

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
November 22nd, 2020
Christ The King Sunday
Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin

Welcome and Announcements

- **November 29th – Rev. John Robertson**
- **December 6th – Communion Sunday**

Call to Worship

(Based on Psalm 95)

O come, let us sing to the LORD;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

For the LORD is a great God,

and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth;

the heights of the mountains are his also.

The sea is his, for he made it,

and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

O come, let us worship and bow down,

let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!

For he is our God,

and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand.

Prayer of Invocation

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you, great God,

for you are ruler of the universe

and have sent your Son to be King of kings.

We rejoice that he has triumphed over all the powers of this world
and governs the nations in justice and righteousness.

We celebrate his victory in his life, death, resurrection,
and ascension to honor and might at your side.

By your Spirit, claim our complete loyalty,

establish Christ's rule in every land and in every heart.

Accept our homage as we offer our lives
in the service of Christ's kingdom.
He is Lord forever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn #275: Jesus Shall Reign Where're The Sun – Keith and Kristyn Getty
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BE4DDB5whyk>

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His Kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns:
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

Chorus

To our King be highest praise,
Rising through eternal days,
Just and faithful he shall reign.
Jesus shall reign!

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Chorus

To our King be highest praise,
Rising through eternal days,
Just and faithful he shall reign.
Jesus shall reign!

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honors to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen.

Chorus

To our King be highest praise,
Rising through eternal days,
Just and faithful he shall reign.
Jesus shall reign!

Call to Confession

In Hebrews 10 we read:

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he

opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21](#) and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22](#) let us draw near 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.

Unison Prayer of Confession

**Righteous God,
you have crowned Jesus Christ as Lord of all.
We confess that we have not bowed before him
and are slow to acknowledge his rule.
We give allegiance to the powers of this world
and fail to be governed by justice and love.
In your mercy, forgive us.
Raise us to acclaim him as ruler of all,
that we may be loyal ambassadors,
obeying the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Assurance of Pardon (Based on Revelation 5)

Do not weep!
See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed.
With his blood he has purchased people for God
from every tribe and language and people and nation.
He has made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign on the earth.

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: “Praise The Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him”, Young Oceans
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sx9I_amxyCA

Praise the Lord Ye heavens adore him
Praise him angels in the height
Sun and moon, rejoice before him
Praise him, all ye stars of light
Praise the Lord for he hath spoken
Worlds his mighty voice obeyed
Laws which never shall be broken
For their guidance he hath made

All creation join the song of praise
Let every tongue declare His mighty ways
And we will sing of Your goodness and mercy all of our days

Praise the Lord for he is glorious
Never shall his promise fail
God hath made his saints victorious
Sin and death shall not prevail

All creation join the song of praise
Let every tongue declare His mighty ways
And we will sing of Your goodness and mercy all of our days

Glory! Glory! All glory to you Lord (X 4)

Praise the God of our salvation!
Hosts on high his power proclaim
Heaven and earth and all creation
Laud and magnify his name.

All creation join the song of praise
Let every tongue declare His mighty ways
And we will sing of Your goodness and mercy all of our days
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Scripture Reading:

Philippians 1:27- 30

Life Worthy of the Gospel

27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

O God Most High!

Everlasting Lord, mighty and lifted up!

Grant to us your Holy Spirit,

that in these words of Holy Scripture

our hearts might be lifted up

and our minds set on heavenly realities,

that contemplating the reign of our ascended Lord

we might long to be with him

and enter into the joy of his eternal kingdom.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**



“Conducting Ourselves In a Manner Worthy of Christ” Philippians 1: 27 - 30

Going to a friends house for dinner or to a party is very different for an adult than it is for a child. As an adult, you just decide what you are going to wear, what you are going to take and then you go. As a child, things were very different. My mother always made sure that I was dressed in clean clothes, that my hair was combed, my teeth brushed and if it was a party, she made sure that I had a

gift in hand. Once the grooming was finished, she proceeded to give me a lecture. “Be polite and always say please and thank you. When you are eating, don’t talk with your mouth full. Always ask for things to be passed to you. Don’t reach in front of the other children and just grab the food. Eat everything on your plate. And Stephen, please don’t pick your nose. Here are some Kleenex for your pocket. If your nose gives you trouble, blow it – don’t pick it!” Really, she was just emphasizing things that I had already been taught at home.

