

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
January 31st, 2021
Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

(Based on Philippians 2:9-11)

Thanks and praise to you,
Jesus Christ, King and Lord of all,
given the name above every other name

**Jesus, King and Lord of all,
we worship and adore you.**

King of righteousness, King of peace,
enthroned at the right hand of Majesty on high

**Jesus, King and Lord of all,
we worship and adore you**

Great high priest, living for ever to intercede for us;

**Jesus, King and Lord of all,
we worship and adore you.**

Pioneer of our salvation,
you bring us to glory through your death and resurrection;

**Jesus, King and Lord of all,
we worship and adore you.**

Every knee bows to you;
every tongue confesses, you are King of kings and Lord of Lords,
to the glory of God the Father.

Prayer of Invocation

Most wonderful God,
the beauty we see in Jesus
is your beauty veiled in human flesh;
the love we witness from Bethlehem to Golgotha
is your love contracted to a single life.
If Christ's life is so holy as to fill us with wonder,
how much more would your unveiled beauty
leave us overwhelmed and trembling?
You are more than the eye could bear,
more than the mind can ever fathom.

Yet you have so carefully made us
that although we cannot fathom you,
we can yet love you.

Gratefully we bring our little lives to you,
asking that our worship may arise from love and be shaped by love,
and be directed towards that larger loving which is our soul's desire.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Hymn: "At The Name Of Jesus" (King's Weston)

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. The lyrics are on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKDOOf-shPQ>

1. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him King of glory now;
'tis our God's good pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning t'was the mighty Word.
2. Humbled for a season to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came.
Faithful, Jesus bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death he passed.
3. Bore it up triumphant with its human light
Through all ranks of creatures, to the central height;
To the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast;
Filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.
4. Christians, this Lord Jesus shall return again
With the Father's glory o'er the earth to reign
For all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow
And our hearts confess him King of glory now.

Call to Confession (Psalm 139:23-24)

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
try me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Prayer of Confession

Almighty God,
you despise nothing you have made,
and you forgive the sins of all who are penitent.
Create in us new and contrite hearts,

that, truly repenting of our sins
and acknowledging our brokenness,
we may obtain from you, the God of all mercy,
full pardon and forgiveness,
through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon (Isaiah 1:18)

“Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD:
though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red like crimson,
they shall become like wool.
Sisters and Brothers, your sins are forgiven; be at peace.

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 Select Verses from Isaiah 45

5 I am the LORD, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;

I equip you, though you do not know me,

**6 that people may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.**

7 I form light and create darkness;

I make well-being and create calamity;

I am the LORD, who does all these things.

**9 “Woe to him who strives with him who formed him,
a pot among earthen pots!**

**Does the clay say to him who forms it, ‘What are you making?’
or ‘Your work has no handles?’ ”**

11 Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel,

and the one who formed him: “Ask me of things to come;
will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands?”

**12 I made the earth and created man on it;
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.**

18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!):
“I am the LORD, and there is no other.

**19 I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness;
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek me in vain.’
I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right.**

22 “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!
For I am God, and there is no other.

**23 By myself I have sworn;
from my mouth has gone out in righteousness
a word that shall not return:**

‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

24 “Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me,
are righteousness and strength.

Ministry of Music: “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me” (CitAlight)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zundjUFazfg&feature=youtu.be>

1. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer
There is no more for heaven now to give
He is my joy my righteousness and freedom
My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace
To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
For my life is wholly bound to his
Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine
Yet not I but through Christ in me

2. The night is dark but I am not forsaken
For by my side the Saviour he will stay
I labour on in weakness and rejoicing
For in my need his power is displayed
To this I hold my Shepherd will defend me
Through the deepest valley he will lead
Oh the night has been won and I shall overcome
Yet not I but through Christ in me

3. No fate I dread I know I am forgiven
The future sure the price it has been paid

For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon
 And he was raised to overthrow the grave
 To this I hold my sin has been defeated
 Jesus now and ever is my plea
 Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free
 Yet not I but through Christ in me

