

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
November 15th, 2020
Guest Worship Leader: Rev. Beryl Orok

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

(Genesis Chapter 1; 1-2-3, Psalm 90: 1)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

○ God of creation, Who was before there was----

We gather to praise your holy name and to celebrate the revelation of yourself in our midst.

And God said "Let there be light, "and there was light. God saw that it was good and He separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day and the darkness he called night."

○ God of light and life who was before there was---

It is through your true Light that we are able to see the truth of your saving love.

○ God of silence and sound, who was before there was----

We thank you for your eternal Word, Who speaks to us in our acts of worship.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God

○ God of time and eternity, who was before there was----

Come afresh, come anew, come again, and come now.

We covet Your Presence among us this day. **Amen**

Prayer of Invocation

Eternal, Loving God; the Psalmist has said 119: 105 "Thy word is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path."

Like the prophet Isaiah, we stand in awe of Your glory; feeling tremendously small and polluted by our sin and the sin of our society.

But today is a new day and we come with open hearts, open minds and voices of praise to welcome Your Presence among us.

We gather to worship You, the only true God and to hear from your holy Word; thereby enriching our lives and building us up in our faith.

May Your Holy Spirit surround and indwell us now and forevermore. In Jesus precious name we pray. **Amen**

Hymn: “Come, Let Us Sing to The Lord Our Song” – (Lyrics)

(Click on the link below to view the video. The words will appear on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nYwkObWIX0>

1. Come, let us sing to the Lord our song:
we have stood silently too long;
surely the Lord deserves our praise,
so joyfully thank God for our days.
2. O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;
God's living waters will never fail.
Surely the Lord will help you to stand,
strengthened and comforted by God's hand.
3. You dwell among us and cause us to pray, and
walk with each other following your way;
our precious brothers and sisters will grow
in the fulfilling love they know.
4. Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing
to the desire of all living things.
Come, all you creatures, high and low;
let your praises endlessly flow.

Call to Confession

This new day we take time to redirect our thought to our failures and our sins. We are ever thankful that You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and so in this time of silent reflection we lay our sins, those of commission and those of omission before You; trusting in Your mercy and Your love for us.
(Silent recall of personal sin)

Prayer of Confession

O Holy God, we acknowledge to You, to ourselves and to one another that we are not what You have called us to be.

Many times, we have not stood by our faith, shared our hope, and reached out in love.

We have done unkind and shameful deeds, and we have left undone deeds that could have made a difference in the lives of those around us.

**We have failed to speak and act for peace and justice in our world.
Have mercy on us as we repent, forgive our sins and transform our lives.
We pray earnestly in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

Our God is true to His Word.

We have confessed our sin.

God has forgiven us; not because of our own doing or any words we say but because Christ died for us to redeem us from all unrighteousness. Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, Who art in heaven

Hallow'ed 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 our debts as we forgive those who have debts against us.

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from the evil one.

For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

Forever and ever. Amen.

Responsive Reading:

Psalm 119; 89-105

Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.

Your laws endure to this day, for all things serve you.

If your law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.

I will never forget your precepts, for by them you have preserved my life.

Save me, for I am yours; I have sought out your precepts.

The wicked are waiting to destroy me, but I will ponder your statutes.

To all perfection I see a limit, but your commands are boundless.

Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies.

I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.

I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word.

I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me.

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

Hymn: **“Open My Eyes, That I May See” – (Lyrics)**

(Click on the link below to view the video. The words will appear on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GDceaG7kFQA>

Open my eyes, that I may see
Glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free

Silently now I wait for thee
Ready, my God, thy will to see
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear
Voices of truth thou send-est clear;
And while the wave-notes fall on my ear
Everything false will disappear

Silently now I wait for thee
Ready, my God, thy will to see
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my mouth, and let me bear
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;
Open my heart and let me prepare
Love with thy children thus to share

Silently now I wait for thee
Ready, my God, thy will to see
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Scripture Reading:

2 Timothy 2: 1-13

1 You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2** The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. **3** Suffer hardship with *me*, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. **4** No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. **5** Also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not win the prize unless he competes according to the rules. **6** The hard-working farmer ought to be the first to receive his share of the crops. **7** Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything. **8** Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead,

descendant of David, according to my gospel, [9](#) for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the word of God is not imprisoned. [10](#) For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus *and with it* eternal glory.