My father’s approach was a little different. While he was never behind in giving me specific advice, usually I got a one or two liner from him. “Stephen, don’t forget who you are. You’re a Dunkin. Don’t forget how Dunkin’s conduct themselves in public.” I don’t want to imply that there was a double standard in our home. My parents didn’t expect me to act differently in public than they did in private. They wanted me to act in public in the same way that they had taught me to act at home. I was a Dunkin and as a Dunkin I was expected to live and act in a certain way.

In our Scripture lesson today, Paul addresses not individuals but all the saints in Christ Jesus who live in Philippi. He is concerned about how they are going to live their lives together. He is writing to his spiritual children and he is concerned about how they are going to conduct themselves in public, as well as in their private lives. Paul is faced with his own difficult circumstances, but then so are the Philippians. I believe that what he has to say to them in the first century is just as applicable to us as a church here in Perth in the 21st century. We too are living through uncertain times, as were the Philippians.

In the New International Version the four verses we are going to look at today bear the title **Life Worthy Of The Gospel**. The start of verse 27 reads: **27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.** Notice that I have underlined the words **whatever happens.** Paul found himself in a situation where he was not sure if he was going to live, die or be set free. So he says **whatever happens.** The Philippians were also going through uncertain times as we will see. So Paul is saying to them, **whatever happens.** We are living through uncertain times, so Paul says to us **whatever happens.** Whatever happens to me



– whatever happens to you, **conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ**. Remember who you are. Remember whose name you bear. You are Christians and because you bear the name of Christ, remember that it doesn't matter what happens to me or to you. **Just make sure that you conduct yourselves – that your manner of living – is worthy of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.**

We believe and live as if it is the outcome of a given set of circumstances that is all important. If we get what we want; if things turn out as we hope, that is the most important thing. I have come to realize that this is a misguided notion. In God's economy, getting what you want and having things turn out as you hope are the least important things. God already knows how things are going to turn out and he is more interested in our **conduct**. Our conduct will be a reflection of our character. With God, character is of supreme importance. If our character is what God wants it to be, then so will our conduct, regardless of the outcome.

Here at St. Andrew's we live with uncertainty and have lived with it for some time. Over a year ago, we set up a Vacancy Committee to begin the process of looking for your next minister. Despite the committee doing good work, and despite having a pretty good handle on what they are looking for, that committee has so far come up empty handed. Let me say that God already knows who that person will be. It is no surprise to him that the search has gone on this long, how few qualified applications we have received and how difficult it has been. In what the Bible calls "**the fullness of time**" – that is, at just the right time, God will bring that person forward. In the meantime, God is concerned about how we conduct ourselves in this time of uncertainty and how our character is developing in the process. **27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.**



Over a year ago, The Presbyterian Church in Canada made the decision to reject the clear teaching of Scripture and follow a course of doctrine and practice that stands in radical opposition to our Reformed heritage. While that decision is waiting to be finalized – and it appears to be certain that it will – we live in a period of uncertainty. The Session responded to Presbytery before that decision was made in

regard to our rejection of these new standards, but until things are finalized, we as a congregation are left in uncertainty. American civil rights leader and Baptist minister Dr. Ralph P. Abernathy, an associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said this about the uncertainty of the future. “I don’t know what the future may hold, but I know who holds the future!”

