

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 5th, 2020
Series: Jesus, Our Prophet Priest and King

Introductory Song: "All Glory, Laud and Honour"

(Click on the link below to hear the hymn. The words will appear on your screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3a8fTTrAdE>

Responsive Call to Worship

I sought the Lord, and he answered me;

he delivered me from all my fears.

Those who look to him are radiant;

their faces are never covered with shame.

Taste and see that the Lord is good;

blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.

Fear the Lord, you his holy people,

for those who fear him lack nothing.

Prayer of Invocation

Lord Jesus, we realize that during this crisis, we walk with you through a time of uncertainty, fear of illness and for some the valley of the shadow of death. May we find our lives centred in you. Each one us carries within us a fatal flaw called rebelliousness that caused both our first ancestors and us to be banished from the Garden of Eden. Yet built into each one of us is a longing for the Garden of Paradise. Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Remember us in your kingdom. We come before you today to hear you speak words of care and compassion for each of us. We know that you alone have the words of eternal life. Amen.

Hymn: "Alleluia! Sing To Jesus"

(Click on the link below to hear the hymn. The words will appear on your screen.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2O_b_aqrPw

Call to Confession (Hebrews 10:19-22)

"Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, having heard your Word,
 we thankfully remember the life
 of our Lord Jesus Christ on this earth.
 Yet we also acknowledge our failure
 to respond earnestly and faithfully to his witness.
 We often mistake Jesus for a mere earthly king,
 friendly companion, or problem-solver,
 failing to see him as the ruler of all creation.
 We do not appreciate the depth
 of his passion and sacrifice on the cross,
 failing to acknowledge him as our way of salvation.
 Even in this Lenten season, we have not walked faithfully
 in the way of Jesus Christ.
 Forgive us, we pray, and bring us ever more fully
 into the joy of union with Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon (Hebrews 10:23-25)

"Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

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 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

**Serve the LORD with gladness!
Come into his presence with singing!**

Know that the LORD, he is God!

**It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.**

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!

Give thanks to him; bless his name!

**For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.**

Ministry of Music

“It Is Well With My Soul”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYrL9ea1XUg>

Scripture Reading:

Hebrews 1:1-4

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. **3** He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Hymn:

“He Knows My Name”

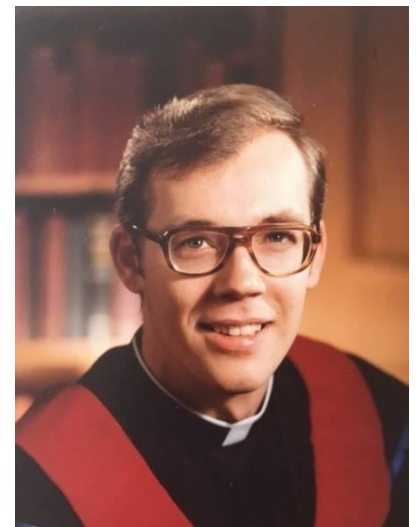
(Click on the link below to hear the hymn. The words will appear on your screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXsiWoyjw60>

“Everybody Needs A Priest!”

Hebrews 1:1-4

It was May 14th, 1976. The day is clearly fixed in my memory because it was the day of my ordination by the Presbytery of Brampton. As I stood at the front of Claude Presbyterian Church, the Moderator of Presbytery read the words of the Ordination Service. In a few minutes he would ask me the questions that were put to every ordinand, but he began by reading what is known as the Preamble.