4. With every breath I long to follow Jesus
 For he has said that he will bring me home
 And day by day I know he will renew me
 Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold my hope is only Jesus
 All the glory evermore to him
 When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat
 Yet not I but through Christ in me (Repeat)

Ending

When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat
 Yet not I but through Christ in me
 Yet not I but through Christ in me

Scripture Reading:

Philippians 2:9-11

9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

God of Jesus Christ,
 give us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Christ,
 so that the eyes of our hearts might be enlightened.
 Help us to know the hope to which you have called us,
 the riches of the glorious inheritance in the saints,
 and the immeasurable greatness of your power at work in us.
 Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

“From Humility to Soaring Exaltation”
Philippians 2: 9-11

As a boy, I liked things that moved. I doubt that I was any different than most other boys. I had trouble sitting still and I was usually on the move. As I think I've told you before, my Uncle Bill used to say, "Stephen, you've got ants in your pants!" I couldn't just stand still at the end of the dock at the cottage. No, I had to pick up stones and see how far I could throw them out into the lake. Sometimes I liked to see how high I could throw them into the air. Occasionally I would use my slingshot to make those stones go higher and further. I also had a bow and arrows. I used it for target practice, but I also liked to shoot out into a field and watch the arc of the arrow as it rose into the sky and then fell to the ground. My friends and I used to say, "Whatever goes up must come down." We weren't aware of anything that violated the law of gravity.

So I doubt I would have really understood what Paul says in Philippians 2:5-11 which provides us with a clear picture of how Jesus had to go down before he could come up. Last week I took you out onto the back deck at my parents cottage so that we could see the stages or steps Jesus took in his Incarnation – in becoming fully human. Let us run through those steps just to remind ourselves of what the descent or humility of Jesus looked like. We begin on the level of the deck itself.

Step "0": Jesus was in **the form of God**. That is he was in very nature God. He was "true God of true God".

Step 1: He did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped. He was already God but he did not consider equality with God something that he had to hold onto.

Step 2; Jesus **emptied himself**. He emptied himself of the rights and privileges of Deity.

Step 3: Jesus emptied himself **by taking the form of a servant**.

Step 4: Jesus **7 ... emptied himself, ... being born in the likeness of men**. Jesus, born in Bethlehem's manger, was born in the likeness of sinful flesh. That birth did not exclude his humanity, but only his sinfulness.

Step 5: **8 ... Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death**. This is the example that Jesus set for us. This is what humility is all about. It is dying to self. It is not just being willing but actually choosing to **10 become like him in his death**. (Philippians 3)

Step 6: Jesus **8 humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a**

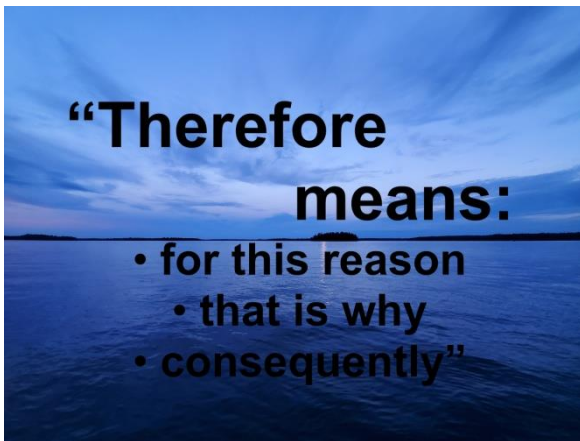


cross. You can't sink any lower than that, for the Bible says, "**Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.**"

So, Jesus, who as equal with God was higher than anyone can possibly imagine, sank lower than anyone ever has. The sinless Son of God became sin for us in order that we might become the righteousness of God. The stairs leading from the deck let us visualize six very steep steps that Jesus took as he journeyed from a place of preeminence and equality with God to the very depths of hell itself. It was an exercise in humility and it was of his own doing. No one forced him to do it. No one humbled him. Herod did not humble him. Pilate did not humble him. Caiaphas the high priest did not humble him. The Romans did not humble him. Jesus **humbled himself**. Jesus Christ, the God-man was the humblest man who ever lived. No one else has even come close.

