

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Worship Leader: Rev. John McIntyre**

**Welcome**

**Call to Worship**

(Psa 92:1-8) A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praises to your name, O Most High;  
**to declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night,**

to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre.

**For you, O LORD, have made me glad by your work; at the works of your hands I sing for joy.**

How great are your works, O LORD! Your thoughts are very deep!

**The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot understand this:**

that though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish, they are doomed to destruction forever;

**but you, O LORD, are on high forever.**

**Prayer of Invocation**

Our Father and our God, you alone are the true and living God. Beside you there is no other. As we gather before you in this place, your word reminds us that you are forgiving and good, a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness to all who call to you. May you be pleased to draw us to yourself through our worship that you might be glorified and your name exalted. We ask, blessed Holy Spirit, that you would give us a worshipful spirit that draws our focus away from ourselves, and gives us receptive hearts, renewed minds, revived zeal and a faithful response as you speak to us through your word and expressions of your truth and love. We ask this with thankful hearts and in the name of our Lord Jesus. **Amen.**

**Hymn: "Love divine All Loves Excelling", Author: Charles Wesley**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-6PMvgJHG0>

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
 joy of heav'n, to earth come down,  
 fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
 all thy faithful mercies crown.  
 Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
 pure, unbounded love thou art.

Visit us with thy salvation;  
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit  
into ev'ry troubled breast.  
Let us all in thee inherit,  
let us find the promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be.  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty, to deliver,  
let us all thy life receive.  
Suddenly return, and never,  
nevermore they temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray, and praise thee without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;  
true and spotless let us be.  
Let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee.  
Changed from glory into glory,  
till in heav'n we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love and praise.

### **Call to Confession**

Speaking prophetically of our Lord Jesus, Isa 53:4-6 says that: *Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.* Let us make our confession trusting in the merits of our Lord Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.

## Prayer of Confession

We hear our Saviour's invitation to come to him that we might have life abundant and the forgiveness of sin. But we must admit: We've been too busy to pray, too anxious to stop and listen for your voice, too guilty to approach you, too afraid to let go of what is comfortable and familiar, too proud to admit we don't know how to change, too fearful to confess that we don't understand how to make our way back to you, and too slothful to leave our sin behind. Our sin weighs us down with shame and somehow it feels too difficult for us to come to One who is holy, righteous, just, and pure as you are. We are prodigal children who have in so many ways, squandered the life you have given us. But you are the God of tender mercies who gave your only begotten Son to make atonement for our sin, and so, like the tax collector beating his breast and weeping at a distance, we too, cry out: God, have mercy on me, a sinner. In your great, great, mercy, pardon our sins for the sake of Jesus Christ and by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit help us to abandon our sinful ways and walk in your holy ways. **Amen.**

## Assurance of Pardon

In (Psa 103:8-12) we read that: *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.* The Lord has forgiven our sins in Christ. Let us receive his forgiveness and rest in his amazing grace now and forever.

## 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:

**Psa 25:1-10**

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

**O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me.**

Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

**Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths.**

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all the day long.

**Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.**

Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for the sake of your goodness, O LORD!

**Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in the way.**

He leads the humble in what is right, and teaches the humble his way.

**All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.**

Hymn: **“My Saviour’s Love”**, Author: Charles H Gabriel  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYvKb1iOEUo>

I stand amazed in the presence,  
 Of Jesus the Nazarene;  
 And wonder how He could love me,  
 A sinner condemned unclean.

*How marvelous how wonderful,  
 And my song shall ever be;  
 How marvelous how wonderful,  
 Is my Savior's love for me.*

For me it was in the garden,  
 He prayed "Not my will but thine"  
 He had no tears for His own grief,  
 But sweat drops of blood for mine.

*How marvelous how wonderful,  
 And my song shall ever be;  
 How marvelous how wonderful,  
 Is my Savior's love for me.*

When with the ransomed in Glory,  
 His face I at last shall see;  
 Will be my joy through the ages,  
 To sing of His love for me.

*How marvelous how wonderful,  
And my song shall ever be;  
How marvelous how wonderful,  
Is my Savior's love for me.*

### **Scripture Reading:**

### **I Cor 13**

- 1** If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
- 2** And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.
- 3** If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.
- 4** Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant
- 5** or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
- 6** it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.
- 7** Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
- 8** Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.
- 9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part,
- 10** but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
- 11** When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.
- 12** For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.
- 13** So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

### **Prayer for Illumination**

Our gracious Father in heaven, "What we know not, teach us. What we are not, make us. What we have not, give us." **Amen**

## Our Debt of Love (Rom 13:8)

In addition to today being Sunday, many will mark it as “Valentine’s Day.” According to Wikipedia Valentine’s Day originated as a Western Christian feast day honouring one or two early Christian martyrs named Saint Valentine. It is recognized as a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and love in many regions of the world.

