and demands, is not quite here. I invite you to close your eyes and be in the moment. No matter where you are in your thoughts and feelings—relieved about what you have accomplished, anxious about what's left undone, concerned about people or projects—no matter where you are in your journey this day—I encourage you to set all that aside and consider where you are right now. Whatever is true for you right now, in this moment, whether it be joy or sadness, gratitude or anxiety, let it come forward. When it is fully present, then listen . . . for God is present in these moments, too. God meets you where you are and calls you forward, moment by moment, guiding you slowly but surely toward transformation. (*Silent time.*)

....As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain caused by the lack of basic needs—lack of food, of shelter, of education, of healthcare, of love. *(A candle is extinguished.)*

Let us pray:

All: Loving God, we thank you that you are with us, and that we may call upon you no matter where we are, or what we are feeling. Keep us mindful of your presence and trusting in your promise—that you are working with us in the moment-by-moment unfolding of our lives. Amen.

Minute For Mission

Ministry of Music St Andrew's -

Prayer of Confession and Words of Assurance

O God, where do we find you, in a world that has been changed forever by a virus? Where all that we knew as normal, such as visiting loved ones, going to work, cruise-ship vacations, passing the peace at church, hugs, and handshakes have now been placed on the forbidden or caution list? We need something to replace all the things that we have lost. Where and how do we find our future? Where is our hope?

Words of Assurance

The days are surely coming, says God, when I will make a new covenant with you, one that you will be able to keep.

I will put it right inside you in your hearts and it will become second nature to everyone.

It will be as if the old days fell into the ground like a seed and died so that the new days would come with new hope.

This is our good news today. Thanks be to God!

LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Mark 8: 31-38

Jesus Predicts His Death

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

The Way of the Cross

³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life^[b] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."

Mark 10:32-45 Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

³² They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and the disciples were astonished, while those who followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him. ³³ "We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, ³⁴ who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."

The Request of James and John

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want you to do for us whatever we ask."

³⁶ "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked.

³⁷ They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."

³⁸ "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

³⁹ "We can," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to

grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Meditation – Who Is This Man? The One Who Chooses the Cross
[Lent5]

One of the most serious side effects of this pandemic is the rise in mental health issues. Distress centres across the country are seeing surges in calls directly related to anxiety around COVID-19 and its related financial and social consequences. In fact the Canada Suicide Prevention Service has seen an increase of 62% in active rescues (that is when responders call emergency services due to an imminent risk of harm or a suicide in progress) — and that trend seems to be accelerating.

I don't think there is anyone here who has not been touched by the tragedy of when a person has taken their own life. And our first reaction, whenever we hear of a suicide, is to say, “If only that person had asked for help. If only he had asked me—or asked anyone—we could have found a way to sort things out.” Whenever a person takes their own life, the decision they have made is hard for us to understand.

Equally hard to understand, one day long ago, was Jesus' announcement of a choice that he has just made that will shortly end *his* life. He will soon die, he tells his bewildered disciples—not of old age, or from accident or disease, but at the hands of other people. He will soon be put to death—tortured, and then crucified. It will happen at the request of the local religious leaders who both hate and fear what he is doing. It will happen, at the latest, in only a few weeks' time. It will happen in Jerusalem.

Most frightening at this moment is the fact that he is already headed toward Jerusalem. Even now, dark and threatening clouds are gathering. He is walking straight into the eye of the storm.

“What?” you say. “Is he crazy? Why would he do that? *It would be suicide to do that.* It's suicide to go up to Jerusalem if you know you are going to be killed when you get there.”

But Jesus intends to go.

The disciples, of course, don't know the details of what will happen, apart from what Jesus tells them, but they know what *could* well happen. They know Jerusalem. They know the religious leaders. They know how passionately their Lord and Master is opposed by his enemies. They have long known the danger, but—they also know how he can avoid the whole problem. Simple: *just stay away from Jerusalem!* Stay out in

the country, far from the centres of religious power and influence, and no one will bother him, ever. They know that.

So, of course, they just can't imagine what Jesus is up to. Doesn't he understand what he is doing? Yes, he understands exactly what he is doing. Well, then, he must be suffering from a major error in judgement: mistaken, confused, misled, troubled in some way. And when Peter, the most outspoken of the disciples, hears about Jesus' plan, he takes it on himself to straighten Jesus out.

He will not, of course, do it in front of the other disciples, for fear of causing embarrassment. So he takes Jesus to one side: "Come over here for a minute. I want to have a word with you." And in hushed tones, he tells Jesus that he simply must not go to Jerusalem.