Today we see a dramatic turnaround as we turn to Philippians 2:9-11. We begin by looking at the implications of one word – **Therefore**. This is a very important word in the New Testament. The Greek word **διο** appears over 50 times. It means "that is why", "for this reason" or "consequently". What follows this word, as John Piper points out, is one total, massive, all inclusive exaltation. Every knee in the universe will bow and every tongue in the universe will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. Everything flows through this one word **therefore**.

I have only been a witness in a trial once and that was by accident. I have only ever served on a jury once. I have watched many trials on TV but they have not impacted me nearly as much as my personal experience in a courtroom. In the first trial, there was only the judge present. There was no jury. I was not there as a witness but rather to support an elderly lady whose car had been totaled on the main street of the little town of Creemore. Her car was parked and was rammed by another vehicle in front of the manse. The young man driving the car that caused the collision



accidentally mentioned my name before the judge, calling me Rev. Dunkin. I was only a student minister so technically I was not a Reverend. However, when the judge heard my name, he called me to give testimony. I heard the crash and was the first person on the scene. At the end of the trial, the Judge summed up his reasons for his decision, one of which was that he believed my testimony over the story that the other young man presented. After his summation he said to the defendant "**Therefore** I am charging you with careless driving."

The word “therefore” marks the transition from all six steps that we have already looked at. Because of his humility, his perfect obedience, his suffering and his death, **9 Therefore** (for this reason, consequently) **God has highly exalted him**. Jesus came from God and perfectly fulfilled his mission. God rewarded him with exaltation. This is confirmed in several other places.

Hebrews 13: **20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant**. This tells us that God **brought again from the dead Jesus by the blood of the eternal covenant**.

Because of his humility, his perfect obedience, his suffering and his death, the blood of Jesus is powerful. It is by that blood that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Hebrews 2: **9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone**.

Why is Jesus crowned with glory and honour? **Because of the suffering of death**.

The last verse is from the lips of Jesus himself.

John 17: **17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again**.

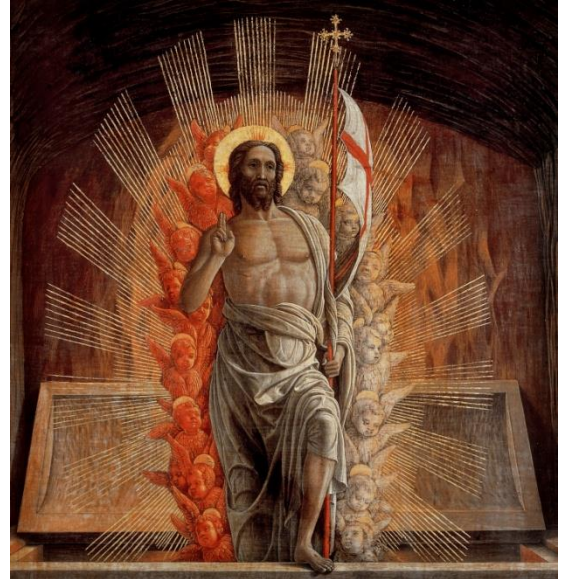
We need to remember that the point of this whole passage is not just theological but also practical.

Philippians 2: **3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others**.

In this call to humility and putting the interests of others above our own, we are to look to Jesus. He is our example. Jesus says to those of us who would follow him in Luke 18: **14 ... For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted**.

R. Kent Hughes describes what brought about the supreme exaltation of Jesus in this way.

Though Christ's exaltation was a once-for-all event, it was the culmination of a process that began with the resurrection. He had gone down, down, down through his incarnation, passion and death (which wrought such spiritual compression), but then in a final explosive upsurge the grave could no longer hold him. Thus, we have that brilliant moment on Sunday morning when Jesus came right through his grave clothes in the sacred body of his humiliation, glorious and radiant. And in the following moments, says Matthew, [2](#) ... **there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.** (Chapter 28).



We are told that Jesus spent 40 days on earth following his resurrection at which time he ascended into heaven. His resurrection and ascension were capped by his exaltation to the right hand of God the Father (Acts 2:33) where he now rules (Hebrews 1:3). The great message of the exaltation of Christ is not that he gets a well deserved rest, but that he reigns!