The Bible has a lot to say about love. by way of review, it teaches us that Love begins in God himself. “*God is love*” (1 Jn 4:16). God in his very nature is love and in creating mankind in his own image, he has given us all the ability to love. Thus we read in (1Jn 4:19) “*We love because he first loved us.*” In addition, for all those who are chosen recipients of God’s saving grace, “*God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*” (Rom 5:5).

Now, contrary to the fickle nature of love among fallen mankind, God’s love is a love that loves the unloving and unlovable. In saving those of us who have placed our faith in Christ, (Rom 5:8) teaches us that “... *God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” Indeed the biblical model of godly “Love” is love that lays down its preferences, its entitlements and its very self, for the sake of the beloved. This is the brand of love Jesus commands us to exhibit when he says in (Jn 13:34), “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*” He then goes on to say a little later in, (Jn 15:13) “*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.*”

Yes, love is written large throughout the pages of Scripture. It is the lead virtue listed in (Gal 5:22) where the fruit of the Spirit is listed: “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...*” So important is love on the part of Christians that Jesus says (Jn 13:35) “*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*”

And so we come to our text for today as found in (Rom 13:8-10) where we are commanded to imitate our Lord in expressing his love shed abroad in our hearts. (Rom 13:8-10)

*8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

*9 For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as*

*yourself."*

*10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

When Paul tells us to, "owe no one," it is not an option. It is a command. It calls for active obedience and by positive implication says, "Owe love!" What is the purpose of this command? It is to show us how to fulfill God's will, that is, "*He who loves his neighbour has fulfilled the law.*"

What specific law is St Paul talking about? It is found in (V. 9) "*You shall love your neighbour as yourself.*" Jesus affirmed this same law. (Lu 10:27-28). On that occasion he asked a man, what he thought was required to receive eternal life. His answer to Jesus was, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.*" And Jesus said to him, "*You have answered correctly; Do this, and you will live.*"

James, in his epistle calls this law, the "Royal Law." Why does Scripture call it the "Royal Law?" It calls it the royal law because it reveals the nature of the sovereign Creator of the Universe. As recounted earlier, the Bible says, "*We love, because He first loved us.*" "*God is love, & the one who abides in love abides in Him*" And so, to love or owe love, is in keeping with God's nature.

*Owe no one anything, except to love each other.* This is a debt we can never completely discharge. One commentator refers to this debt of love as an, "*Immortal debt of mutual love, which, though fully paid, is still forever due.*" The debt of love - Is a perpetual debt. – Why? It is perpetual because God is eternal and *His love* is perpetual. To love will never be out of date because Christ's love & His Father's love are continuous. "*His love endures forever.*"

It says, "*Owe no one anything, except to love each other.*" That means no one is to be excluded from our debt of love. We owe it to all persons to love them.

This sounds like a strange command. (We all know of people who are unlovable) Yet we are called to love – Why is that? Well, in the beginning, "*God created Man in his own image.*" At present it's a distorted/shattered image to be sure, but even in its distorted condition that image of God in humanity is the basis of mankind's worth, the basis of morality, the reason why immorality is wrong, and the basis of perpetual love for every person.

This kind of love is rare because it is so costly. The love Paul is talking about is not a cheap love. It is a costly love. It is a love inspired and by Christ: (Eph 5:2) *Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.* God's love for us cost Him the life of His only begotten Son. True godly love is not cheap – It is costly.

The story is told of a hunger-weakened mother lying on the ground and holding a tiny baby girl in her arms. An aid worker put a cooked sweet potato into

her outstretched hand, wondering if she would live until morning. Her strength almost gone, her tired eyes acknowledged the gift. The sweet potato could help so little – but it was all the worker had. Taking a bite she chewed it carefully. Then, placing her mouth over her baby's mouth, she forced the soft warm food into the tiny throat. Although the mother was starving, she used the entire potato to keep her baby alive. Exhausted from her effort, she dropped her head on the ground and closed her eyes. In a few minutes the baby was asleep. Later during the night the mother's heart stopped, but her little girl lived.

God in His love for us (and for a lost world) "*spared not His own Son*" to give the world His love. Such love is costly.