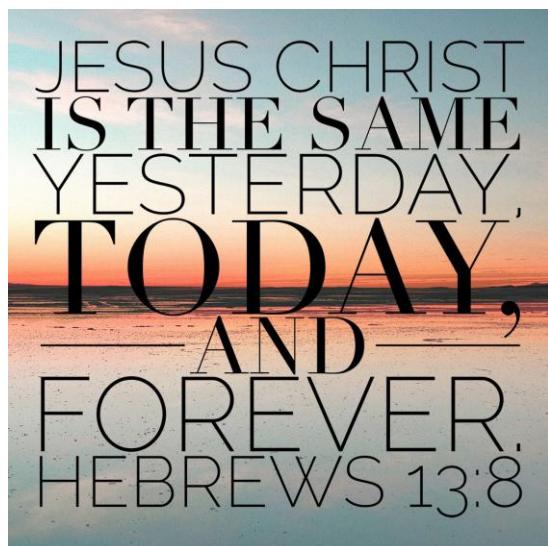


“All ministries of the Church proceed from and are sustained by the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our **Prophet, Priest and King.**”

These words may not seem like much to you, but they are one of the outstanding proclamations of the Christian faith. It has a Latin name – *munus triplex* – but that means nothing to me. I never took Latin. I recognize that *triplex* has something to do with three. I looked it up and it means “threefold office”. For those of us who are of the Presbyterian and Reformed persuasion, The Westminster Shorter Catechism, which our grandparents would have had to memorize to become members of the church, has as Question 23: **What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?**

Answer: **Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.**

What I want to focus on is this: “What does it mean to us today, in the middle of the worst crisis that most of us have encountered in our lifetime? Our country is shut down for the most part, our borders sealed, people are confined to their homes either legally or in self-imposed isolation, businesses are shuttered, schools are



closed, the main street of Perth is lifeless and we have to distance ourselves physically from everyone we meet. What does it mean today to say: “Jesus is our Redeemer – our Prophet, Priest and King?” What difference does it make in the face of this crisis which is staring us down? I would argue that it makes a great deal of difference. There have been many crises in human history, a great number of them far worse than what we are facing now. And yet all these points of history have one thing in common. It is found in Hebrews 13: **8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.** This statement was and is true in the face of every

crisis. In this time, at this hour, our focus needs to be, not on what is happening in the world around us, but on Jesus who is our Redeemer, **our Prophet, Priest and King.** Our world has changed. The circumstances that surround our lives are always changing. The challenges we face change, but Jesus Christ remains the bedrock of our existence. He **is the same yesterday and today and forever.** He never changes. He is the reference point to which we must keep returning. I believe that this present crisis is a clarion call to return to him as the centre and focus of our lives.

Maybe Jesus has never been at the centre of your life. Maybe he has never been the reference point around which your life revolved. Maybe at one time he was, but you chose to follow another path. Maybe you thought that you were in control and were the master of your own destiny. At times like this, when life feels increasingly out of control – when we realize that it is too big and has too many variables for us to control – is a good time to focus on the One who is changeless.

Today, on Passion/Palm Sunday we want to begin to consider what it means for Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer – our Prophet and our Priest. Next Sunday – Easter Sunday – we will focus on Jesus Christ our Redeemer as King.

It is the belief of the vast majority of humankind that we can think our way to God. What we fail to realize is that there is something that impedes this undertaking. History has a fatal flaw and nothing that we can do will ever rectify this fatal flaw that lies at the heart of things. Paul Gauguin, the post impressionist painter of the 19th century, wrote on his most famous canvas three phrases in the top right hand quarter: “**Where do we come from**”, “**What are we**” and “**Where are we going**”. These questions, written without question marks and found on none of his other paintings, express the questions that lie in the heart of every man and woman and for which we have no answers. Why? It is not because our world is so poor, but because as C.S.



Lewis said “we were not ultimately actually made for this world”. Rev. Allistair Begg, well known Scottish-American preacher says this: “There is a fragrance that we have in our minds that we have never smelt; a melody line that we have never heard; a journey that we have never taken; a destination that we know is out there, but we have never reached it.” You see, these are the indications of the imperfection – the “flawedness” of our lives.

The writer to the Hebrews helps us to put things in their proper perspective. **1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...** (Hebrews 1) The way to God and indeed the knowledge of God is not the result of

speculation but of revelation. God has chosen to place himself in the centre of our flawed perceptions and renews our understanding which has been clouded by this fatal flaw. That fatal flaw is sin and it has affected our ability to think. So unless our intellect and our understanding are transformed, our thinking and our reasoning are going to be muddled or clouded. As a result you cannot think your way to God. You cannot find an intellectual road to God. There is only one way that God can be known. He has chosen to reveal himself to us in the person of his Son Jesus. That is what the birth and life of Jesus are all about.