Paul writes: **Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.**

The next question we need to ask ourselves is: “What does it mean for a group of people to conduct themselves in a worthy manner?” “What does it mean for a church to conduct itself in a worthy manner?” **27 Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that....** It doesn’t matter whether Paul is set free and can visit the Philippians in person, or whether he remains in prison and only hears about how they are doing by second hand reports, there are three things that he needs to know:

1. **27 ... I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit.** There was a game

that we used to play as kids called Red Rover. There would be two lines of children or young people facing one another. One side would call out: “Red Rover, Red Rover, we call Marcy over.” Marcy would run from her side, try to find the weakest spot in the opposing line and break through as in this picture.



The group that she was running against would plant

their feet firmly. They would hold tightly onto one another’s hands and try to stop Marcy from breaking through their line. Together, they needed to stand firm. If we as a Christian Church are going to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, we need to **stand firm in the one Spirit**. The young people playing Red Rover have only one thought in mind and that is to stop Marcy from breaking through their line. As Christians we need to learn to be of **one Spirit**. As Christians, we can only allow **one Spirit** – the Spirit of God – to be at work in our midst. To be of **one Spirit** is to stand together in unity. That unity is the unity of the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 133 begins with these words: **1 How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!** Unity is good and pleasant. Disunity is bad and unpleasant. But there is more here than we notice at first. Unity is not just good and pleasant, because as we read on in verses **3 For there the LORD bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.** When we stand firm together in the unity of the Spirit, that is where we will find God's blessing. Disunity drives God's blessing away.

2. To conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ also involves **27 ... striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.** It is not enough to be like minded; to just be in agreement. It is in regard to the **faith of the gospel** that we must be in agreement. There are churches that are torn by strife and disunity. There are other churches that are in total agreement about what they want. They want their church to be a safe and happy little social club where the tranquility of fun activities is never disturbed. I heard about a church like that. It was called St. Sominex Presbyterian Church and the minister was the Rev. Joe Pillow. The church's slogan was "The Home of Soothing Sermons".

If we are going to stand firm together in unity – if we are going to strive, or contend for anything – then it must be the **faith of the gospel**. It must be centred in Jesus Christ because he is the centre and focus of the gospel. He is what it is all about. A church that is centred in anything else, no matter how good and noble it may be, is not really a church. The church must be the Church of Jesus Christ. Never before in the history of the church in Canada do we need to contend and strive for the faith of the gospel more than we do today.

3. As we contend and strive for the faith of the gospel Paul says that we are to do so **28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.** Now we are getting down into the weeds. Paul is writing to a group of Christians who are facing stiff opposition. They were being pressured to conform to the practices of their society. Those practices were in direct conflict with their Christian beliefs. There were serious consequences for those who refused to conform to those practices. They could lose their jobs. They could have their property confiscated. They could go to prison. It was only natural that they should be frightened, but Paul's contention is that if they are to **conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ**, then there are certain things they must do:
 - **stand firm in the one Spirit** – the Holy Spirit.

- **strive together as one for the faith of the gospel**
- and they are to do so **without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.**

That is a little bit like spanking a child and then telling him not to cry. How can you face strong opposition and not be frightened?

Jesus says that there are some things that are worthy of fear and other things that are not. In Luke 12 we read **4 “I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do. 5 But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him!”** What is Jesus saying here? He does not provide any guarantee to his disciples against death. God alone controls our final destiny and we should fear him rather than mere men who can only kill the body and after that can do nothing. Mere men may be able to kill us, but final authority over us is in the hands of God. **Yes, I tell you, fear him! 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows.** We are to fear God, but no one else and nothing else. Beyond that we are not to be afraid. God knows us and loves us. He who has numbered the very hairs of our heads will take care of his own.

There is one last thing that I want to comment on before I make my concluding remarks. **29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him ...** I expect that there are very few here this morning who do not believe in Jesus Christ, but is there anyone here who has ever suffered for him? I have been ridiculed for my faith. Even within



the Presbyterian Church people have laughed at it and made fun of it. Some Christians have made my life very unpleasant at times, but I have never really suffered for my faith. However, Paul says that **it has been granted to (us) on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.** Notice that word “granted”. That means we have the privilege of not only believing in Christ but also the privilege of

suffering for Christ.

