St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth Sunday, August 16th,2020 Guest Worship Leader: Rev. Beryl Orok

Introductory Song: "Ancient Words", Written by Lynn Deshazos (Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics on screen.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?y=3ymTkXNpwzs

Holy words long preserved For our walk in this world They resound with God's own heart O let the ancient words impart Words of life words of hope Give us strength help us cope In this world where'er we roam Ancient words will guide us home

Chorus

Ancient words ever true Changing me and changing you We have come with open hearts O let the ancient words impart

Holy words of our faith Handed down to this age Came to us through sacrifice O heed the faithful words of Christ Holy words long preserved For our walk in this world They resound with God's own heart O let the ancient words impart

Chorus x 4

Ancient words ever true Changing me changing you We have come with open hearts O let the ancient words impart We have come with open hearts

O let the ancient words impart

Call to Worship

Come, let us praise God together!

For God is great, and worthy of our praise!

Let us tell stories of God's power and majesty, His mighty acts throughout history;

For God is great, and worthy of our praise! Let us remember the compassion He has shown toward us; His mercy and unfailing love, generation after generation;

For God is great, and worthy of our praise! Come let us worship God together! Amen

Prayer of Invocation

Loving God, Thank you that when we are weary and worn, You are there as a refreshing dew from heaven. Thank you for your faithfulness to us, even when we go astray. You are faithful and just to forgive us our sin and restore us to life everlasting in You. As we offer our praise and worship this day may it be a sweet offering to You. In the holy name of Jesus we pray. Amen

Hymn:

"Christ Is Mine Forevermore", CityAlight

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics on screen.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roQovDZeAWE

 Mine are days that God has numbered I was made to walk with Him Yet I look for worldly treasure And forsake the King of kings

Chorus

But mine is hope in my Redeemer Though I fall His love is sure For Christ has paid for every failing I am His forevermore

 Mine are tears in times of sorrow Darkness not yet understood Through the valley I must travel Where I see no earthly good

Chorus 2

But mine is peace that flows from heaven And the strength in times of need I know my pain will not be wasted Christ completes His work in me

 Mine are days here as a stranger Pilgrim on a narrow way One with Christ I will encounter Harm and hatred for His name

Chorus 3

But mine is armor for this battle Strong enough to last the war And He has said He will deliver Safely to the golden shore **Chorus 4** And mine are keys to Zion city Where beside the King I walk For there my heart has found its treasure Christ is mine forevermore

Bridge

Come rejoice now O my soul For His love is my reward Fear is gone and hope is sure Christ is mine forevermore

Call to Confession

Let us be mindful of our failings and our faults. Let us open our spirits to the Holy Spirit to search the depths of our hearts for anything that is not pleasing to God, in order that we might seek forgiveness and be restored to a right relationship with Him.

Prayer of Confession

We come with humble and contrite hearts Lord: seeking Your forgiveness.

May we ever be grateful for redemption's work in our lives; recognizing the sacrifice that was made on our behalf through the death and resurrection of Your Son, Jesus; our Lord and Savior. From this day forward may we strive diligently to be found faithful and true to You and Your Word. Amen

Assurance of Pardon

Christ is at work within us, and is able to accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine.

We are forgiven. Let us rejoice that such wondrous love has been given to us through Christ our Lord. **Amen**

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

The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,

And His ears are open to their cry

The righteous cry out and the Lord hears,

And delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to those with a broken heart

And saves such as have a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous,

But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

He guards all his bones;

Not one of them is broken.

Evil will slay the wicked,

And those who hate the righteous shall be condemned.

The Lord redeems the soul of His servants,

And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned. Praise God for His Holy Word!

Ministry of Music:

"How Great Thou Art"

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics on screen.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PdE_NKyY_00

1. O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder Consider all the worlds thy hands have made, I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, Thy power throughout the universe displayed:

Refrain Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: How great thou art! How great thou art! Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee: How great thou art! How great thou art!

2.And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.
3. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, My God, how great thou art!

Scripture Reading:

Hosea 14:4-9 Israel restored at last.