Jesus did not come to be a great teacher and to give us some nice moral advice like the Golden Rule and the commandment to love our neighbour. No, he came as our Redeemer. He came as the one to buy us back from our fatal flaw. He came to purchase us from the Kingdom of Darkness and the bondage of sin and transfer us to the Kingdom of Light and his dear Son.

One of the great contributions to our understanding of the work of Christ is John Calvin's exposition of the threefold office of Christ as our Prophet, our Priest and our King. Calvin spoke of the role of Christ as being that of a Prophet revealing God, as a Priest reconciling us to God and as a King who reigns as God.

We think of a prophet as a person who foretells events; someone who can see into the future and tell us what is going to happen. Another way of saying this is that for us a prophet is one who can predict the future. Unfortunately, there can be problems with viewing prophets in this way. Back in the 1860's, the most popular mode of



transportation around New York City (and other large cities) was by horse drawn trolley. As you can see from the picture, each trolley was pulled by two horses and those horses could only work for four hours a day. The trolleys ran 16 hours a day which required four teams of horses. In addition there were many other horses required to pull loaded wagons for commerce, moving goods from the rail stations to other points in the city. By 1880 there were at least 150,000 horses living in New York.

Each horse produced on average 22 pounds of manure a day. The city produced 45,000 tons of manure a month. At first, farmers in the surrounding countryside were happy to take this free fertilizer but eventually there was a glut on the market and stable owners had to pay to have it drawn away. By the 1890's, it had begun to take

on the proportions of an insurmountable problem. One prophet predicted that by the 1930's the level of manure on city streets would reach the level of third storey windows. *The Times* of London was a little more conservative in its prophecy of London's problem. In 1894, *The Times* predicted that by the 1950's, London streets would be piled nine feet high in manure. Unable to imagine cities without horses, urban planners were at their wits end by 1898. And then, almost overnight, the crisis passed.



With the introduction of electrification and the development of the internal combustion engine, there were new ways to move people and goods around the city. Automobiles outnumbered horses in New York by 1912 and in 1917 the city's last horse drawn trolley made its final run. The prophecy or prediction of streets overwhelmed with stinking, rotting manure never came true because of changes that the so called "prophets" could not envision.

A biblical definition of a prophet is more helpful to us. In the Old Testament, a prophet was a kind of mediator between God and his people. He spoke to the people on behalf of God. At times there was an element of prophecy in the sense of forth telling the future in the prophet's speech. But more often than not it was a word of warning of what would happen if God's people did not mend their ways. Jesus was the Prophet of God par excellence, for he was both the



object and subject of prophecy. His person and work was the subject of Old Testament prophecy, and yet Jesus was himself a Prophet. He frequently spoke of his role in the coming Kingdom of God. As Jesus carried out his ministry, people were filled with awe. **16** **"A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people."** (Luke 7) As I have already pointed out, the principal activity of a prophet was to declare the Word of God. Jesus not only declared the Word of God, he **was** the Word of God. Jesus the Man was the supreme Prophet of God for he was God's Word in the flesh. As we read in John's Gospel: **1** **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2** **He was with God in the beginning. ... 14** **The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of**

the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1) So truly, as the writer of Hebrew's makes clear, in times past God did speak to his people through prophets. Through the prophets God's Word was begun but not completed. **2 But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.** Just by sending his Son to live among us, God has spoken. Jesus was indeed God's complete Word in the flesh.

We all need a prophet. We need a Prophet to reveal God to us. We all need Someone who can give us a word of what lies ahead and what fork in the road to take. What we don't need is someone who will give us a prediction of the future based on partial or flawed information. Jesus is our Prophet because he comes from the Father and knows of what he speaks. He wants to be your Prophet today and speak God's truth into your life. Jesus is God's full and final Word. While the prophets of old came to inform, Jesus as Prophet came to transform. So we see Jesus as a Prophet revealing God, but we also see him as a Priest reconciling us to God.