"Get behind me, Satan!"

Peter never expected that sort of response. Anger. Jesus is angry. Upset. On edge. Peter has touched a raw nerve somewhere. "You do not have in mind the things of God, Peter, but the things of men."

The things of God? What's God got to do with it? Surely God wants us all to be sensible. Surely God doesn't want Jesus just walking into the line of enemy fire and being cut down—does he?

Who is this man? This man; the one who heals, and forgives, and loves little children; the one who dares always to speak the truth—*this* man is choosing to give up his life, to throw it away, to end it all—for nothing! And, strangely, he somehow believes God wants him to do it.

Why would Jesus choose to do that? Only two answers are possible: either he is hopelessly naive, or confused, or deluded—or *else* he knows exactly what he is doing, and in his own mind, he has no choice. Reading the story makes it clear that he does know what he is doing. That makes him a man who has no choice.

No choice. We know something of what that is like. If you come home to find your house on fire, and your child is somewhere inside calling for help, what will you do? You know what you will do. If someone asks you why you did it, you simply say, “I had no choice.” And everyone understands exactly what you mean. Somehow, sometime, we’ve all been there.

And Jesus is on the road to Jerusalem. He is there because he has no choice.

He has no choice because he loves us.

Of course, the disciples can’t yet see any sense to all of this. They don’t understand. They *can’t* understand—not yet. Jesus will try to explain—a little at a time, by and by, as they are able to hear. Further down the road, a few days later, he will say this: “The Son of Man [came]...to serve, and to give his life a

ransom for many” [Mark 10:45]. Still, they won’t really understand—not until it is all over.

Jesus must become a ransom—a ransom for many. That’s what he says. That’s what the cross is all about. That’s why Jesus has no choice.

Back in the late 90’s, guerillas in Central America captured an employee of a Canadian mineral exploration company. A few days later, the man’s boss, the owner of the company, contacted the guerillas with a surprising offer: if they would let his employee go, he would come and take the employee’s place. The offer was accepted: the employer walked up into the hills to become the captive, while the employee walked out of the hills a free man. The employer became the ransom for the employee. For weeks after, no one knew what would happen to him. Finally, his own release was negotiated, and he was able to come home.

When you become a ransom, you take the place of someone who is in captivity, and that other person is allowed to go free.

Jesus says he must go to Jerusalem and die to become a ransom for many—the many who include you and me. He will not pay an amount of money for the ransom—he himself will become the ransom. He will become the ransom, to set free those ensnared by the power of sin. And he will do it through his death on the cross.

What is the power of sin? It is a net, a web, that pulls people in and then won't let them go. Sin is not a take-it-or-leave-it proposition—it's more like an addiction: easy to get into, impossible to get free from. One of the evidences of sin is simple corruption in the things we see around us. And corruption seems a normal part of our world. You just have to Listen to the news: A gunmen who murders 7 women on account of their race. A former police officer convicted of child pornography. Scandals in government which seem to happen on a daily basis. Think about it:—people who are supposed to be representing the highest ideals our world has to offer—.involved in individual immoral acts, sinister webs that entangle and corrupt and destroy. That's sin.

And all of us, the Bible says, will wander into the web and become entangled. And we all—every single one of us—need to be forgiven and set free.

Jesus went up to Jerusalem because of sin. He went there to attack sin in the only way that could ever have any lasting result: by offering himself as a ransom. He said, in effect, "You can do whatever you want to me, provided that you allow everyone already caught up in your net to go free." So sin untangled its barbs and released us from its grasp, and Jesus stepped in and took our place.

He was chained up, slandered, and abused. He was flogged until his back was torn in shreds. The indignities included a

crown of thorns. He was taunted and spit upon. Then nails were driven through his wrists and his ankles, and he was hung up as an object of ridicule until he died.

But you and I suddenly found our chains had dropped off. We looked around, and the prison doors were wide open, and we were free to walk away. Jesus had become our ransom, and we were forgiven and able to begin again. It happened because Jesus chose the road to Jerusalem. And he chose that road because he loved us.

Freedom is a beautiful thing. Freedom makes us think of sunshine and blue skies. Freedom means knowing you are loved. Freedom means starting your life all over again. Freedom means the power of sin has been broken: not that we are no longer able to sin, or that we never again will want to sin, but that we are no longer caught up in its power. We are now at liberty to live in a totally new way. We now have a choice. For the first time, we can choose to live life the way God intends it to be lived.

