

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
February 21st, 2021
Worship Leader: Rev. Beryl Orok

Welcome

Call to Worship

(Micah 6:8)

“God has told you, o mortal, what is good; and what the Lord requires of you; but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humble with your God.”

God, as we go through the wilderness of Lent and the seasons of our lives, send Your manna to us.

May Your Word and Your holy presence give us strength and wisdom to turn from temptation and embrace what You have required of us as Your servants.

We have set aside this time together to worship and we seek Your presence among us. We are listening for the voice of Your Spirit.

Show us Your ways, encourage our hearts we pray.

We desire to walk with You; humbly, closely, each day. Amen.

Prayer of Invocation

Into Your presence we come, Father God, as your children have done throughout the centuries. In vast cathedrals, parish churches, Chapels, warehouses, catacombs, converted cinema's and storefronts, in lonely isolated places and now in our homes.

Alone or gathered together with others, Your Church is wherever Your people meet, whether physically or in spirit to worship You and pray.

Be with us now, Loving Father and we thank You for the love and mercy extended to us through the death and resurrection of Your Son Jesus, Our Savior and Lord. Amen

Hymn #461:

“Be Thou My Vision” – Selah

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

1. Be Thou my Vision O Lord of my heart
 Naught be all else to me save that Thou art

Thou my best thought by day or by night
Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light

2. Be Thou my Wisdom and Thou my true Word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me Lord
Thou my great Father I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one
3. High King of heaven my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys bright heaven's Sun
Heart of my own heart whatever befall
Still be my Vision O Ruler of all

Call to Confession

Let us pray: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your unfailing love.

Let us come before God to confess our sin and ask forgiveness. Now let us take a few moments in silence to recall our personal sins.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, on this first Sunday of Lent we are reminded of Jesus in the desert. He was tempted, over and over again, and yet stayed steadfast in His goodness. We are tempted continually, as we live our lives. We struggle with petty jealousies; we want material goods and a sense of power that no one needs. God, be with us in our struggle as You were with Your son in the desert. Help us to be open to Your leading and Your Word, as our example and direction. Give us strength to stay on the path You have chosen for us. And when we do stray, remind us that You will grant forgiveness, if we repent and turn to You. This we ask in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

God has given ear to our confession today.

Just as by one person's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one sacrifice of Jesus, the many are made righteous. In the name of Jesus Christ we are forgiven. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, Who art in heaven
Hallow'ed is 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 our debtors.
 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 25: 1-10

To You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

**O my God, I trust in You; Let me not be ashamed; Let not my
 enemies triumph over me.**

Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed
 who deal treacherously without cause.

Show me Your ways, O Lord; Teach me Your paths.

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation;
 On You I wait all the day.

**Remember, O Lord, Your tender mercies and Your loving
 kindnesses, For they are from of old.**

Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions; According
 to Your mercy remember me, For Your goodness' sake, O Lord.

**Good and upright is the Lord; Therefore He teaches sinners in
 the way.**

The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

**All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, To such as keep
 His covenant and His testimonies**

Ministry of Music: "All My Ways Are Known To You" – CityAlight
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44mVzqGeS-Q&feature=youtu.be>

1. In days of peace and days of rest
 In times of loss and loneliness
 Though rich or poor Your word is true
 That all my ways are known to You

2. No trial has come beyond Your hand
 No step I walk beyond Your plan
 The path is dark outside my view
 Still all my ways are known to You

Chorus

And O what peace that I have found
 Wherever I may be

For all my ways are known to You
Hallelujah they are known to You

3. I do not fear the final night
For death will be the door to life
You take my hand and lead me through
For all my ways are known to You

Bridge (X2)

Open up my eyes so I may see
That You have made these ways for me
Open up my eyes so I may see
That You my God will walk with me

Scripture Reading:

Mark 1: 9-15

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. **10** Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. **11** And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." **12** At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, **13** and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. **14** After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. **15** "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy One, prepare us to receive Your Word. As we listen in faith and hope, open our souls to Your quenching water. Free us from our doubts and fears. Enrich our minds with renewed vigor to think as You think and our hearts to love as You love. **Amen.**

“The Times of Testing”

Today we find ourselves commencing the season of Lent.
By definition Lent is; the period preceding Easter; wherein the Christian Church is devoted to fasting, abstinence, and penitence in commemoration

of Christ's fasting in the wilderness and as spiritual preparation for the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The Lenten season extends from Ash Wednesday until Holy Saturday, which includes forty weekdays. Historically Lent was associated with the Roman Catholic Church; but other denominations have recognized the significance of being spiritually better prepared for Easter and encourage participation in the elements of Lent to do so. This manifests from the thinking that Easter needs to not be a one-day event; but rather the culmination of a journey; that is both meaningful and powerful in our lives, as followers of Christ.

I personally believe Lent is a most significant opportunity to focus on our spiritual lives and our personal walk with God.

Likewise; it can also be a time when a congregation can be united in a shared journey of prayer, intensified scripture reading, meditation and some form or other of fasting. So even though we are not gathering physically as the body of believers, we can as a church community participate through our like mindedness and commitment.

The significance of the season of Lent, for me, began in my childhood. During Lent our family prayed together more, and as I grew up the season of Lent brought to me personally, a keen awareness of my sinfulness and need to repent and avoid temptation.

My mother had a lesson about temptation for us kids each Lent and we all participated. No choices here!

She would insist we give up something we enjoyed for Lent.

Often, she chose what it was we were to give up!!! One year she insisted we give up chewing gum; which admittedly I really enjoyed.

To help us develop strength to overcome temptation, she distributed open packages of juicy fruit gum around the house. Now you know how good juicy fruit gum smells.

It was dire consequences for any of us caught chewing gum during that Lent; except on Sundays! Sunday was a day of rest; a day off battling temptation and we could have gum!!

As I look back on those Lenten seasons, it is both amusing and interesting. I am grateful for her efforts to develop us spiritually and teach us about obedience and avoiding temptation.

The lectionary reading for Lent is connected to the fast and temptation Jesus underwent when the Spirit led Him into the wilderness directly following His baptism. It is documented in Mark 1:12-13, Matthew 4: 1-11 and Luke 4: 1-13.

Mark tells us that Jesus was tempted by Satan; but it is in Matthew and Luke the details of the temptation are fleshed out. I will refer to the section in Matthew in sharing some thoughts with you today.

It is noteworthy that a temptation is not always about trying to get someone to do something that is inherently wrong. There is a story about a little boy who was noticed staring longingly at an open box of donuts sitting on the counter in a store. The store manager observed the little guy for a bit and finally addressed him saying; "Young man, are you tempted to take one of those donuts?" The little boy looked up to the man and said, "No sir, I am trying hard not to be tempted to take one of those donuts." We smile at this but remember that the Lord's Prayer petitions God to lead us not into temptation!

Many have been duped into thinking of Satan, the devil, Beelzebub, the spirit of evil in the world, as a comic strip character; to be taken lightly: even joked and laughed about; a ridiculous superstition from an old and primitive time. Perhaps this is the evil one's greatest achievement. Some may have been persuaded that evil, as a real entity, does not exist, and that our modern, intellectual, sophisticated world, will no longer fall for this old story about a prince of darkness.

However; the witness of God's Word is insistent. There is an evil force; call it; call him, what you may. The name Satan means adversary; as such he is a spiritual enemy opposing all that is good and noble.

In John 12:31 Jesus calls Satan the ruler of this world.

Ephesians 2:1-2 deems him the prince of the air and a spirit who is at work in those who are disobedient.

Satan was and is a formidable enemy of God's people.