(New Living Translation)

Psalm 34: 15, 17-22

4. The Lord says, "Then I will heal you of your idolatry and faithlessness, and My love will know no bounds, for My anger will be gone forever!"
5 I will be to Israel like refreshing dew from heaven. It will blossom like the lily: it will send roots deep down into the soil like the cedars of Lebanon
6 Its branches will spread out like those of the beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as the cedar forests of Lebanon

7. My people will return again to the safety of their land. They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines. They will be as fragrant as the wines of Lebanon.

8." O Israel stay away from idols! I am the one who looks after you and cares for you. I'm like the tree that is always green, giving my fruit to you all through the year."

9. Let those who are wise understand these things. Let those who are discerning listen carefully. The paths of the Lord are true, right, and righteous people live by walking in them. But sinners stumble and fall along the way.

This is the Word of the Lord. Amen

Hymn:

"Speak, O Lord", Keith & Kristyn Getty

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. 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

Prayer of Illumination

Loving God, help us to be attentive to the voice of Your Spirit today. May our hearts be troubled towards repentance, as we are reminded of Your desire to be in relationship with us; so that we my rejoice in Your steadfast love and mercy.

You are the God of our salvation. Amen

"The Blessing Of The Dew" Rev. Beryl Orok

Charles Spurgeon wrote: "Where sin abounds, grace doth much more abound. No chapter in the Bible is so rich in mercy as Hosea."

The book of Hosea not only depicts the nation of Israel deeply entrenched in idolatry; but God's merciful plan and effort to bring them back to Himself and into renewed relationship as His people.

You might well remember that Israel had a history wrought with stories of repeatedly turning from God to worship false gods; a long, repetitive pattern in the lives of the Israelite nation, despite the fact they were God's chosen people.

God himself had predicted Israel's rebellion as far back as the records show in the book of Deuteronomy 31:16: And the Lord said to Moses; "Behold you will sleep with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of this land where they go to be among them and they will forsake Me and break My covenant that I have made with them."

Exodus 20: 12 The Ten Commandments written by the hand of God and given personally to Moses clearly stated: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." Yet, even while Moses was with God receiving the Ten Commandments, the people became bored of waiting for his return and coerced Aaron into building a golden calf idol, so that they might have something to worship that they could see.

Judges 2:13 tells us "They forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtoreth."

You can probably name many more examples when this nation became involved with false gods down through their history. Israel suffered many tragic events because of these choices.

Today we are going to take some time to look into the Book of Hosea, the Minor Prophet. The primary character in the book of Hosea, next to God of course, was a man named Hosea; whose name literally means--**Jehovah is salvation.** He was God's prophet who preached, urged, and threatened the nation of Israel with judgement at the hand of God, unless they repented of their grievous sins involving idol worship and return to God. In Hosea's time, yet again, we see that Baalism, in particular, had captured the minds and hearts of God's people.

They worshipped these false gods and incorporated following them into their everyday practices as a nation. This seems astounding when we read that less than a century prior, recorded in **1Kings18: 20-38 of how God dramatically demonstrated His sovereignty at Mt Carmel. He sent down fire from heaven upon the altar Elijah had built, burning up, not only the soaking wet sacrifice; but the altar, the stones, the water, and the earth the altar was built upon. 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Ashtoreth were killed that day. Pretty impressive demonstration of God's power! But as I said; this was a nation that repeatedly turned from God to idolatry.**

Hosea chapter 1:2 When the Lord began speaking to Hosea, He said" Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry And children of harlotry. For the land has committed great harlotry By departing from the Lord."

With God's command in his heart, we are told Hosea marries Gomer. Their life together is an enacted prophecy revealing the pain and righteous anger God experiences over sin and the love He feels for the sinner, despite it all. Hosea and Gomer's story is a love story, not a fairy tale; but it is a wonder someone has not made a Hollywood movie portraying it. It's a story involving betrayal, ransom, anger, forgiveness and restoration.

The early part of their marriage went well it seems but Gomer became restless and unhappy; enticed by her old sins.

Proverbs 26:11 "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats their folly" This isn't a very appealing reference to think about but it's appropriate for Gomer I'm afraid! Her life before Hosea was one filled with sexual perverseness, possibly even related to Baal worship. Old lovers were still available and she is lured back. To be sure sin has a lure and enticement which proved to be strong in Gomer's life.

During her trysts outside her marriage, she bore Hosea three children. God named the children. The first was a son named Jezreel after the Valley of Jezreel that had been ravaged by battles in which King Ahab and his evil wife Jezebel had committed many murders of God's people.