But there is still a price to be paid. It's not the price of our forgiveness or our freedom. The price comes from living our lives for the one who has ransomed us. Jesus, alive again, now calls us to live our lives for him. And whenever we do that, we pay a price. So in that very same passage where Jesus tells his disciples the choice he has made, we read this: **Then [Jesus] called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and**

follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it” [Mark 8:34-35].

If we are to live in this new freedom, in this new life that Jesus gives us, we, too, have to take up a cross. Did you notice that?

Why would that be? Because now that we live for Jesus, the people who didn’t like him will have a problem with us, too. If we, like Jesus, live as people who speak the truth in love, those who do not appreciate the truth will not appreciate us. If we, like Jesus, make friends of the rejected and unimportant people of our world, the important people will distance themselves from us. If we, like Jesus, refuse to speak and act in ways that are politically correct, those who are politically correct will become upset with us.

Our new freedom has a price. But there is also a promise: “Whoever loses his life—or her life—for me and for the gospel,” says Jesus, “will save it.” When we offer our life in his service, we don’t lose it in the end: we get it back. Jesus gives it back. Try to seize life for yourself, control it, hold on to it and keep it, says Jesus, and you will lose it in the end. Offer your life to him, in his service—give your life away—and it will become yours once again, forever.

Who is this man who said that? He is the one who freely chose to die so we could be set free. He is the one who freely gave himself for our ransom.

*And what he told us is a promise we can build our life on.
Thanks be to God.*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

Dedication of Offering

Invitation

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.

-Glorious God, in the splendor of this day, we stand before you with joy-filled hearts. You have blessed us with great abundance and we are privileged to share. It is humbling to realize that the ministry of compassion, outreach and proclamation is possible because of these gifts. May the work begun today continue when we leave this place of sanctuary and refuge. We pray in the name of the life-giving Christ. Amen

Pastoral Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

As we seek God's blessing on other people, we renew our commitment to love friend, neighbour and enemy.
Let us pray.

—brief silence—

God our Friend and resourceful Helper, as we call to mind other people in their numerous needs, we pray that you will encompass them with your loving Spirit, and enable us as your church to find practical ways of ministering to them.

Somewhere today both near and far, children are whimpering after days of hunger, and their parents can only look on with the pain of a love that feels powerless.

Somewhere right now oppressed people are working like slaves for scant rewards while their exploiters are living in luxurious leisure.

Somewhere this morning people are facing major surgery, while others are being told that they have a disease for which there is no remedy.

Somewhere this day innocent people are suffering the chaos and brutality of war, homes are ravaged, bodies mutilated, hatreds enlarged.

Somewhere at this hour of prayer, some silent members of this congregation, and others in our faith community, may be secretly facing crises which threaten to overwhelm them.

Somewhere, near or far away, there are folk caught up in the raw grief of a recent death, so distressed that they wonder how they will ever be able to go on living.

We pray, O Lord, for those people whose names, or faces, or needs are resting upon our hearts –

Lord, hear our prayers for those in our family, our church, our community and our world that you bring to our hearts and minds at this time, we think especially of the 8 people. 7 women and 1 man killed this past week that you would comfort their families– as we hold them up to you

We pray, O Lord, that you would make us bold in our faith, help us make visible to all our brothers and sisters the reality of your power and care, showing them that your light shines around them and your word is close at hand-

We thank you loving God, that your mercies are never confined to the range of our prayers, but Through Christ Jesus our reconciler and healer all things are possible, through the words he taught us to pray..Our Father... .
Amen!

Hymn: "Take Up Your Cross"

1 Take up your cross, the Saviour said,
 if you would my disciple be;
 take up your cross with willing heart,
 and humbly follow after me.

2 Take up your cross; let not its weight
 fill your weak spirit with alarm;

Christ's strength shall bear your spirit up,
and brace your heart, and nerve your arm.

- 3 Take up your cross, heed not the shame,
nor let your foolish pride rebel;
your Saviour once accepted death
upon a cross, on Calvary's hill.
- 4 Take up your cross, and follow Christ,
think not till death to lay it down;
for only those who bear the cross
may hope to wear the glorious crown.

Commissioning and Benediction

Let your path from here be guided by love, loving each other and serving God in the world. In the name of Jesus Christ who is love, shows us how to love, and loved us first of all. Amen.

March bulletins are sponsored by: The Henscratchers in loving memory of Erma Johnson. **And by: Shirley Collins** in loving memory of Versil Collins.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 next Sunday

Good Friday- joint service April 2nd will be at St. Andrew's at 10:00 a.m.

Easter Sunday -Trinity 9:30, St Andrew's 11 a.m.; April 11th -

Joint M&S Service at St Andrew's at 11:00am

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)

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

Janie McLeese, 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*