We are all familiar from the movies of seeing priests give the Last Rites to people who are dying. It is almost as if everyone needs a priest to help them cross the great divide. There is even a 1988 movie called Last Rites. After awhile, you get the feeling that everyone needs a priest. In actual fact, it is true. Everyone does need a priest. In the Old Testament, the people of God needed a priest to offer sacrifices that would expiate or pay the penalty for their sins. The Old Testament law laid out exactly how the priests were to perform the proper sacrifices to fulfill this obligation. Hebrews 10 has something to say about the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. **1 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.** Later it goes on to say: **11 Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.** So watching the priest perform sacrifices is like going to the movies and watching a preview of a coming attraction. The preview is not the coming attraction. It is only a shadow or a taste of the next movie which will be



released at a later date. In other words, not all priests are created equal and not all sacrifices are created equal.

We all need a priest, but not just any priest will do. We need a priest who can perform a sacrifice on our behalf, but not just any sacrifice. Going back to Hebrews 1 we read: **3 The Son (Jesus) is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.** Jesus not only is the exact representation of God – not only does he express the very character of God (New Living Translation) – but he has **provided purification for sins** – for our sins. Jesus was not the first to make purification for sins. As we saw, in the Old Testament there was a means set in place for God's people to be purified from their sins, but it was inferior. It was but a glimpse – a shadow – of what was to come. Jesus was to be, and has become, that Priest who is able to reconcile us to God.

Now let's swing back over to Hebrew's 10 again. **19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.** Only the High Priest in Old Testament times was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle and then it was only once a year. The writer to the Hebrews says that when it comes to that Most Holy Place, we can enter it, not with fear, but with confidence. Why? Because of the sacrifice of **the blood of Jesus**. That must have been some sacrifice. You see, **we have a great priest over the house of God** and because of him we can draw near to the house of God in full confidence that there we will be washed clean of our sin.



What exactly is it that happens when Jesus as our Priest bears our sin? A little Scotsman named Terry McCutcheon said this: "You know, if something is going to get clean, something else has to get dirty." Let's read this statement again. "You know, if something is going to get clean, something else has to get dirty." If your dirty dishes are going to get clean, then your dish cloth and your dish water are going to get

dirty. If your lawn mower is going to get clean, then a rag has to get dirty. Christ dirtied himself – Christ filthied himself – with our sin in order that we might be cleansed by the power of his blood. If the damage caused by our imperfection or “flawedness” is going to be repaired, somebody is going to pay. If the damage is going to be rectified, somebody is going to pay. Either we will pay, or we will accept the payment that has been made on behalf of sinners. A hymn writer put it this way:

*There's a way back to God from the dark paths of sin;
There's a door that is open and you may go in.
At Calvary's cross is where you begin
When you come as a sinner to Jesus.*

Jesus is our Priest who filthied himself in order that we might be reconciled to God.

Hymn #410:

“In Christ Alone”

(Click on the link below to hear the hymn. The words will appear on your screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWiFYJMGas0>

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.

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

- **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.**
- **For Peri-Ann and Holden Echlin as they are expecting the arrival of Baby Echlin.**
- **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)
- **St. Andrew's**
- **Rick & Colleen Richardson**
- **Richard Hendry**
- **Joanna Savage**
- **Joan Palmer**

Closing Hymn: "Hosanna"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1X-VDCMyAc>

Hosanna, Hosanna
 Hosanna in the highest!
 Hosanna, Hosanna,
 Hosanna in the highest!

Lord we lift up Your name
 with hearts full of praise
 Be exalted oh Lord my God!
 Hosanna in the highest!
 (Glory to the King of Kings!) (second time around)

Glory, Glory
 Glory to the King of Kings!
 Glory, Glory,
 Glory to the King of Kings!

Benediction "The Lord Bless You and Keep You"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3V4paAmFiM>