I want you to notice that Paul does not just say that Jesus was exalted. Most translations read like this: [9](#) **Therefore God has highly exalted him.** What we need to realize is that there is a word used here that is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It is *hyperypsoo*. You don't have to know any Greek to pick up on the



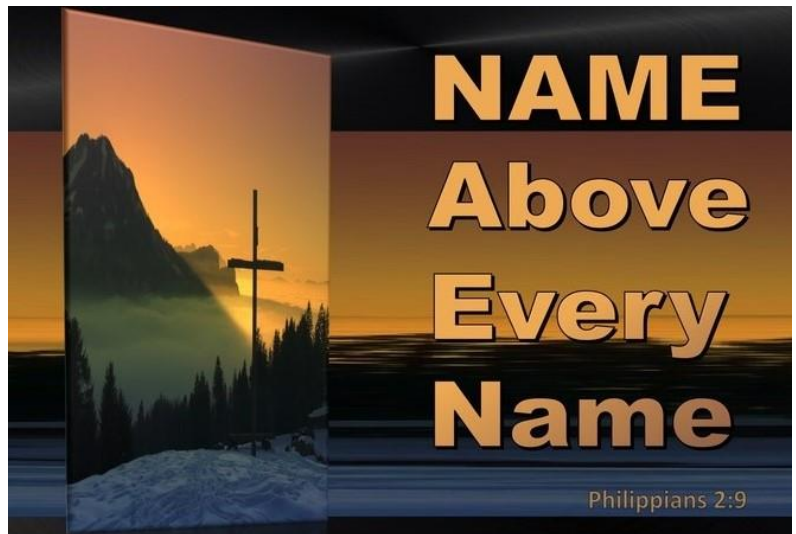
first part of this word – hyper! Jesus was **hyper-exalted**. He was super-exalted or we could say that his was a soaring exaltation. The NIV translates this passage puts it best. [9](#) **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place.**

The take home for us here is that Jesus Christ reigns supreme forever. His was a soaring exaltation. God the Father exhibited his great power when he [20](#) ... **raised (Jesus) from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, [21](#) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion**

(Ephesians 1). As Christians who stand firmly on the truth and validity of God's Word, this is not just a theological fact. It is a historical one!

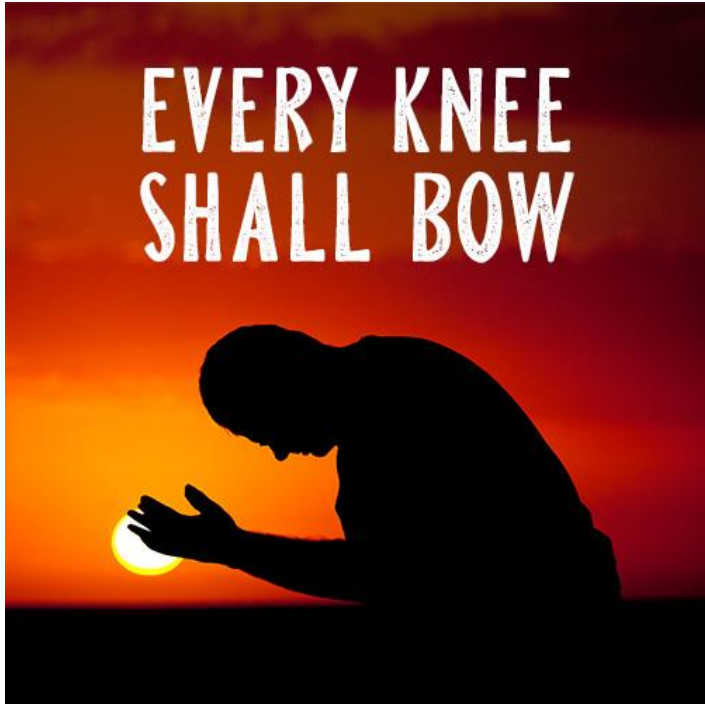
Along with the soaring exaltation of Jesus following his Resurrection and Ascension, Jesus receives a new name. **9 Therefore God ... bestowed on him the name that is above every name.** Now Jesus has many names with which we are familiar – Immanuel, Wonderful Counsellor, Prince of Peace, Ancient of Days, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Word, the Light, the Bread of Life, and the Alpha and Omega to point out a few. We need to ask, “What is the special name referred to in verse 9?” The clue to this lies in that this is **the name that is above every name.** It is greater than any other name that has been conferred on Jesus. In fact, it is God's own name – *kyrios* or Lord. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it was used to represent Yahweh, the God of Israel. In verse 11 we read, **“and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** Jesus is Lord (*kyrios*) Yahweh. Giving Jesus the name “Lord” (Yahweh) is the ultimate of all honours. In Isaiah 42 God says, **8 I am the LORD; that is my name.** No one else bears this name. This is the awesome name of the covenant God of Israel. It is **the name that is above every name.** What an event that must have been when Jesus entered heaven to soaring exaltation and a new name.

