

Worship on August 29, 2021

Order of worship

We Gather

- Welcome and Announcements
- Call to worship
- Praise song – Change my heart O God
- Prayer for worship + Lord's Prayer
- Words of Assurance

We Listen

- Prayer for illumination
- Scripture: John 17:20-26 (MSG)
- Sermon: My Precious Church
- The Prayer for the people of God

We Respond

- Offering – Spirit of the Living God

We Serve

- Benediction

Ponder Upon Questions

Announcements:

. Welcome! Grace and peace to you all who are worshipping God with us live right now. This is Sunday, August 29th, 2021. As we worship and praise our Father God, may his love and peace and comfort be upon us.

. There is Bible study after worship. Please stay for sharing lives, thoughts, and prayer for each other.

. Worship volunteers are always welcome.

. Thank you for your support with your gifts. God may use our gifts and us for this world and our community.

As we come into the presence of our God, let us calm down our hearts and minds, and focus on our Lord.

Responsive Call to Worship

One: Holy God, you call us to worship.

All: In your presence, we seek truth and forgiveness.

One: Holy God, you call us to worship you.

All: In your presence, we seek the grace to forgive one another.

One: Holy God, you call us to worship you, heart, body, mind and soul.

All: So, we gather to offer you our prayer and praise with joyful thanks.

Praise song – Change my heart O God

Prayer For Adoration and Confession

Faithful God, In the world of your creation, you made the seasons to change, the sun to shine and the rain to fall, the vines to bear fruit and the fields to produce good things. You alone are God, our strength and security; you alone bring us rest and comfort. We turn to you as the source of all life, marvelling at your wisdom, seeking to learn your purpose for our lives. We offer you our praise and thanksgiving, for you are the God who made us, the Christ who mends us, and the Holy Spirit who brings us life.

Faithful God, even though we know you are the Source of our lives, we confess we often turn our backs on you. We speak and think in ways that deny our loyalty and love for you; we ignore our own needs and the needs of others. We harbour anger and say things that cause others pain. In your mercy, Lord, restore us to right relationships with you and with one another.

This time we come to you in prayer that you taught us how to pray: (The Lord's Prayer:)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Sisters and brothers in Christ at St. Andrew's, Jesus said, While it is true that we have all sinned, it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love in Jesus Christ. To all who humbly seek the mercy of God, I say, In Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven. Be at peace with God, with yourself, and with one another.

Prayer for Illumination:

God of Word and Wisdom, send your Holy Spirit upon us today as we hear the scriptures read and interpreted. Help us be doers of your Word, not mere listeners, so that our lives reflect the truth we meet in Jesus Christ, your living Word. Amen.

Scripture: John 17:20-26 (MSG)

20-23 I'm praying not only for them But also for those who will believe in me Because of them and their witness about me. The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind— Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, So they might be one heart and mind with us. Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me. The same glory you gave me, I gave them, So they'll be as unified and together as we are— I in them and you in me. Then they'll be mature in this oneness, And give the godless world evidence That you've sent me and loved them In the same way you've loved me.

24-26 Father, I want those you gave me To be with me, right where I am, So they can see my glory, the splendor you gave me, Having loved me Long before there ever was a world. Righteous Father, the world has never known you, But I have known you, and these disciples know That you sent me on this mission. I have made your very being known to them— Who you are and what you do—And continue to make it known, So that your love for me Might be in them Exactly as I am in them. **"This is the word of the Lord / Thanks be to God."**

SERMON: My Precious Church

Today's sermon title is "My Precious Church."

When you hear “My precious..” Are you thinking what I am thinking?

Gollum in the movie The Lord of the Rings.

It might be a little awkward to compare Gollum with God, but Gollum gives us a very clear picture of how to treat “My Precious.”

Gollum’s whole heart is toward the ring. He lives for it and he does anything to get the ring. We are to learn the attitude of treating our precious treasures from him.

First of all, do we know what is the one thing that is most precious for us? What would be one thing we cannot lose all through our lives? Ponder upon this question this week. What is My Precious?

For God, his “My Precious” is church, his people. God constantly focuses on us, nothing else. His full attention is on us. When we have a close look at the process of God’s creation, we find that God prepared the place for us before he created us. When God created us, there was nothing else we needed. Everything was ready for us.

And when we read the Bible, it is repetition of our running away and God’s chasing us. The whole Bible is simple. We run away; and God runs after us. God never stops. God is almost stupid. He never gives up what he wants. Although we always fall, always selfish, always weak, always make mistakes, always turn away from God, God still loves us. God is not mad at us, but God is mad about us. What do you think about this? Is God sick and tired of us and being frustrated? In the Old Testaments, God seems pretty angry. He even curses his own people. But, when we read the Bible carefully, he gives numerous chances for us to come back to him. If we turn to God, God will never abandon us.

If you are a parent, think about your baby, if they are grown up or little. We love them, but they make us frustrated. Sometimes, even though we love them, we hate what they are doing. We have emotional struggles. But, God is beyond our imagination, beyond our understanding, and beyond our ability. Whatever we do and wherever we are, God takes us in his arms. God always embraces us. God’s love never changes.

Because of his love for us, he can never let us go.

Today’s scripture is the prayer of Jesus for his people. It is Jesus’ prayer for church.