How is this costly love to be worked out in our lives? These words may help.

It is silence – when your words would hurt.

It is patience – when your neighbour's curt.

It is deafness – when a scandal flows.

It is thoughtfulness – for other's woes.

It is promptness – when stern duty calls.

It is courage – when misfortune falls.

It is a love that takes no thought for self.

It is a love that displaces self for the sake of another.

It is a love that seeks to create value in another.

The love we owe not only costly, it is a love that includes all persons.

It is a love for Family: Our closest neighbours.

On one occasion, the teacher gave an adult-education creative-writing class 15 minutes to write, "*I love you*" in 25 words or less, *without* using the words "*I love you.*" One woman in the class spent about ten minutes looking at the ceiling and wriggling in her seat. The last five minutes she wrote frantically and later read the results: "*Why, I've seen lots worse hairdos than that honey.*" "*These cookies are hardly burned at all.*" "*Cuddle up – I'll warm up your feet.*"

Love suffers the chill involved in warming up another's feet.

It is love for our neighbours: Even those who may be distant neighbours.

Who is your neighbour? Someone has said: *Your neighbour is one whose need you see, and whose need you can help meet.*

The story goes that as a child, a boy named Ted Stallard was a needy kid. Turned off by school, he was very sloppy in appearance. He was expressionless & unattractive. Even his teacher, Miss Thompson enjoyed, bearing down her red pen as she placed X's beside his many wrong answers. If only she had studied his records more carefully - They read: 1st grade: Ted shows promise with his work and attitude, but has poor home situation. 2nd grade: Ted could do better. Mother seriously ill. Receives little help from home. 3rd grade: Ted is good boy but too serious. He is a slow learner. His mother died this year. 4th grade: Ted is



very slow, but well-behaved. His father shows no interest whatsoever.

Christmas arrived. The children piled elaborately wrapped gifts on their teacher's desk. Ted brought one too. It was wrapped in brown paper and held together with Scotch Tape. Miss Thompson opened each gift, as the children crowded around to watch. Out of Ted's package fell a gaudy rhinestone bracelet, with half of the stones missing, and a bottle of cheap perfume. The children began to snicker. But she silenced them by splashing some of the perfume on her wrist, and letting them smell it. She put the bracelet on too.

At day's end, after the other children had left, Ted came by the teacher's desk and said, *"Miss Thompson, you smell just like my mother. And the bracelet looks real pretty on you. I'm glad you like my presents."* He left and Miss Thompson bowed her head and asked God to forgive her and to change her attitude.

The next school day, a reformed teacher greeted the children. One committed to loving each of them, especially the slow ones – Especially Ted. Surprisingly, or maybe, not surprisingly, Ted began to show great improvement. He actually caught up with most of the students & even passed a few.

Graduation came and went. Miss Thompson heard nothing from Ted for a long time. Then, one day, she received this note: *"Dear Miss Thompson: I wanted you to be the first to know. I will be graduating second in my class. Love, Ted"*

Four years later, another note arrived:

*"Dear Miss Thompson: They just told me I will be graduating first in my class. I wanted you to be first to know. University has not been easy, but I liked it. Love, Ted"*

And four years later:

*"Dear Miss Thompson: As of today, I am Theodore Stallard, M.D. How about that? I wanted you to be the first to know. I am getting married next month, the 27th to be exact. I want you to come and sit where my mother would sit if she were alive. You are the only family I have now; Dad died last year. Love Ted"*

It's not always easy or natural to love our neighbours; it takes courage, reckless abandon and denial of self! But we are called to love our removed neighbours, even the least of them.

### The love we owe is a love that is indispensable

It's a love you might see alongside the shuffleboard courts in Florida, or in the seniors apartment buildings: An old man with snow-white hair, a little hard of hearing, reading the newspaper through a magnifying glass; An old woman in a shapeless dress, her knuckles gnarled by arthritis, wearing sandals to ease her aching arches. They are holding hands, and in a little while they will totter off to

take a nap. Then, she will cook supper, maybe not a very good supper. And they will watch television, each knowing exactly what the other is thinking, until it is time for bed. They may even have a good, soul-stirring argument, just to prove that they still really care. And through the night they will snore unabashedly, each resting content because the other is there. They are in love – they have always been in love, although sometimes they would have denied it. And because they have been in love they have survived everything that life could throw at them, even their own failures. Love is indispensable!

The love in the text is a love that lasts. It is a committed. It is faithful.