However, our passage takes us beyond Christ's past and present exaltation to a future exaltation that God has ordained. God has already exalted Jesus Christ to the highest place at his right hand and given him the name that is above every name, so that at some time in the future **10 ... at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in**



heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. These words are an echo of Isaiah 45. **23 By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.** This is a declaration of God's absolute sovereign rule in history and salvation.

I now want to clarify what is being said here when Paul declares that **“every knee shall bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth”**. The reference is to rational beings in the universe. **“In heaven”** is a reference to angelic beings. **“On earth”**



“On earth” refers to human beings. **“Under the earth”** refers to human beings who have died and to fallen spiritual beings. No knee in the universe will be excluded. That means that every angelic being, every human being and every demonic being will bow the knee before the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Some will do so willingly and gladly but some will do so grudgingly. This is a certainty and it is sealed with Yahweh’s oath in Isaiah 45 as we have seen. **23 By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.**

This tells us that regardless of our spiritual state, regardless of what you believe, regardless of whether you are sympathetic to Jesus or diametrically opposed to him and his teaching – there is coming a day when you will fall on your knees before him. The only question is: “Will you choose to submit your life to him now in full freedom; or will you wait until you have no choice and are forced to submit to him by the sheer power of his glory, power and Deity? I would suggest that it is much better to do it now. It is a little bit like having a scrap with another kid when you are young. Say you have a falling out with your best friend that ended up with a fight in the school yard. What is the best course of action: to willingly settle your difference with your friend? Or would you prefer to have a teacher force you to shake hands and say you are sorry against your will?

Confession with the tongue is the spoken counterpart to bending the knee. Every knee will bow [11](#) and every tongue confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father**. What does it mean when someone says that “Jesus Christ is Lord”? **Jesus** means “the Lord saves” and it is the name given to the Son of God at his birth. No wonder the aged Simeon, as he held Jesus in the temple on the day of his circumcision said: [29](#) “**Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; [30](#) for my eyes have seen your salvation**”. (Luke 2)



Christ means “the Anointed One” or “Messiah” and speaks to us of the fact that this one to whom we are confessing is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. In 1 Corinthians 15 we read: [3](#) **For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, [4](#) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures...**

Lord here represents the divine name Yahweh which is a public declaration of his sovereignty. In Isaiah 45, the greatest chapter on the sovereignty of God in all of Scripture, Yahweh declares through the prophet:

[5](#) **I am the LORD, and there is no other ...”**

[6](#) **... I am the LORD, and there is no other.”**

[18](#) **For thus says the LORD ... “I am the LORD, and there is no other.”**

[14](#) **“Surely God is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.”**

[22](#) **“Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”**

This is our confession when we gather for worship, that “Jesus Christ is Lord.” Ultimately it will be the confession that is offered by every believing heart and by every unbelieving heart as well. The first will cry these words out of joy and thanksgiving; in worship, honour, adoration and praise. The later will confess it in dismissal submission and despair. Every fallen spirit will confess it. Caiaphas will confess that Jesus Messiah is Yahweh. Herod will confess it. Pilate will confess it. Nero will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Hitler and Stalin and Mao-Tse-tung will

confess it. Every soul from every age will **confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