The second child was a daughter named Loruhamah, meaning unloved, or not knowing the real father.

The third was another son named Lo-Ammi, meaning not my people.

Their very names reflected the promiscuous life of their mother who soon ran away to be with her lover.

Hosea was heartbroken over his wife's actions. God was heartbroken over His people who were playing the harlot again, worshipping idols.

Gomer was a prodigal wife, just as Israel was a prodigal nation, who kept repeatedly leaving the true God to worship false gods and idols. At God's request Hosea had married into a seemingly hopeless situation with not only a prostitute, but also a worshipper of foreign gods. Yet the Lord promised that He would make a way where there seemed to be no way and Hosea trusted Him. God has the following words of encouragement for Hosea:

Hosea 2: 14-15:"Therefore I, behold I will allure her, will bring her back into the wilderness

And speak comfort to her.

I will give her vineyards from there,

And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope.

She shall sing

As in the days of her youth, as in the days when she came up from Egypt. For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,

And they will be remembered by their name no longer."

God had a plan and in Chapter 3 He told Hosea to go and find Gomer, bring her home and love her again. The story of Hosea and Gomer's marriage is an illustrated parable of God's love for the nation of Israel. It depicted on a human level the God who sought after His people to bring them back to Himself; all the while loving them through the pain they caused Him. Essentially God was saying; "Son, I'm going to turn the curse into a blessing. This woman, who seems so much trouble to you, is a prophetic picture of the whole nation, who as well, will become a blessing. There is hope for you, your marriage and the nation of Israel.

Both Hosea's situation and Israel's required action. Hosea still had to forgive his wife. Her actions had cost him dearly: his reputation, the heartache of betrayal, money required to purchase her freedom, having to live in the meantime as a single father dealing with the needs of his children and their pain over the loss of their mother for she had abandoned them as well. His anger reflected the deep pain she had caused within him. Nevertheless, he chose to trust God's plan and to forgive her; believing and trusting in God's plan and promise.

You see, God loved Israel, not because they deserved it, but because of who He is! God's heart, not unlike Hosea's, grieved and hurt for His beloved nation. They

angered Him because of their sin, but He was willing to forgive them. Throughout chapters 4-8 we read of God anticipation of Israel's repentance and return to Him. His heart yearned for relationship with His people. Hosea's purpose as a Prophet of God was to denounce sin, to warn of impending judgement and to assure the faithful that God's love was enduring. He even gave the people the words to say to God upon returning to Him. There was a time Hosea was just plain fed up trying to show these people the error of their ways, but he relented, and supported them in their turning back to God; just as he supported his wife in their rebuilding of their marriage.

Chapter 14 is entitled: Israel Restored at Last.

In order to be restored to God they had to ask for forgiveness and Hosea even gives them the words to say:

Take words with you, and return to the Lord.

Say to Him,

Take away all iniquity; receive us graciously,

For we will offer the sacrifice of our lips.

Assyria shall not save us,

We will not ride on horses,

Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands," They are our gods.' For in You the fatherless finds mercy.

God's response to their plea for forgiveness is so beautiful!

Verse 4"I will heal their backsliding.

I will love them freely,

For my anger has turned away from him.

Verse 5 and 6 "I will be to Israel like refreshing dew from heaven. He shall grow like the lily, And lengthen his roots in Lebanon. His branches shall spread;

His beauty shall be like an olive tree, And his fragrances like Lebanon.



Only as we read these words in light of the geography of the Holy Land are, we able to take in the full impact of the statement: "I will be to Israel like refreshing dew from heaven." This is a desert country where for over half the

year no rain at all falls. During the long hot summer season when no rain falls we are left to wonder how life goes on. How does any vegetation survive? Those of us who are gardeners know that without our efforts to water our plants during heat waves we would simply have no crops. Everything would quickly shrivel up and die. Our garden this summer looks like wilted, half dead plants at times, unless we water. Yet the experience of periods of drought here over the years isn't even remotely comparable to the Judean desert. So what is the answer to the question of how any vegetation survives! **The answer is ---the dew!**

We all know how refreshing it is so see and feel the wet, cool dew on our feet in the morning. I can almost see the plants greedily soaking it up and I am always amazed by the amount of moisture on my boots in the early morning. There is no way I could just wear sneakers on my treks to the chicken coop as they would be soaked!