[11](#) It is a trustworthy statement:

For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him;

[12](#) If we endure, we will also reign with Him;

If we deny Him, He also will deny us;

[13](#) If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

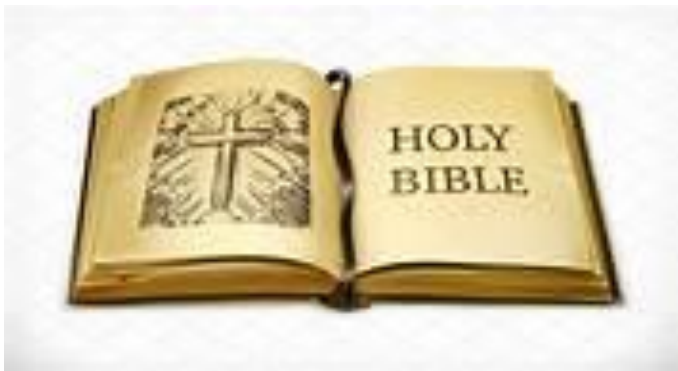
Prayer for Illumination

Living and loving God help us to hear what Your message is to us today. Help us to hear Your Holy word that our faith may be strengthened in resolve to serve You and You alone.

Word that was , Word that is, Living Word of God, by the power of your Holy Spirit, open our hearts and our minds now as we have this time to reflect upon the great gift to us of your Eternal Word.

“The Eternal Word of God”

Rev. Beryl Orok



If I were to ask you this morning how many Bibles you currently have in your home; what would you say—1, 3, 5, perhaps more? As I thought of this question I did a quick survey of our living room and found there are 4 Bibles in that room alone. I know there is one by the computer downstairs and one on the end table beside the recliner in the family

room. There is also one on my bedside table and I'm certain I could find more in my bookshelves if I was to look. We like to have a variety of translations on hand to enhance our study and meditation times. I think all of us take for granted having God's word at our fingertips; not only in paper form, but also electronically. I can ask

Google to locate a scripture reference for topics I am researching or the chapter and verse for a scripture I can't remember offhand. That is pretty amazing!

The Bible has successfully withstood every attempt to destroy it physically. That is not to say the Word of God has not been perverted and used by unscrupulous people seeking to control, manipulate, shame and even abuse others emotionally and spiritually.

There is always a danger, unless we humbly seek the Holy Spirit's illumination and guidance, that we may use the Word of God to confirm our preconceived ideas. We, clinging to these ideas, may only hear what we want to hear, because it is our human tendency to do so.

History records that wealthy landowners wanted to keep human beings as property; to use these people for work and to prosper themselves from the work their slaves did. Some Christians historically argued that the Bible depicted it was alright to buy and sell human beings, as if they were animals.

A lot of early American Christian identity was predicated on proslavery. Passages of scripture were used as justification for owning slaves; even one of the slave ships in 1764 was called Hope! Rather cruel, bizarre name considering the cargo of human beings chained and beaten and often suffering from malnutrition and disease in the hold of these ships on their way to be sold at auction. Ephesians 6: 9 was one scripture they used as a reference point. "Slaves obey your earthly masters with respect and fear and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ." The New King James translations uses the word servants, instead of slaves, but the situation of these people was the same.

Paul in writing this passage was not condoning slavery. He personally sought freedom for slaves.