My years at St. Andrew's, Perth have been good years. I am thankful for the over four years that God has permitted me to serve you. However, as this pandemic carries on into its second year, I have wondered at why God called me to serve St. Andrew's at this time. This is a job for a younger man, not one who has gone beyond his "best before" date. I am a preacher by calling and nature. I do best if I have a congregation in front of me when I proclaim the Word of God. I find it hard turning out written sermons and services only. There is no feedback – no response from the congregation and this deeply affects me. Then there are the things that concern me. Will people return to church once this pandemic is over, or have we lost some who came before forever? The pandemic has dried up minister's looking for a call to a new congregation. What will the availability of ministers be like once it is over? Will St. Andrew's be so weakened by this downturn that we will not be in a position to be able to call a new minister?

These questions and many others make it difficult to carry on the work of ministry. Yet, the message of this passage, which clearly proclaims God's sovereignty, gives me courage to continue. God does not call us to produce results. He calls us to faithfully and humbly serve him and others. 1 Peter 5 tells us: **5 ... Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."** **6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.** The race set before us is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. Those that endure will be those who put their trust in Christ alone and wait for God's appointed time to lift them up. And even if everything fails in this life, then we have learned today that there is a day coming when at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. I can say "Amen!" to that. Let us continue to walk forward in these difficult times utterly convinced of the supremacy of Jesus Christ. He who willingly experienced the ultimate humiliation has now experienced a soaring exaltation and sits at the right hand of God the Father on high.

Hymn: **"All Hail The Power of Jesus Name"** (Tune: Diadem)
(Click on the link below to play the hymn. The lyrics are on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WVSYGBBfi8>

1. All hail the power of Jesus' name
Let angels prostrate fall

Let angels prostrate fall
 Bring forth the royal diadem
 And crown Him crown Him crown Him
 Crown Him Lord of all

2. Ye seed of Israel's chosen race
 Ye ransomed of the fall
 Ye ransomed of the fall
 Hail Him who saves you by His grace
 And crown Him crown Him crown Him
 Crown Him Lord of all

3. Let every kindred, ev'ry tribe
 On this terrestrial ball
 On this terrestrial ball
 To him all majesty ascribe
 And crown Him crown Him crown Him
 Crown Him Lord of all

4. O that with yonder sacred throng
 We at his feet may fall
 We at his feet may fall
 We'll join the everlasting song
 And crown Him crown Him crown Him
 Crown Him Lord of all

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. standrewspert offering@gmail.com 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.

Invitation to Offering

With thankfulness we give in gratitude and joy.
 With prayerfulness we give in sacrifice and love.
 With hopefulness we give in commitment to God.
 Let us present our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

Responsive Offertory Prayer

Mighty God and Father, you overwhelm us with your great mercy.
 At the time of our greatest need you surprised us with your wondrous love.
 Jesus offered his life for us to remove our dreadful curse.
 As you draw us into this renewing relationship of love,
 may we respond with gratitude
 as we offer the substance of our souls to continue the ministry of Christ.
 For his name and glory, we pray and present our gifts. **Amen!**

Call to Prayer (Psalm 32:6-7)

Let all who are faithful offer prayer to you;
 at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters shall not reach them.
 You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble;
 you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

Pastoral Prayer

O great God, glorify yourself in all the earth.
 Be glorified in creation, be glorified in your church,
 be glorified in our worship here this very morning.
 Though we are so small and you are so grand,
 help us nevertheless to magnify your name.
 Help us to make your name and the nature of your grace
 larger and easier for people to see.
 Help us to live and to worship in such a way
 that we become like magnifying glasses
 through which our neighbors and coworkers and children and friends
 can see you come into focus in ways they may not have seen before.
 When people ask for an explanation of the hope we have,
 give us the words to answer thoughtfully and well.
 When people wonder out loud who Jesus is and why he matters,
 help us to reply in words that will echo the sweetness of your gospel.
 Help us to magnify your name, O Lord,
 so that you may be glorified in all the earth.
 Father, ours is a world that could use more glimpses of glory
 and fewer glimpses of the hell to which our sin so easily leads.
 Ours is a world that needs more of the gentle words of your Son, Jesus,
 and fewer angry words shouted by ruthless dictators on platforms
 or by husbands who raise both voice and fist against women
 they vowed once to cherish.
 We need your glory, Lord God, so that we can aspire to be more like you