It was a busy morning in outpatients when an elderly gentleman, in his 80's, arrived about 8:30 AM to have stitches removed from his thumb. He stated that he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am. I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound. On exam, it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound.

While taking care of his wound, we began to engage in conversation. I asked him if he had a doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry. The gentleman said no, but that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his wife. I then inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer Disease.

As we talked, and I finished dressing his wound, I asked if she would be worried if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. I was surprised, and asked him. *"And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?"* He smiled as he patted my hand and said. *"She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is."* The love of God in a heart is - A love that lasts

**The love God says we owe – is a love that lasts. It is a love that is required of us all – *Right Now!*** It is not something to be, put off.

Someone has written, (Before the advent of smart phones)

*"If we discovered that we had five minutes left to say all we wanted to say, every telephone booth would be occupied by people calling other people to stammer that they love them."*

Why wait until the last five minutes?

*"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."*

**Hymn: “How deep the Father’s Love for Us”, Stuart Townend**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tzQj7XvKFmA>

How deep the Father's love for us  
 How vast beyond all measure  
 That He should give His only Son  
 To make a wretch His treasure

How great the pain of searing loss  
 The Father turns His face away  
 As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
 Bring many sons to glory

Behold the man upon a cross  
 My sin upon His shoulders  
 Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice  
 Call out among the scoffers

It was my sin that held Him there  
 Until it was accomplished  
 His dying breath has brought me life  
 I know that it is finished

I will not boast in anything  
 No gifts, no power, no wisdom  
 But I will boast in Jesus Christ  
 His death and resurrection

Why should I gain from His reward?  
 I cannot give an answer  
 But this I know with all my heart  
 His wounds have paid my ransom

### **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](mailto: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**

The God of all of creation holds each one of us in tender love and care. So we respond in gratitude and praise by offering a portion of what we have generously received from a loving God.

### **Offertory Prayer**

Our father and our God we are reminded of your word to the Corinthian church and to us, to excel in this act of grace and thereby prove that our love also is genuine. For we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich. Be pleased Father, to bless these gifts to the furtherance of you kingdom even as we pray, thy kingdom come. **Amen**

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Our gracious heavenly Father we again come before you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ acknowledging your undying love as God who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. All praise to you for your indescribable gift proffered in our Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation he brings to all who rest in him.

We thank you for the innumerable spiritual blessings that are ours in him and for the temporal blessings that you lavishly pour out upon us: Family, friends, fellowship, the measure of health and strength allotted to each of us and for the faith hope and love you impart to us the undergirds our lives by your grace.

We pray for those in authority over us at each level of governance and ask that you give our leaders wisdom, discernment, fortitude and integrity as they seek to administer the affairs they are called to oversee. We particularly pray for all who serve in staunching the ravages of the pandemic that threatens our nation and the world. Assist them in their duties whatever they may be. And give them patient endurance when they grow weary. Be pleased Father to use this pandemic as a calling card reminding us that we are not autonomous but that there is a God before whom we are accountable and a Saviour in whom to trust that we might be presented faultless before your throne on that day that is drawing closer by the moment.

We pray for this congregation asking for your provision of a minister steeped in the doctrines of grace who loves his God, his neighbour and the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be pleased to advance your kingdom among us for the sake of your dear son. Grant the leadership of this congregation grace, wisdom, discernment and abundant knowledge of your word and your will amid the denominational complications that have arisen as outlined in the annual report.

We pray that you would graciously meet the needs of those within our congregation that are experiencing difficulties of various kinds be they physical challenges, grief over the passing of a loved one, emotional, relational, financial or any other problem that is causing your people anxiety and doubt.

By your Spirit, enable each of us to entrust ourselves to your providences knowing that you do all things well and that each of our names are engraved on the palms of your hands and nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All these things and much more, we commend to you, the only wise and loving God who is able to do far more abundantly than our minds can ask or think, in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: “Here is Love Vast as the Ocean”, Authors: Wm Rees & Wm Williams**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c-bZe3QLrHI>

Here is love, vast as the ocean  
 Loving kindness as the flood  
 When the Prince of Life, our Ransom  
 Shed for us His precious blood  
 Who His love will not remember?  
 Who can cease to sing His praise?  
 He can never be forgotten  
 Throughout Heaven's eternal days

On the mount of crucifixion  
 Fountains opened deep and wide  
 Through the floodgates of God's mercy  
 Flowed a vast and gracious tide  
 Grace and love, like mighty rivers  
 Poured incessant from above  
 And Heaven's peace and perfect justice  
 Kissed a guilty world in love

**Benediction**

The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.