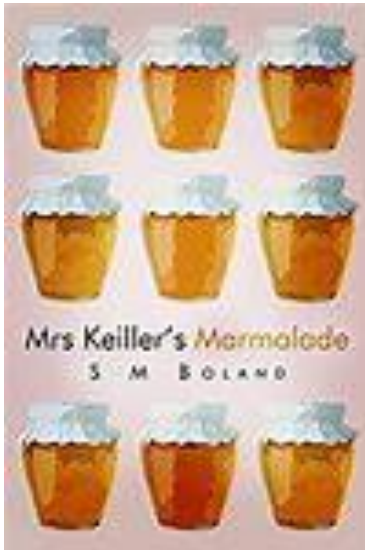
Philemon 1: 15-16 Paul is addressing the owner of a runaway slave. "Perhaps the reason he is separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever; no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord."

Yet because slavery was the reality of the culture Paul lived in, he encouraged those in bondage to still live for Christ. That was not easy under the control of an often harsh, even brutal, master.

In verse 9 of Ephesians 6 Paul addresses those with servants or slaves. "And masters ---stop your threatening, knowing that He who is both their Master and

yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with Him.” He warned them not to be harsh.

Now have you noticed that mean, angry people usually find a mean angry God to portray in the bible? I recently read a novel entitled Mrs. Keiller’s Marmalade. The story was set in the small village of Auchobane on The Dundee coast of North East Scotland.



The story is about a young widow who lives in Rose Cottage just outside the village and who has inherited the legendary recipe book from a long line of Keiller women for making marmalade. It was very shortly after her arrival to the village that she encountered the Scottish minister’s wife, who kept everyone in the village, including her husband the minister, under her control by using Scripture like a serrated knife. Her caustic tongue was feared by many. I’m not going to tell you the rest of the story, but I will tell you I found myself cringing and even feeling angry at times, at the brutal misuse of the Word of God. I suppose I reacted this way because I unfortunately have met people who do this and I have sat in support with wounded people who have been the target of such abuse.

There are also comfortable, powerful people who often find the Bible supports their political bent; while others find scripture to support political and social reforms of their interpretation.

Then there are those who totally subvert the intent, even the wording of the Bible to their own advantage; taking scripture out of context and without the balance of the entire Word.

This little example was written by Jack Gullidge in Proclaim Magazine.

A member was brought before the church Board for disciplinary action for stealing chickens. The accused defended his crime on the basis of **Ephesians 4: 28, which reads; “Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needs.”**

By dropping five words and changing some punctuation, the ingenious culprit came up with the following translation: **“Let him that stole steal. No more let him labor; working with his hands is good, that he may have to give to him who is in need.”**

Well how often have you seen this done or attempted?

Since the word of God has successfully withstood every attempt to destroy it physically throughout history; let's refresh our memories today.

About 600 B.C. Jehoiakim, King of Judah, attempted to rid the land of God's word. Here's the gist of what happened in Jeremiah Chapter 36 and 37.

God had given Jeremiah a mandate to write everything He was told on a scroll. God said take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judea and all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of Josiah until today. Josiah had been a godly King but those that followed were not and the nations had turned to idol worship again.

The words God gave Jeremiah to record were words of warning that He was about to punish their sin by allowing the Babylonian Kingdom to invade and take them over. Jeremiah had his scribe Baruch inscribe the words from God exactly as Jeremiah dictated to him.

Jeremiah was banned from the temple because of his prophetic warnings, which were not well received, so he instructed Baruch to go and read to all the people there. Baruch read the scroll in the chamber of the High Secretary of the upper Court, at the entry of the New Gate of the Lord's House.

The Secretary's son Micaiah heard the words Baruch read and went to the King's house, where he reported to the officials there.

They asked Baruch to come personally and read it to them. Then Baruch took the scroll and read it to the Princes of the land. They all agreed that the King should hear this message, but they told Jeremiah and Baruch to hide. The King listened to the princes and then demanded that the scroll be produced and read, word for word, to him. When this was done as he demanded he became so enraged about the message, which the scroll of Jeremiah contained; he cut it to pieces and threw it into the fire. But the Word did not burn----just the paper on which it was written.

God then instructed Jeremiah to reproduce the scroll with every word He had told him. This writing reproduced at the command of God exists for us to read today in the book of Jeremiah.

