St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth Sunday, April 26th, 2020 Season of Easter Series: Believe "Hope"

Introductory Song:

"Hosanna"

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. The lyrics are on the screen. Be patient with this piece. It starts out with a lot of black. Eventually it will play.) https://youtu.be/p8xHr8krAll

Verse 1

Hosanna hosanna Hosanna in the highest Hosanna hosanna Hosanna in the highest Verse 2 Glory glory Glory to the King of kings Glory glory Glory to the King of kings

Chorus

Lord we lift up Your name With hearts full of praise Be exalted oh Lord my God (1st) Hosanna in the highest (2nd) Glory to the King of kings

Call to Worship

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.

I well remember them,

and my soul is downcast within me.

Yet this I call to mind

and therefore I have hope:

Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."

Prayer of Invocation

Brightness of God's glory and exact image of God's person, whom death could not conquer nor the tomb imprison, as you have shared our frailty in human flesh, help us to share your immortality in the Spirit. Let no shadow of the grave terrify us and no fear of darkness turn our hearts from you. Reveal yourself to us this day and all our days, as the first and the last, the living one, our immortal Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Hymn:

"For All The Saints" (Lyrics)

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. The lyrics are on the screen.) <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10aBgaMcOvM</u> 1. For all the saints who from their labors rest.

who Thee by faith before the world confessed; Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest. Alleluia, Alleluia!

2. Thou wast their Rock, their Fortress, and their Might; Thou, Lord, their Captain in the well-fought fight; Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true Light. Alleluia, Alleluia!

3. O blest communion, fellowship divine! We feebly struggle, they in glory shine; yet all are one in Thee, for all are Thine. Alleluia, Alleluia!

4. The golden evening brightens in the west, soon, soon to faithful warriors cometh rest. Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest. Alleluia, Alleluia!

5. But when there breaks a yet more glorious day; the saints triumphant rise in bright array; the King of glory passes on His way. Alleluia, Alleluia!

6. From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast, through gates of pearl streams in the countless host, singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Call to Confession

When we gather to praise God, we remember that we are people who have preferred our wills to his. Accepting his power to become new persons in Christ, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Responsive Prayer of Confession

Lord, you said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command." Forgive us our lukewarm love and our disobedience.

- Lord, you said, "You may ask for anything in my name." Forgive us when we think we need to solve our own problems.
- Lord, you said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." We confess that our lives are often consumed by worry and anxiety.
- Lord, you said, "If you remain in me and I in you,
- you will bear much fruit."

Forgive us our barren lives, Lord.

Lord, you said, "You must testify, for you have been with me." We confess, Lord, that we have been too often silent.

- Lord, you said, "Love each other as I have loved you."
 - In this and in so many other ways,

we confess our failures and shortcomings. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Christ has been raised from the dead,

the first fruits of those who have died.

For since death came through a human being,

the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being;

for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

(1 Corinthians 15:20-22)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

Responsive Reading Psalm 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

2 Lord, hear my voice.Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

- 3 If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?
 - 4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.
- 5 I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.
 - 6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption.

8 He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Ministry of Music

"I Go To The Rock"

(Click on the link below to listen to the Ministry of Music. I chose this piece of music because I refer to it in my sermon. Stephen) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJb2596sQ18

Scripture Reading:

Titus 2:1-14

13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, **14** saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." **15** And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. **16** People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. **17** Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. **18** God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. **19** We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, **20** where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Hymn:

"Speak, O Lord" (Keith & Kristyn Getty)

(Click on the link below to play the video. Lyrics on screen.) https://youtu.be/ubRIJj8xkds

Speak O Lord as we come to You To receive the food of Your holy word Take Your truth plant it deep in us Shape and fashion us in Your likeness That the light of Christ might be seen today In our acts of love and our deeds of faith Speak O Lord and fulfill in us All Your purposes for Your glory

Teach us Lord full obedience Holy reverence true humility Test our thoughts and our attitudes In the radiance of Your purity Cause our faith to rise Cause our eyes to see Your majestic love and authority Words of power that can never fail Let their truth prevail over unbelief

Speak O Lord and renew our minds Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us Truths unchanged from the dawn of time That will echo down through eternity And by grace we'll stand on Your promises And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us Speak O Lord till Your church is built And the earth is filled with Your glory