The only time I don't appreciate the dew is if I am camping in a tent; which by the way, I decided long ago I just do not need to experience ever again. Been there done that! I hate waking up to the dampness in a tent, everything wet and soggy! No thanks!

In the Holy Land, in the area of which we speak today, the onshore winds bring moisture from the Mediterranean; which condenses to form dew on blades of grass and little plants. This literally means the difference between life and death to vegetation. God's creative provision always amazes me. One would perhaps prefer a gentle soaking rain once in a while. Yet in the hot dry months, only the dew sustains life in the most unlikely places.

No place on earth appears more barren, parched and sun-scorched in summer than the wilderness of Judea. It is an analogy of a sin sick soul lost and dying in sin.

The blessing of the dew is the hope of the land. The refreshing dew from heaven –so beautifully promised to revive Israel, is equally God's promise to the Church and to us personally.

When God says, "I will be the dew", what is He saying? God describes His loving restoration and renewal in exquisite poetry in this section of scripture. The people of the day living in that region would understand God's poetic words.

Guais Glenn Atkin, Professor of Homiletics and Author of many titles; including Modern Religious Cults, wrote this statement: "Like the dew of the Palestinian hills, the ocean of God's providence comes to us in such a way as even a blade of grass can take and grow by!" How profoundly beautiful that statement is! What privilege we have to serve such an amazing, loving God!

The wonderful imagery depicted in Hosea chapter 14 is that of a restored nation and people of God.

He was telling His people, and that includes us; this is what will be.

The dew reflects imagery of God's deep, abiding love. Such love is hard for us to fathom. It renews, revitalizes and sustains us. We have a perpetual need to turn from our sinful ways, our selfishness and blind self-interest to return to God thru Jesus.

There is no other image that can exhibit the manifold grace of God as beautifully as that of the lily. It is an emblem of the beauty and purity of the soul saved by grace and the sweet fragrance of a life lived for God. God's people are like the lily—whether in the Old or New Testament, when God's grace fills them with beauty! When we repent and soak in "the dew from heaven," we are like the lily, becoming transformed into the image of God! God's response to Israel's repentance is life giving forgiveness; just as it is to us through the sacrifice of Jesus. The analogy of the lily blooming speaks of the effects of God's grace and the fruit thereof.

The image of the cedar of Lebanon depicts strength, deep rootedness, uprightness and steadfastness. Rooted in His love, obedient and having hid His word within us, so that we do not sin against Him; we can stand firm in the trials of life, assured of His plan of redemption. The evergreen olive tree, maintaining its beauty both winter and summer depicts the eternal, unvarying, presence of Divine grace which enables the bearing of fruit in our lives. God is always with us and farther on in this same chapter He confirms that He will be like the green Cyprus with its branches outstretched and overshadowing to protect.

Francis Thompson, an English Poet who wrote the famous poem: Hound of Heaven, said," I am a half-hearted man, full of contradictions and yet God wants to make a home in me and I to make a home in Him. I am completely dumbstruck!

I would have to say," me too!"

If we are honest, we can sometimes see ourselves in Gomer; maybe lured by temptation or creating things in our lives; whether people or possessions or a career perhaps that we put before God and His will. It is not to be misunderstood; God hates sin, while He grieves over the sinner. His righteousness and justice, His holy nature, demands that He deal with sin; Yet He diligently seeks the sinner to restore unto Himself. Where do you turn in the Bible when you need encouragement, peace of mind? Well the prophets might not be your first choice: but we have seen today the Old Testament is rich, overflowing in truth and hope, and a picture of God's grace, forgiveness, mercy and love, for those He calls His own.

Hosea spoke often of sin and judgement, but his message did not end there. He always pointed the way to salvation through humble repentance.

I am led to think of the words of the next scripture.

2 Chronicles 7:4 the Lord appeared to Solomon by night and said" If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven and will forgive them their sin and heal their land!