John 8:44 "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he speaks, he speaks his own language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

There are 4 references to Satan in the Old Testament and 35 in the New Testament.

The confrontation with evil is as real today as it was in Eden; at the beginning of the human adventure.

I am presently reading a novel entitled; Father Elijah: An Apocalypse.

It is a captivating, yet sobering and sometimes frightening story outlining events that are not beyond the realm of possibility in our world as the Antichrist comes on the scene. What is so sobering is how the author

details the New World Order being introduced and how its insidious mandate penetrates the minds and lives of good Christian people. What it also depicts is just how terrible it is for those who are not deceived and choose to stand against the trials and temptations set before them.

Testing comes to each of us; even as it came to Jesus, who was true God, and yet truly human and thereby vulnerable.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit; Matthew records a portrayal of the confrontation of Christ by Satan. Matthew describes the types of testing Jesus was subjected to, and the testing that we have fallen heir to, as well.

All three gospels state quite clearly, that evil is an actual and powerful reality in the world. The accounts of the temptation of Jesus unfold to us the manner in which evil works in the hidden corners of our hearts and minds, as we live out our day to day lives.

The testing comes to us first, as it came to Jesus, through our senses, our natural desires and our appetites.

Matthew 4: 1-11 gives us the details. After Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist, the Spirit leads Him into the desert.

Beginning with verse **2** **“After fasting forty days and forty nights, Jesus was hungry. 3 The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.”**

Jesus would have been desperately hungry and most vulnerable. The



tempter sought to lure Jesus to use His God given powers to satisfy His hunger. For the record: it is not inherently wrong to turn stones into bread. However; the Father’s will for Jesus at that time was to fast. In time God would provide food for Jesus; but not in this way.

We are aware that one of our greatest areas of vulnerability is our earthly, sensual appetite and desires. The issue with us is; as it was for Jesus; God’s will versus our desires.

This applies, of course, to more than our physical appetites; but rather, all our sensual needs and desires.

The luring voice offers us this choice; satisfy ourselves and enjoy; or follow God’s ways and go without! Jesus gave us the answer as to how to overcome. **Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man**

shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

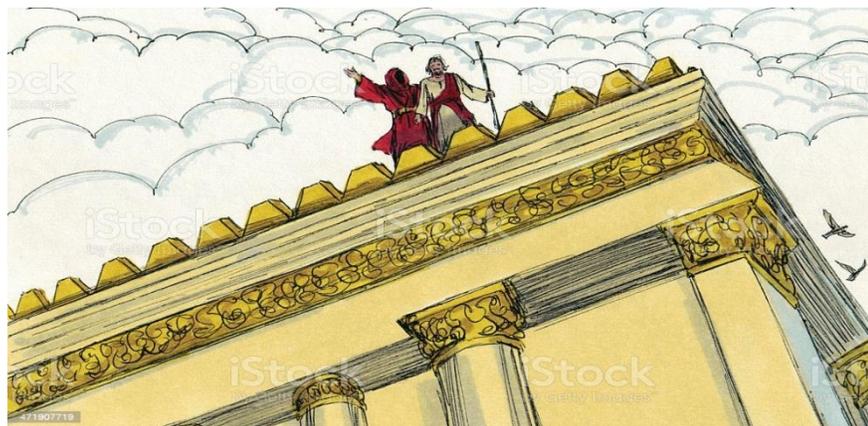
Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple.

6 “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw

yourself down. For it is written:

“He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’

7 Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”



Then as Jesus stood on the pinnacle of the temple, He was once again tempted by the adversary, Satan.

The pinnacle of temple was the South West corner of the Temple mount. It was elevated above the houses and shops in the village below.

This was the site where the priest stood while blowing the trumpet to call the faithful to worship; some 450 degrees above the Kidron Valley.

Satan has brought Jesus to this spot for the purpose of temptation.