V20 I’m praying not only for them But also for those who will believe in me Because of them and their witness about me. The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind
This is Jesus’ aim for us that we have one heart and mind. Jesus continues, **“Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, So they might be one heart and mind with us.”**

Can you imagine that Jesus wants us to have the same kind of relationship as his relationship with his Father God? Jesus prays that we are with Jesus and Jesus is with us. Let the same mind be in us. That is the dream of Jesus for us. Jesus’ prayer continues, **“Then the world might believe that you, [God] in fact, sent me. The same glory you gave me, I gave them, So they’ll be as unified and together as we are— I in them and you in me. Then they’ll be mature in this oneness, And give the godless world evidence That you’ve sent me and loved them In the same way you’ve loved me.**

Jesus is the bridge. Jesus' prayer extends. The main focus is to have the same heart and mind as Jesus himself, but the next step is to be in God's glory, through Jesus as the connecting bridge. His prayer is the invitation for us to be in his glory. Moreover, this prayer becomes more extensive. We are to have the same heart and mind as Jesus, so that we stay with Jesus in God's glory, so that through this glory, we make Jesus known to the whole world. After we experience the glory of Jesus, we are becoming the invitation for the whole world who does not know Jesus yet. We are becoming the display of God's love and glory. Like Jesus became the bridge between us and God, now, we are to become the bridge between the godless world and God.

This is church. This is our life's purpose. This is Jesus' prayer for us.

Let us go back to our mission statement. **Our Reason Why – This is why we as a community of believers in Jesus Christ exist in this place and time. It is our purpose, cause, or belief.**

Our reason why St. Andrew's Aurora exists is:

- **To be in relationship (with God and with one another)**
- **To feel cared for and connected**
- **To belong**
- **To participate with others to serve a larger purpose**

Do you see the prayer of Jesus for his church in our mission statement?

YES! I see Jesus' prayer in why we exist. Simply speaking, it is to be one with Christ and to be one with one another, so that we become God's display of his love and grace. This is the purpose of God's people in this world and this is what we are supposed to be as God's precious church.

To maintain our purpose as church, experiencing oneness and harmony with each other, Rick Warren gives us few advices.

- 1) Focus on what we have in common, not our differences.
- 2) Be realistic in your expectations.
- 3) Choose to encourage rather than criticize.
- 4) Refuse to listen to gossip.
- 5) Practice God's method for conflict resolution. – this is Matthew 20:15-17, **“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won’t listen, tell the church.”**
- 6) Support your pastor and leaders.

We are all sinful and selfish. Because we are all weak, it is impossible to keep oneness with our own strength and desire. So, keep this in mind that Jesus is in our hearts and the Holy Spirit is helping us in all ways. Remember that we are God's Precious.

Let us pray.

Gracious and loving Father God, we thank you that you treasure us. We are your precious. We are loved and we are cared for by you. You listen to our prayers and you listen to our smallest sighs. With your almighty power, you care for us.

And thank you for calling us and made us your church. We are your people. Although we are weak and although we fall, you still hold us. You never give us up. Thank you.

As you cherish us and as you want us to be in your glory, we want to have the same desire as

yours. Fill our hearts with love for ourselves and for your people. Help us love ourselves and love others, so we truly live out your prayer. Thank you. In Jesus' precious name, we pray. Amen.

The Prayer for the people of God

Loving Father God, we are standing before your presence with humble hearts. We lay down our wants and needs. As we pray to you this time, fill our hearts with your wisdom, so that we may discern from what we need and what we want. And align our prayers to your heart.

We thank you for these beautiful days. We enjoy your creation day by day. As we enjoy your creation, help us see you through what's around us. Let our hearts be amazed by what you are providing for us. You are the great God and you are the awesome God.

Gracious and merciful Father God, we pray for your church, our church. Thank you for calling us together and making us one church. Help us have one heart and mind as Jesus prays for us. To make it happen, help us grow spiritually and personally. We need you every day in our daily tasks and in our relationships.

We also pray for the people who are suffering from their sickness. Place your hands on them now and with your Holy Spirit, with your healing power, heal them and help them recover from their physical pain. Also, help our people with their emotional suffering, relational challenges, and other life's difficulties. You are our God and you are our Lord. Help us put you in the centre of our lives.

He's got the whole world in his hands. It's a children song. We sing that you are the Lord of the whole world. But, when we see what's happening around the world, we worry. We are scared. Corona virus, wild fires, climate crisis, political crisis in Afghanistan and Haiti, and hatred filled culture around the whole earth. We are quick to be angry and we are slow to listen and understand each other. We become more selfish and more fast-tempered. Mindlessly, we throw out garbage, without care, we are destroying your creation and ourselves, and our children's future eventually. Have mercy upon us. Help us our thoughtlessness. Give us wisdom, so we know what to do. Give us courage, so we act on what we need to.

Place your heart in us and lead our lives. You are our Lord and Master. Thank you God for loving and being with us. In Jesus' precious and powerful name, we pray. Amen.

Invitation to the offering: This is the time for offering. The Letter of James records that every generous act comes from God. So let our offering today reflect God's generosity and our gratitude for every gift we have received through God's faithfulness. Let us pray.

Offering prayer:

Great is your faithfulness, O God, and so we offer to you a portion of what we have received through your unfailing goodness. Bless these gifts and our lives, so that your love is proclaimed to the world through all we accomplish in the name of Jesus Christ, our Friend and Saviour. Amen.

Praise song – Spirit of the Living God

Now, it is the time for us to be sent to the world. Who are we? We are God's precious. We are cherished. We are treasured by God. God cannot stop loving us. Let us desire the life that makes our God proud. We are God's precious.

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, And the Love of God, And the intimate fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all, now and always. Amen.

Ponder Upon Questions:

1. What is the one thing most precious in my life?
2. He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot love (Jim Elliot)
This means to give my life to Jesus to gain eternal life. What is my response to this?
3. What do I do to keep my precious?