When God brings us "the blessing of the dew" He gives us what we need; not always what we want. We often want the blessing of abundant rains while in His wisdom He provides the blessing of the dew and not unlike the Apostle Paul we learn that **His grace is sufficient.**

Great God of Love may Your word sink deep into our being this day. Give us wisdom to discern the areas of our lives that need to be changed. May we be so acutely aware of Your loving presence and care for us that we just naturally shun all things in our lives that would lead us away from You, the one true and living God. **Amen.**

Hymn

"How Great Are You Lord" - Robin Mark

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics on screen.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLePg4hJrWg

How great are You Lord How great is Your mercy How great are the things That You have done for me How great are You Lord Your loving kindness Is filling my heart as I sing How great are You Lord How great is Your love It reaches to the heavens How great is the heart That sought and rescued me 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, Drummond St. W., Perth, Ont. K7H 3E3). We also have another option for your 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.

Invitation to Offering

The Lord loves cheerful giver, and so it is with thanksgiving and gratitude we come to offer our gifts this day. You have blessed us beyond measure loving God and so out of that abundance we take opportunity to give this day.

Offertory Prayer

Generous God you have blessed us with many gifts and drawn us together into Christ's body, the church, so that from your abundance we may bless others. May the gifts of our money, time and talents, support and bring furtherance to your kingdom work. **Amen**

Prayers for the People by the People

In response to the Covid-19 Pandemic:

- For the leaders in our Government (federal, provincial, municipal).
- For the **Frontline workers**.
- For St. Andrew's Church and its leadership.
- For marriages that are struggling, as a result of the pandemic.
- For the **Education system**, that safeguards will be put in place to protect the students, teachers and staff.
- Shut-ins and Nursing Home residents and in hospital: (Elva Fair, Audrey Ferrier, Germaine Vanderklok, June O'Hara, Gwen Travis, Lyn Harrington, Bing Juen, Jo Mott, Ruth McTavish, Jackie and Brian Stapleton, (Karen McKim's parents), Nellie Larabie).
- Shelagh Stevens's mother, Lyn Harrington. Mom is improving and can move about by herself with a walker and some care. Shelagh.

Please continue to pray for:

- Stuart McKim & Louise Burke.
- Ann Savage A scan scheduled for September 1st. Praying that results are favorable.
- Rick and Colleen Richardson and their daughter Deborah.
- Joanna Savage We are waiting to hear from the surgeon to discuss next steps regarding the removal of the primary tumor in her intestine now that the liver tumor has reduced in size. She continues to be in need of our love and prayers as she has a long and uncertain road ahead of her. Marilyn
- Paul Thompson (eye condition) Next appointment in September.
- Dave (Parkinson's) and Anne Crawley (foot infection) I have an appointment booked for mid-August with the Infectious Control Specialist. I am still awaiting an Orthopedic appoint. Please pray the root cause will be discovered.
- University and College Students to have a summer job and return to school in the fall.
- **Angus Funston** For healing of his liver and for his appointment at Sick Kids in August.
- Eric and Laurie Cousins and Eric's Mother June as they deal with the loss of Eric's Father. His Mother June, deals with treatment of her bowel cancer, which has spread to her liver.

Closing Hymn:

"Praise My Soul", The King of Heaven

(Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics on screen.) https://www.voutube.com/watch?v=rCRCZMmnwZQ

Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven; To His feet thy tribute bring. Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, Who like me His praises sing

Praise Him, praise Him, Praise Him, praise Him, Praise the everlasting King.

Praise Him for His grace and favor To our fathers in distress; Praise Him still the same forever, Slow to chide, and swift to bless.

Praise Him, praise Him, Praise Him, praise Him Glorious in His faithfulness. Fatherlike He tends and spares us, Well our feeble frame He knows; In His hands He gently bears us, Rescues us from all our foes.

Praise Him, praise Him, Praise Him, praise Him, Widely yet His mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore Him, Ye behold Him face to face; Sun and moon, bow down before Him; Dwellers all in time and space,

Praise Him, praise Him, Praise Him, praise Him, Praise with us the God of grace.

Benediction

Go now as those renewed in Christ, wondering at God's great love and telling the story of your salvation to all who will listen.

May God nourish your souls for He is faithful.

May Christ Jesus ever renew your lives into the image of our Creator and all He intends us to be

May the Holy Spirit lead us with cords of kindness and love.

Go now in peace to serve the Lord and each other. Amen.



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)

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

St. Andrew's is continuing the Sunday 12-12:10 pm ringing of the bells as a reminder to pray for all aspects of the current crisis and everyone affected. This will continue until the church reopens for worship.