Satan presents Jesus with a proposition and he bases it on scripture from **Psalm 91: 11-12** and in so doing, he misquotes **Psalm 91: 11-12** which actually says, “**For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways 12 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**”

Remember Jesus at the time of His arrest, before the crucifixion, tells us in Matthew 26:

53 “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? **54** But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

So, Jesus certainly had the power to call on God to save Him; if He chose to do what Satan was suggesting.

To have such power and not use it was a temptation. Had He succumbed, He might well have had a huge following of people, who saw God's angels saving Him; but this was not the way God had designed for Jesus to create a following.

Jesus replies to Satan saying,

“Thou shalt not tempt God”; which is a scripture reference from Deuteronomy 6:16 “Do Not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Massah”

Satan has knowledge of scripture and here he warped it in his attempt to tempt Jesus! But Jesus fought that battle with the power of Scripture. In so doing; He models for us why it is so important to have the Word of God hidden in our hearts; so we will not sin against Him.

For Jesus there was to be no short cut to His mission.

Every day of our lives testing comes our way. Sometimes testing comes through our doubts and fears.

Basically the test is; trust God and believe God's Word; in spite of our fear and trembling, or call God's bluff and let Him prove Himself. A dangerous and disastrous temptation to succumb to!

This is the temptation may come to us from time to time in questions that are posed to us or that we may be thinking ourselves. Well, if God really cared---- or why would a loving God allow such and such!! The evil spirit begins prodding us and challenging the truth of God's existence, His love and Word.

Testing often comes to us in the dire times and tragedies of our life, when God's presence and love can sometimes seem so far away. But we are believers; and that is what we do; believe! We know His Word and His truth and have experienced His faithfulness and love, in which we can trust in the trials and temptations of life.

Finally; Matthew records that Satan leads Jesus up to a mountain top: the tallest mountain in Israel, which was known to be Mt. Hermon, on Israel's northern border. For centuries different Kings had set up and ruled their kingdoms, built fortresses and cities in the foothills of Mt. Hermon. It is here that Satan promises Jesus political prowess and all the kingdoms of the world, if He will just bow down and worship him.

8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” **10** Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’”

This is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 6:13 **“Fear the Lord, your God, serve Him only and your oaths in His name.”**



Now Jesus’s ultimate goal was and is, to gather all the nations into the Kingdom of God. But before the royal throne, was the cross! The Father’s will for Jesus was the cross. Satan offered Jesus a shortcut to the very goal He was born to accomplish. Jesus did not succumb his wily ways.

Here is the question for us: Does it matter how we achieve God’s will for our lives. Does it matter what methods we use to realize our ambition! Which is more important; the way you live or what you end up with?

This brings to my mind a story a Pastor shared with us in a sermon he was preaching on the subject of doing things God’s way, as the world is watching. He told of a couple he knew who were distressed because they had to declare bankruptcy. They drove the latest, expensive model of car, lived in a fabulous lake house and had time shares in Florida. The husband had a high paying job and gifted expensive jewelry, paintings and even a car to his wife. They took numerous trips each year. Over time they found themselves hiding their valuables and losing their house to bank foreclosure. Pomp and circumstance were everything to these folks; even though they professed to be Christians to all. The wife’s only comment concerning their current situation was, “Well we had a good time getting here anyways and we will again”. I just want to clarify that having money and living well is not the issue here. There was never any accounting for the outrageous lifestyle these folks chose; yet couldn’t pay for, or any repentance in the form of changing their ways. As this Pastor said, “To say the least; it was a very poor Christian witness.”

Does it matter how we live our life ----it sure does! Do the worldly ways and things tempt us? Indeed.

But Philippians 2:13 reminds us; **“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.”**

Tested through our own ambitions and desire; seeking the kingdoms of this world; we hear the Lord’s command. **“Strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things will be given to you as well.”** (Matthew 6:33)

We see this promise come to fruition for Jesus in the final verses of scripture concerning the temptation of Jesus which reads **11 Then the devil left Him, and angels came and attended Him.**

What a beautiful picture of God’s provision and love for His faithful Son.