Suffering for Christ is something we rarely hear about in our society. There was the case of Rachel Scott who died at the hands of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold in the massacre at Columbine High School. In the movie *"I'm Not Ashamed: The Rachel Joy Scott Story"*, Klebold and Harris are portrayed as mocking Scott for her belief in God, but it is unclear if that actually happened. Undoubtedly Rachel's diaries demonstrated her deep personal faith in Jesus Christ. There is no doubt that Rachel was a vibrant young Christian woman, but did she die because of her faith? Despite the claims of the movie, we cannot be certain.

It is more common to hear about Westerners dying for their faith in other countries. Australian missionary Graham Staines had worked among leprosy patients and members of the tribal people who lived in abject poverty in India. In January 1999 he was sleeping in his car outside a small church along with his two sons



Philip (10) and Timothy (6) when their car was torched by Hindu extremists who alleged that there had been forced conversions by Staines and others in his mission. The allegations were unfounded. Later Staines wife Gladys was awarded the Mother Theresa Memorial Award for Social Justice for their work among lepers and the tribal people.



Gayle Williams was an aid worker for SERVE, Afghanistan. She was walking to work in Kabul in 2008 when she was shot to death by two men on a motorbike. The Taliban claimed responsibility for her death and said that she was killed because "she worked for an organization that was preaching Christianity in Afghanistan". Her sister Karen said that she had forgiven the killers as Gayle would have done.

These are all westerners. But what about Indian Christians who know that persecutions and

beatings can come at any time? What about Muslims who become Christians realizing that if their conversions become known by their families it is a death sentence? What about the Chinese Christians who worship in underground churches, knowing that imprisonment is a very real possibility for them? You see, Christians in the 21st Century are just as likely to undergo suffering as were Christians in the 1st Century. So far, it is just more likely that they will not live in the West, but in Africa, in Asia and the Middle East. So far the minor uncertainties that Christians face in Canada and the West, pale in comparison to that experienced in other parts of the world. But make no mistake. Suffering will rise for us as our society moves away from its Judeo Christian foundations and embraces a more secular, hedonistic – even pagan – worldview. However Paul’s message speaks to us today no matter where we live and no matter what we are facing. **27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then ... I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.**

Hymn #643: “Lift High The Cross”, First Plymouth Church
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C59j6p6iOZ4>

Chorus

Lift high the Cross the love of Christ proclaim
 Till all the world adore His sacred name

1. Come, Christians, follow where our Saviour trod
 Our Lamb victorious, Christ, the Son of God
2. All new born servants, of the Crucified
 Bears on their brow the seal of Christ who died
3. O Lord once lifted on the glorious Tree
 Your death has brought us life eternally.
4. So shall our song of triumph ever be
 Praise to the Crucified for victory

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. standrewspertthoffering@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

So here's what I want you to do, God helping you:

Take your everyday, ordinary life—

your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—

and place it before God as an offering.

Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.

—Romans 12:1, TM

Offertory Prayer

Lord God, heavenly King,

we offer these our gifts

as a sign of love, devotion, and praise.

Through these, as through our praises,

we acknowledge that you are our Lord.

In your name we pray. **Amen.**

Pastoral Prayer

Closing Hymn #449:

“Lord, Listen To Your Children Praying”

<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. (Sing twice)

Benediction

Go now, and embrace the hope to which God has called us.

Recognise Christ in friend and stranger,

and as Christ has been gracious to you,

so be gracious to those in need.

And may God give you a place of rest on rich pasture;

May Christ Jesus be the shepherd king who binds your wounds;

And may the Holy Spirit give you wisdom

and reveal to you the fullness of the one who fills all in all.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.