"Hope is the Anchor of Your Soul" Believe Chapter 25



Amanda Todd was well known to Canadians. Eight years ago we saw her picture in the paper; we heard her name on the radio. The 15 year old teen from Port Coquitlam, British Columbia became the poster child for despair when she posted a 9 minute video on YouTube that went viral. Entitled "My Story: Struggling, Bullying, Suicide, Self-harm", it is the story of her situation in life. Her downward spiral began when a predator convinced her to expose herself and take a picture and send it to him. He then posted that picture on the internet. You can imagine the embarrassment and humiliation she experienced. She couldn't escape it. In was in the school hallways and the internet highways. There was embarrassment everywhere she went. Her family relocated and started her in a new school, but still she couldn't escape the text messages, the calls, the bullying and the hounding that went on day after day. Amanda was already a very fragile person, but this experience just did her in. In the 9 minute video that she posted on YouTube, which has had over 13 million hits, she never says a word but just holds up cards. Those cards carry phrases like "I need help" and "I have no one". At the very end of the video she wrote: "My name is Amanda Todd." And then she showed a picture of her arm where she had been cutting herself. She admitted to drinking bleach and trying to take her life, but even failed at that. Two days after she posted the video she tried to take her life again and succeeded. It was October 10th, 2012. You see, Amanda Todd had run out of hope.

I have had times of despair in my life. I have had times of deep despair, but I have never experienced the depth of despair that Amanda Todd experienced. It is not because I have a sunny disposition and always look at life as if the cup is half-full, rather than being half-empty. And I don't think it is because I am a particularly strong individual. No, it is because outside the frail person who is Stephen Dunkin, I have a source of hope that is bigger than I am. So I am not talking about hope in the sense of being an optimistic person. I believe that hope must be grounded in something that is real.

Our Key Question (Believe p. 401) for today asks: "How do I deal with the hardships and struggles of life?" This is an important question that every one of us needs to know the answer to. Life is no picnic. Yes, there are good times and there are bad. Very few of us need to know how to handle the good

Key Question

times. It is times of adversity – times when we feel driven to our knees and are not sure if we are able to get up – these are the times we need to know how to deal with. Sooner or later each one of us is going to open up the cupboard door and reach up onto the shelf, only to find that the shelf is bare and there is no hope. The director of a medical clinic tells this story. A terminally ill young man came in for his usual treatment. There was a new doctor on duty that day who was lacking in what we would call a "caring bedside manner". In a rather casual way, he said to the young man, "You know you won't live out the year." It was a cruel and thoughtless remark. As the young man left the clinic, he stopped at the director's desk and wept. "That man just took away all my hope." he blurted out. "I guess he did." said the director. "Maybe it is time you found a new source of hope." Was the director being as unfeeling as the doctor? I don't think so. I think that he was just trying to direct the young man to put his hope in something more permanent than a mere mortal doctor.

What do we do when our usual source of hope runs out? How do we cope without hope? Certainly, as people face the fallout out of this present pandemic, there is a need of hope on a national – even a worldwide – scale. Maybe you are reading this today more out of desperation than in search of inspiration. If so, then you need to hear what God has to say about hope. Our Key Idea (Believe p. 401) succinctly sums up the only true source of hope. **"I can cope with the hardships of life because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ."** I know what you are thinking. "Stephen, you say that everything is to be found in Jesus Christ. Love is found in Jesus. Joy is found in Jesus. Jesus is the source of peace. Last week you even told us that true self-control is rooted in Jesus. And now you are trying to tell us that hope is found in Jesus because that is what the Bible teaches.



There is a beautiful Scripture on the topic of hope and it is found in the New Testament book of Hebrews. It also just happens to be our Key Verse for today. Found on page 401 of Believe or Hebrews 6:19-20 it reads: <u>19</u> We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, <u>20</u> where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. In verse 19, we

have three words that we want to focus on – hope, anchor and soul, because our text is telling us that hope is an anchor for the soul. I expect that most of you recognize the object in the picture as an anchor. You know what an anchor is. Maybe you have even used an anchor. Maybe you have thrown an anchor over the side of a boat and felt the tug on the rope when those hooks dig deep into the sand or catch on a rock or boulder. There is nothing worse than being in a boat in a storm and the wind is blowing you towards shore. Your motor is dead and so in desperation you heave the anchor over the side. Unfortunately, the anchor doesn't find a firm hold. It doesn't dig deep into the sand. It doesn't get caught on a boulder. Instead it just drags along the bottom and the wind drives you closer and closer to