Every effort of men and the devil to annihilate the Word has only bought about its certain increase.

It seems the ashes of its burn seemingly become the seeds of reproduction.

In 30 A.D. the Roman Emperor Diocletian instigated the most terrific onslaught against the Bible that the world to date has ever known. Every manuscript that could be found was destroyed and every copy of the Christian scriptures was burned; at the same time thousands of people who possessed these, and their families, were

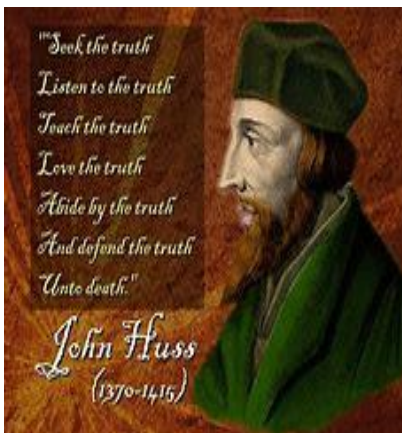
martyred. He was so confident that after a 2 year purge he had a monument erected in the midst of the ashes pit of burnt manuscripts and scriptures and had inscribed on it: "Extinct is the name of Christians." But less than 10 years later the Emperor Constantine had the Bible enthroned as the infallible Word of Truth! Within 4 hours of Constantine's offer of rewards for any copies the people were in possession of to be brought forth, 50 copies were presented to the Emperor. God's word lived on.

Then there were those who sacrificed greatly to translate the Bible from Greek and Hebrew.

Jerome, a Latin priest, confessor, theologian and historian living in A.D. 405 translated a version of the Bible that lived through the Dark Ages as the Bible of Europe; despite all the opposition of the Bishops of his day.

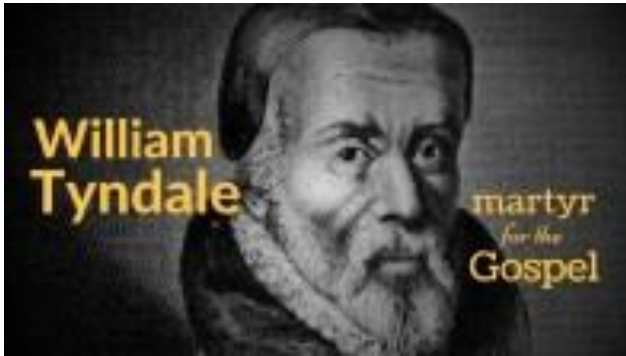


The English Theologian John Wycliffe gathered about him a group of Oxford scholars in 1379 to translate the Bible from Latin to English. He was met with fierce opposition from the church and state. He and his companions involved in this undertaking were threatened, maligned, and hauled into court time after time. But they completed hundreds of handwritten copies to distribute to the people who could read and the poor parish priests who rallied around them. Those who were caught in possession of a copy were burned at the stake. Despite all efforts to destroy all of Wycliffe's work there are 170 copies of Wycliffe's priceless handwritten translations still existing.



John Hus, a Reformer, Philosopher and key predecessor of the Protestant Reform challenged the papal authority on the subject of infallibility and other church doctrines. He was known to have said, "Show me from the Scriptures and I will repent and recant" He realized from Scripture, as the Holy Spirit revealed to him, the truth, that only God and His Word are infallible.

No one will ever succeed working against God to destroy His Word!



In 1524 William Tyndale resolved to have the Bible written in the English language of his time and send it out around the nation. He lived in extreme poverty and constant peril while doing so. He escaped with his manuscripts and his life from Cologne where he had started publishing his translated works, to the city of Worms, Germany, where he completed the publication of the New

Testament. Three thousand copies were smuggled into England in barrels of flour and bales of cloth. Many were discovered and burnt but many remained. Tyndale was finally betrayed by a friend and was imprisoned for 16 months in Belgium, where he continued to work on the translation of the Old Testament, aided by some of his prison guards no less. God always has people placed where they are needed to fulfill His purposes. When people's eyes are opened, as the guards no doubt were, they will risk life to bring about God's will and purposes.