The ideology behind all sin is to be no longer dependent upon or obedient to God.

There are vital lessons to be learned from the temptation of Jesus.

Ephesians 5:17, **"Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."**

We need to avoid temptation at all costs and scripture tells us how:

Galatians 5:16-17 **“I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.”**

Know the Word of God.

Psalm 119: 7-11, **7 I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn Your righteous laws. 8 I will obey Your decrees; do not utterly forsake me. 9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to Your Word. 10 I seek You with all my heart; do not let me stray from Your commands. 11 I have hidden Your Word in my heart that I might not sin against You.**

Worship God and God alone. The first commandment admonishes us: **“You shall have no other gods before Me.”** (Exodus 20:3)

Now this is one commandment most of us do not think we ever break. We tend to imagine an idol worshipper lying prostrate before a carved image when we hear this commandment. Yet, the command is much broader than that. An idol is anything or anyone who takes the place of God in our lives. It is anything—an object, idea, philosophy, habit, occupation, sport, or person—that is your primary concern, or that to any degree, decreases your trust and loyalty to God. Nothing is to be placed before the Lord. If God is what He claims to be; then He must be supreme in our lives—before everyone and everything else.

“Our God is the person we think most precious, for whom we would make the greatest sacrifice, and who moves our hearts with the warmest love. He is the person who, if we lost him, would leave us desolate.” —Alan Redpath

This season of Lent provides an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the Bible and to also assess our lives for some practical ways to strengthen our walk with God and to repent.

This leads me to some practical thoughts on an element of the Lenten journey that folks commonly think of; fasting.

When we think of the word fasting; we most often think of food! Or maybe that’s just me.!!

But there are many forms of fasting.

I’d like to suggest just a few for your consideration.

1) Fasting from noise in various forms:

It’s hard for us to realize just how flooded our lives are with noise. Silence is a rare gift and it seems ever rarer. **David Haas relates some words from Isaiah in song—“I will come to you in silence; I have called to you and you are mine.”** We can’t possibly hope to hear the voice of God, His Word or fully experience the depth of His love, when we are inundated with noise. This may mean turning off the television, radio, other electronics and getting alone with God! Finding a place of quiet sanctuary where we can commune with God.

2) Fasting from idle words and gossip:

I think we have had a great example from our neighbors to the south of just how impactful and damaging words can be. It seems to me, when I follow some conversations on social media that more and more people

think they have to comment, share their opinion or worse yet; use the platform to insult, ridicule or bully others.

Fasting from idle words and gossip will make us more intentional in our conversations and lead us to really seek our true motivation for what we share in conversations with others.

Proverbs 18:21 - Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat its fruit.

1 Peter 3:10 - For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from deceitful speech.

Proverbs 15:1 - A soft answer turns away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Ephesians 4:29 - Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

3) Perhaps we might consider fasting from excuses and complaints: Some of us are masters at making excuses and some of us can be habitual complainers. Life is challenging. We are all so weary of our situation in this pandemic. What can we do in some small way to make a difference for ourselves or others?

All things are possible with God! Whether it is completing a task that we have been putting off or making the most of this time of isolation.

4) Fasting from busyness is a big one for some to undertake: The word Lent refers to springtime; but its roots in Latin are “lentitudo”; a reference to slowing down. I’m not talking about the busyness of work commitments etc. but rather that tendency we have to rush around and keep busy; sometimes just for the sake of being busy itself. Our society often makes it a badge of honor to be seen as “busy:” But busyness can often lead us to neglect our loved ones, relationships, our health and especially time with our Lord. Busyness is addictive and can be used as a way to avoid situations we would rather not engage in. Have you ever said to someone –Oh, I’m sorry but I’m busy that day? I must confess I have done this!