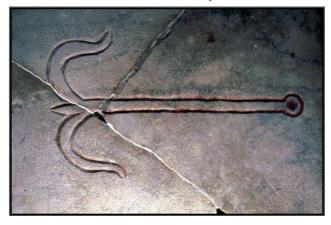
the shore. An anchor that drags along the bottom is useless. But our text speaks of an anchor that is **firm and secure**. **We have this hope as an anchor for the soul**. This anchor that we have finds a grip. We can feel the rope go taunt in our hands. We can relax because we are now anchored to something that is stronger than the storm.

We have an anchor in life and it anchors something more valuable than any boat. It anchors your soul. Now the soul must be important because Jesus said: <u>36</u> What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? <u>37</u> Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? (Mark 8) So the soul must to be extremely important. In fact, I would say that your soul is precious. You may remember that God formed Adam – the first being – of the dust of the earth. And when Adam was formed or shaped, God breathed into him more than oxygen. The breath of God and the Spirit of God are one and the same thing. Here in Genesis 2

the full process is described. **7** Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7) Or as it says in the King James Version: "and man became a living soul". In other words, when God breathes the breath of life, he releases the essence of the divine into our being. He places within us a divine spark.



What is your soul? Well, we can *define* the soul as being made up of your mind, will and emotions. But definitions are kind of dry. So let me describe it this way. It is your soul at work when you hold a baby – maybe your own child – for the very first time and you get all choked up. It is your soul at work when you contemplate a glorious sunrise or sunset and you ask, "Why am I here? What is the purpose of life?" It is your soul at work when you feel like you can't run another step, but something deep inside of you drives you forward to the finish line. Now your soul – the divine spark within you – needs to be anchored to something and that anchor is hope. The letter to the Hebrews was written to people facing persecution. It was written to give people courage in hard times. In keeping with our metaphor we would say times were tough and the waters were rough. And these believers needed an anchor to hold them secure so they didn't drift. Something I did not realize until I started



preparing for this message was that the anchor was a key Christian symbol during the time of Roman persecution. If you were a first century Christian hiding in the catacombs of Rome and talking to others about your friends who had been thrown to the lions, crucified, burned at the stake, or being turned into a living torches to light up one of Nero's garden parties, then the symbol of the cross would have been of little comfort to you. You needed something to

encourage you, and the cross did not do that. You would have known what the cross stood for. What you needed was an anchor. An anchor would have reminded you that in Jesus you were firm and secure. In Jesus there was hope. And so tombs of believers dating back to the first century displayed an anchor alongside an epitaph. Then from around 100 A.D. we have this item. St. Clement of Rome was banished to the Crimea by the Emperor Trajan. Banishment did not silence Clement. Instead he converted the people of Crimea. When Trajan found out about the conversions he ordered that St. Clement be tied to an iron anchor and be drowned. The anchor was a great symbol for those early Christians to remind them of their hope.

So the writer of Hebrews tells us to anchor our souls – the very essence of ourselves – to something that is greater than we are. This is where hope comes from. If you want hope, you make sure that you are anchored to a solid rock. Who is this Rock? Where is this rock located and how do we find it? Let's jump back a few verses and look at the context of our text.

13 When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, **14** saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants." **15** And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised. **16** People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. **17** Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. **18** God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly

encouraged. <u>19</u> We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. (Hebrews 6)

Notice the reference to Abraham. To help us understand what it is to be hope filled people, we are taken back to Abraham. Abraham was 75 years old when he received this astounding promise from God. God said, "Look at the stars and realize that someday your descendants are going to outnumber the stars." This was a major promise to a guy who didn't have any kids. Yet Abraham chose to believe God. I like this comment by Max Lucado. "Abraham goes down in history,



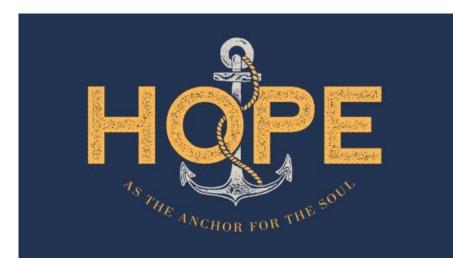
not because of all the great accomplishments or great monuments he built. He goes down in history as the father of faith." Because God said it, he believed it. And he had to believe it for 25 years before anything happened. It is one thing to believe a promise. It is something else again to wait for 25 years before that promise becomes reality. Abraham is our hero because he stood firm on the promise of God. Here is what Romans 4 says about Abraham:

<u>18</u> Against all <u>hope</u>, Abraham in <u>hope</u> believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be." <u>19</u> Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. <u>20</u> Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, <u>21</u> being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

Abraham anchored his soul to the sturdy promises of God. Which raises the question, "When it comes to anchoring your soul to the promises of God or the circumstances of life, which do you choose?" I am not asking this question flippantly. In this present crisis, some of you are facing some very difficult life circumstances. But this morning God is saying to you, "Don't anchor your soul to the unsteady promises of life, because in the end, intentionally or unintentionally, they will let you down." No, you need to reach out beyond this world and anchor your hope to the person of Jesus Christ. He is that solid Rock. A gospel song (by Dottie Rombo) puts it this way:

Where do I go When there's no one else to turn to Who do I talk to When no one wants to listen Who do I lean on When there's no foundation stable I go to the Rock I know that's able I go to the Rock I know that's able I go to the Rock <u>Chorus</u> I go to the Rock of my salvation Go to the Stone that the builder rejected Run to the Mountain and the Mountain stands by me The earth all around me is sinking sand On Christ the solid Rock I stand When I need a shelter when I need a friend

I go to the Rock



Before we finish, I want us to go back and look at our key verses again in Hebrews 6: <u>19</u> We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, <u>20</u> where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. I am sure that someone is wondering about this business

of the "inner sanctuary" and "the curtain". What is that all about and what does it have to do with hope? Well, under the old covenant the place of worship was the first the tabernacle and then the temple. It was divided into sections. There was the Holy Place where only the priests were allowed to go. That was where the sacrifices were offered. And then there was the Most Holy Place that is referred to here as the **inner sanctuary behind the curtain**. The Most Holy Place was separated from the Holy Place by a curtain and that was the place where God dwelt. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter it and then only once a year. It was where the Ark of the Covenant was kept and anyone other than the High Priest who entered it died. The High Priest entered the Most Holy Place only once a year to make atonement for the sins of the people before the mercy seat. This ritual went on year after year. Now the reason we have such hope in Jesus as our Saviour is that under the new covenant, we have no need for a high priest to go through this ritual every year. This hope which anchors our soul firmly and securely goes behind the curtain and enters the Most Holy Place in the person of Jesus on our behalf. Through his onetime sacrifice on the cross he has made atonement for our sin for all time. Simply by trusting in him, our sin is dealt with for all time. There is nothing better than this as a source of hope. As Christians, it is in our nature to hope.

One night on a farm in Arizona, a fierce desert storm struck with rain, hail and high winds. At daybreak, feeling sick and fearing what he might find, the farmer went to survey his family's loss. The hail had beaten the garden into the ground; the house was partially unroofed; the henhouse had blown away and dead chickens were scattered about. Destruction and devastation were everywhere.

While standing there dazed... He evaluated the mess and he began to wonder about the future. About that time the farmer heard a stirring in the lumber pile that was the remains of the hen house. A rooster was climbing up through the debris, and he didn't stop climbing until he had mounted the highest board in the pile. That old rooster was dripping wet with most of his feathers blown away. But as the sun came over the



eastern horizon, he flapped his bony wings and proudly crowed. When the morning sun appeared on the horizon amidst all the chaos and devastation... that beat-up, featherless rooster could still crow. Why? Because... it was his nature to crow!

In the same way, it is in our nature to hope. Tim Rollen, a pastor in Clovis California tells this story. "On Friday, February 12th, 2010, 20 hours before my mother would die, I whispered into her ear that I did not want to leave her, and go share in 2 funerals. With confidence in her eyes she whispered back, "You go share HOPE with those who may not have any, we already have more than we need!" My mother's cup of hope was running over and it spilled out on me!"

In the midst of this pandemic we have abundance of reason to hope, because the rock upon which our salvation is built is Jesus Christ. In him is to be found not only our hope, but the hope of the whole world.