Tyndale never completed the task of translating the Old Testament, as he was strangled and burnt at the stake, October 16 1536; but his dying words were a prayer, "Lord open the King of England's eyes."

And God was faithful to answer that prayer. In less than 3 years King Henry V111 authorized the publication of what was then known as The Great Bible, in reference to its huge size. One copy of which was chained in every parish church in England, where it was available for anyone to read. There are 3 parishes in Chester area of England where the chained Bible is still present.

Even the philosophers attempted to rid the world of God's word. A Frenchman named Voltaire came on the scene in the 1600's and predicted that within 100 years the Bible would be a forgotten book. Before the century was up, his very home was owned and used by the Geneva Bible society; from where thousands of Bibles are distributed around the world. Voltaire's own printing press was used to print copies of the Bible. To this day the Geneva Bible Society has a goal to provide free Bibles or minimal cost Bibles around the world. It makes you just want to cheer doesn't it!

Robert Ingersoll, an American agnostic declared, as he held the Bible high, "Within 15 years I will have this book in the morgue." Within 15 years he was in the morgue and the Bible was as alive as ever.

There is a story told that early in the 20th century of an Armenian soldier in an American army hospital in Turkey, who was given a Bible; the first one he had ever possessed.

When he left the hospital to return to his village he took the Bible with him and was excited to show his friends. A Muslim teacher hearing him reading portions to his friends snatched the Bible from him; tore it from its bindings and strew the pages through the streets. A grocer passing through collected the pages and used them for wrapping produce in. Soon the entire village had pages of the Bible to read and the people were greedy for more.

Not long after a Bible seller came to the village and was amazed to find a hundred people who were eager to buy the Holy Bible.

Even the torn pages of the Word found a way to people's hearts. God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

Today in spite of threats of imprisonment, even death, there are people taking the Word of God and its message throughout the world. God bless our missionaries, who risk and sacrifice so greatly to share the Good News of the Gospel!

Sometime ago I made a decision to give a Bible to each couple that I married. I have no idea what they did with it but since God impressed upon me to do this I have certainty that He has a plan.

I think one of the things resulting in the midst of this pandemic is more people seeking God and answers. A friend I have known since high school was listening to a pastor of a mega church in the United States and something he said really upset her. She sent me a note and asked questions. I was able to send her Scriptures concerning her questions and she thanked me. I know God is working in her life to overcome a past of spiritual abuse which created in her a somewhat negative image of church and God.

I remember a friend years ago who also had been spiritually abused and wanted nothing to do with God. We met one evening to say our goodbye because she was moving away and as a going away gift I gave her a Bible. I did so with some fear and trepidation, as I knew her feelings and viewpoint and she was not one to mince her words; so I did not know if she would refuse my gift or not. She didn't and some 20 years later we reconnected. She told me she will be forever grateful for the gift of the Bible that evening. It literally saved her life, as she turned to it, seeking hope, in a time of deep despair. She and her husband are committed Christians and I am so thrilled that God has brought healing in her life and that she knows and loves Jesus.

Hebrews 4: 12 teaches us; for the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart"

This is probably amongst the most often used verses in the Bible, and a highlight of the Book of Hebrews. The imagery used here in Hebrews is a vivid metaphor;

whether a military style sword or a meat cutter's blade; the purpose is to separate the tendons, ligaments and meaty parts. These tissues are hidden away, hard to reach, but a sharp blade can uncover and separate them in the same way the Word of God can separate spiritual things, which are seemingly intertwined, such as soul and spirit.

It is also a graphic depiction of how completely God's word can distinguish between the godly and ungodly parts of us.

The incredible cutting power of the Holy Spirit inspired Scripture is therefore a tool used by the Spirit to separate our very thoughts into good and evil and to reach into the depth of our being where a work needs to be done.