and less like the selfish, self-indulgent creatures we have become in our sin.
We need the glory of your grace in a world bent on revenge,
the glory of your truth in a world in love with lies,
the glory of your holiness in a world filled with tawdriness,
the glory of your resurrection life in a world mired in death.
Make us transparent to you so that,
because of your Spirit at work in us,
this world can become a better place,
a more kingdom-like place, a shalom place.
Bless our congregation.
Heal those who are ill;
comfort those who are grieving;
reassure those who feel troubled
and frightened by what the future may hold.
Bless the leadership of our congregation.
Anoint them by your Spirit, and may they really feel that anointing.
As they do sometimes difficult, sometimes joyful, but always holy work,
may they sense your anointing.
Be in the words they speak, the cards they send, the calls they make;
be in the meetings they attend and the committees they work on.
Make each worker in this place a bearer of Pentecost's flame,
warming hearts, providing hope, lending comfort,
and so, in all these ways contributing to your glory in this congregation.
Be with all of us as we continue to worship you now
and as we prepare ourselves for the week ahead.
For children who climb aboard buses and study at school,
be with them and keep them safe
even as they day by day deepen their awareness
of the world of wonders you have made, Creator God.
Protect them from COVID-19 as they are back in the classroom.
For college students, taking on-line classes, writing papers and taking exams,
give them fresh recall of what they have labored so hard to learn.
And for any here today who face an anxious week,
grant extra measures of your Spirit's presence and balm.
For those who worry and who have much to worry about, lend peace.
For little children who have been asked to grow up too quickly
because a parent is sick or not present in the home,
deal gently with these young ones, heavenly Father.
Scoop them up in your divine arms
so that they will know your embrace on those nights

when they find themselves crying into their pillows.
 Be also with all the lonely people.
 Be with the widow and widower who has been alone for many years
 and who we all think has done so well,
 but who alone knows how much her heart still aches more days than not.
 Be with the one who has so long wanted marriage
 but who has not found such companionship,
 and for whom the years seem to be slipping away.
 Be with divorced people who still cannot believe most days
 that their fondest dreams have been shattered
 and who now live with both the regret and the loneliness of it all.
 Be with those who so wish they could find someone to talk to but cannot,
 those who wait for the phone to ring but it stays silent,
 those who work so hard on tasks that no one ever mentions or comments on.
 Be with those who are hungry for a word of gratitude that never comes,
 those who search crowded rooms for a familiar face
 but who can never seem to find a friend.
 Be with all the lonely people—
 be their friend when this world's friends fail,
 be their companion when they feel that they walk life's journey alone,
 be their word of kindness and hope
 when the world seems able only to be gruff and brusque
 as it brushes past lives that don't seem to count.
 As we close our worship now, fill us with yourself.
 As we sing, lift us ever higher to yourself.

Loving God, we offer these prayers,
 joining our voices to the great chorus of those
 who sing your praise and depend on you alone.
 We long for that day when all your children
 will live in your peace and praise your name.
 Until that day, give us sturdy patience and enduring hope,
 rooted only in Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn:

“I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QISk0oYYpuk>

I want to walk as a child of the light
 I want to follow Jesus
 God set the stars to give light to the world
 The star of my life is Jesus

Chorus

In Him there is no darkness at all
The night and the day are both alike
The Lamb is the light of the city of God
Shine in my heart Lord Jesus

I want to see the brightness of God
I want to look at Jesus
Clear Sun of righteousness shine on my path
And show me the way to the Father

I'm looking for the coming of Christ
I want to be with Jesus
When we have run with patience the race
We shall know the joy of Jesus

Benediction

Go now, and heed God's message.
Never forget God's wonderful mercy and kindness.
Welcome the freedom that is won in truth,
but never use your freedom to undermine others.
See that your words and actions are worthy of praise.

And may God uphold you in a lasting covenant.
May Christ Jesus free you from all that would harm you.
And may the Holy Spirit nourish you in wisdom and faithfulness.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.