Hymn: "My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less" (Norton Hall Band)

(Click on the link below to play the hymn.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVE-xXFDOwg

 My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus' blood and righteousness I dare not trust the sweetest frame But wholly lean on Jesus name

<u>Chorus</u>

On Christ the solid rock I stand All other ground is sinking sand All other ground is sinking sand

- When darkness veils His lovely face
 I rest on His unchanging grace
 In every high and stormy gale
 My anchor holds within the veil
- His oath His covenant His blood Supports me in the 'whelming flood When all around my soul gives way He then is all my hope and stay
- When he shall come with trumpet sound Oh, may I then in him be found Dressed in his righteousness alone Faultless to stand before the throne

On Christ the solid rock I stand All other ground is sinking sand...

Offering

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer. This note from our treasurer.

E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. <u>standrewsperthoffering@gmail.com</u> Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (eg Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Offertory Prayer

Dear God, we offer you our praise. We offer you our hearts. We offer you our money. We offer you our lives. Thank you for everything you give to us. **Amen.**

Prayers for the People by the People – please continue to pray for members of our congregation and others that you personally know of.

- For all the families and those impacted by the terrible tragedy that took place in Nova Scotia last weekend.
- Those on the front line in the fight against COVID-19, especially the nurses and PSW's in our congregations. (Destiny Bowes, Glenda Gould, Connie Young, Tracey Laffine)
- Those who are out of work and struggling financially to pay their bills.
- Praise the Lord for the safe arrival of Nora Jean Echlin on Tuesday, April 21st at 1:13 AM. Nora Jean weighted 8 lbs 7 oz and was 22inches long. Congratulations to Holden and Peri-Ann Echlin on their first child and to David and Tressa Oliver on their first grandchild.
- Stuart McKim & Louise Burke
- Ann Savage
- Dave Crawley & Paul Thompson
- University and College Students (Holly, Caitlin, Colleen, Jonathan, Liam, Caleb and Issac) & Angus Funston
- **Shut-ins and Nursing Homes (**Elva Fair, Audrey Ferrier, Germaine Vanderklok, June O'Hara, Gwen Travis, Lyn Harrington, Bing Jeun, Jo Mott, Ruth McTavish)
- Pray especially for Carolina Suites (2 deaths) and Lanark Lifestyles where COVID-19 is present. Pray for Lyn Harrington (Shelagh Stephen's mother) and Nellie Larabie (Marlene Larabie's mother-in-law) are in Carolina Suites.
- St. Andrew's as we carry on without benefit of regular services and seek to minister in a virtual, yet broken world.
- Rick & Colleen Richardson
- Richard Hendry
- Joanna Savage has a large cancerous mass on her liver. Treatments and appointments are being delayed as a result of COVID-19.
- Joan Palmer was home for almost a week following a visit in hospital in Kingston. As of Monday, she was back in Perth hospital again unable to breathe. Joan passed away on the evening of April 22nd. Remember Larry and their family in this difficult time of loss. A Celebration of Life has been postponed to a later date.
- Adam Dowdall Sharon Dowdall's grandson has diabetes which has been hard to control of late.

Closing Hymn:

"Alleluia! Alleluia! Give thanks to the Risen Lord"

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics will be displayed on the screen.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2U1MuOCHon4

Chorus

Alleluia alleluia Give thanks to the Risen Lord Alleluia alleluia Give praise to His Name <u>Verse 1</u> Jesus is Lord of all the earth He is the King of creation <u>Verse 3</u> We have been crucified with Christ Now we shall live forever

Verse 2

Spread the good news o'er all the earth Jesus has died and has risen <u>Verse 5</u> Come let us praise the Living God Joyfully sing to our Saviour

Benediction

As the father sent Christ Jesus, so now you are sent. Go then, with your hearts rejoicing, as those who have touched the marks of truth. Endure suffering, forgive sins, and love the Lord.

And may God's power be your protection; May Christ Jesus reach out to you with words of peace; And may the Holy Spirit fill you with indescribable and glorious joy.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.



On Palm Sunday and on Easter Sunday the Churches of Perth Rang Their Bells (Click on the link below to play)

St. Andrew's Perth- Bell
Ringing (short version)St. John's Perth-Bell
Ringing (short version)St. James
Bell Ringing

<u>St. James Perth -</u> <u>Bell Ringing</u> (short version)

St. Andrew's and St. John's are continuing the Sunday 12-12:10 pm ringing of the bells as a reminder of the Easter Season as well as a call to pray for all aspects of the current crisis and everyone affected. You are encouraged to do the same!