Our text this morning from 2 Timothy 2: 9, "Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds: but the word of God is not bound! I suffer hardships even as a criminal." This was written by the Apostle Paul from prison near the end of his life.

This letter Paul has written from his prison cell exhorted Timothy to learn from Paul's example in suffering and from common people, who practice single-minded commitment, discipline and hard work.

Paul clarifies that it is the gospel message for which he is suffering. He had done nothing wrong or illegal except proclaim Christ! Yet he found himself imprisoned; most likely his hands and his feet in chains; similar to Peter on Acts 12:6, "The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate."

This is much more serious imprisonment than Paul's first stint in Rome where he lived under house arrest. He is cast into a prison cell.

Paul, at this time would most likely be thinking that he may just die soon.

Yet, in stark contrast to the reality he is experiencing, he rejoices in knowing the truth of the gospel cannot be restrained.

His incarceration lent him time to carry on his ministry through his letters to Timothy. The words of the gospel message continued to impact Timothy and countless others down through history because of Paul's endeavors. Paul had no way of envisioning the impact of God's word on us as we sit here today, but by faith he believed God and in obedience continued to write the letters we have to read today.

Again, God uses the faithful and will make a way for His Word to live on.

Indeed Hebrews 4:12 is so true; "For the word of God is alive and active!"

There are many scriptures to remind us of the everlasting nature of God's word.

There is not a doubt the Bible is God's Word to you and to me and to all people of every generation.

It is powerful beyond our understanding and will endure all things.

Isaiah 40:8 says that “the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our Lord endures forever.”

Matthew 24:35 says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

We have had a snapshot of history today, related to the prevailing power of God’s Word. I think it is important to reflect upon the extremes God has gone to and the sacrifices of the people He has used to further the kingdom of God. Their efforts ensured His Word went forth at all cost and was preserved for all.

I hope that it has spoken to you, as it has to me, about responsibility regarding the Word of God. Think about it ---Before all else, before the light of day there was the illumination of the Word

Matthew 14: 35 “Heaven and earth will pass away but my Word will not pass away.”

So after science, philosophy, education, kingdoms, empires, tyrants, dictators, kings; after theology, biology and psychology, Marxism ,Socialism, Communism, and after gold, silver and riches----After all these there will remain the precious Living Word of the Living God!

We have seen this morning some examples of how God has kept the Bible through history for us, with the expectation that we will read it, treasure it, share it, love it and obey it.

It is matchless in its value and is the only true document that brings us the Good News of hope and salvation that we all need. Therefore; it is so vital that we aspire to **Psalm 119: 11, “Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.”**

James 1:22 admonishes us, “But be doers of the Word and not hearers only.”

Remembering the vital truth of Isaiah 55:11, “so is my word that goes out of my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

I trust we can say as the Psalmist did in 119: 14 You are my refuge and my shield, I have put my hope in your Word.

God’s Word is Permanent, Perfect and Powerful.

Hymn: “Ancient Words” – Written by Lynn Deshazo

(Click on the link below to view the video. The words will appear on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vmTkXNpwzs>

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

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

Your Word O God encourages us to give joyfully of the gifts You have bestowed on us. So, we honour Your Word and present out tithes and offerings; remembering the blessings You have bestowed upon us with grateful hearts. **Amen.**

Offertory Prayer

We are grateful to have this opportunity to give back a portion of what You have blessed us with God. May this offering be used for the furtherance of Your kingdom to bring blessing to many.

Pastoral Prayer

Closing Hymn: “Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying”

(Click on the link below to view the video. The words will be on the screen.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qp5Ck6BsWJQ>

Lord, listen to your children praying,
 Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
 Lord, listen to your children praying,
 Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

Benediction

Go with a tender and grateful heart, remembering that you may be the only Gospel that your neighbor reads this week. So in all you say and do spread the grace of God, the love of Jesus and the friendship of the Holy Spirit with which you have been blessed.

Let us embrace the work and wonder of this day.

May the Word of God lead, guide and uphold you as you love and serve the Lord and one another. Amen