5) Fasting from expectations: Too often we forget to say thank you; esp. to those we are closest to!

Is it just an expectation that someone will make dinner for you, wash your clothes, shovel your driveway, be there when you need help or an ear to listen, etc.?

Perhaps it's time to practice taking note of just how much others do for us and express thanks to them. It is definitely time to recognize all that God has done for us and His presence in our lives.

6) Fasting from always putting ourselves first.

Saint Francis said, "It is in the giving that we receive---and in the dying that we are born to eternal life."

Putting ourselves first is more than often the thinking and intention that leads us to having expectations of others; making us prone to complaints and excuses. It can also make us less than grateful.

Philippians 2:3. **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. but in humility value others as more important than yourselves.**

7) Which leads to fasting from ungratefulness:

Father Jack of Franciscan Media writes:

"Scientists have done research that shows that grateful people sleep better, are healthier, less depressed, less stressed and have more positive ways of coping with difficulties. We can be enriched by being grateful and we have so much to be grateful for as children of God."

8) We might also fast from asking God for what we want:

That means we would purpose to listen more intentionally to what God desires for us and how He is leading us; rather than always expressing what we want to God.

This can change us and our relationships. Someone once said that gratefulness could change the world! Something to ponder and pray about.

These are just a few practical examples of fasting to get us thinking about engaging in this season of Lent.

Even these I have mentioned will strengthen us and our resolve to draw closer to our God and to avoid succumbing to temptation.

We are tested by the evil, grasping, greedy spirit of these days and we are repeatedly led to magnify the end and ignore the means by which it is achieved.

We are hypnotized by the vision of the crown and the throne; the power and the glory, which is worshipped in the world. Attaining these things can

become so important to us that we have little regard for our brothers and sisters and even disdain for God's Word.

The testing times are always and everywhere unfortunately. What shall we do? Where shall we go?

Jesus, in His testing time has given us the answers.

The way of God, the Word of God and the truth of God are our only sure defense.

Tempted by our appetites we hear the Lord's reply:

Man shall not live by bread alone; but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Mathew 4:4)

Tested by fear and trembling doubt; we hear the Lord's reply:

"Father into your hands, I commend my spirit". Luke 23:46

Perfect love casts out fear.

Tested by our own ambitious seeking of the kingdoms of this world; we hear the Lord's command.

"Strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6: 33-34)

Finally: to be alive to God, we must die to self and the glory of the Christian life is in the love it gives away.

In all we do this Lenten season may we bring glory and honor to our God!

Let us take full advantage of this time of renewal, repentance and commitment!

Hymn:

"In Christ Alone"

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

1. In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light my strength my song
This Cornerstone this solid Ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love what depths of peace
When fears are stilled when strivings cease
My Comforter my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand
2. In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied

For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

3. There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious Day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

4. No guilt in life no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

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 (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Invitation to Offering:

God is so good to us. The Bible tells us that in thankfulness for the abundance of blessings God bestows upon us we should give a portion back to Him; thoughtfully, thankfully and with gladness. This is our opportunity to do so.

Offertory Prayer

Great provider, how can we thank You enough for health, for food, for family, for freedom, for faith? Here is a token of our gratitude Lord, in these gifts we now offer. May they be a true reflection of our thankfulness and a true measure of our discipleship. May they be multiplied and used for the furtherance of Your kingdom. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer

Loving, Eternal, Almighty God: We pray today with the assurance that You hear our prayers and You care about our burdens. Many today have fearful hearts; burdened thoughts concerning the ongoing pandemic. We ask that we, as Your people, will have words of faith and encouragement to offer to those in such need. We pray at this time, more people will turn to You and we will have opportunity to share the gospel of hope, peace, joy and love, that only Jesus can offer.

We pray for the leaders of our Government at all levels; federal, provincial, and municipal; that You would give them wisdom. We give thanks for the hope found in the vaccination program; but as the appearance of variant strains of Covid are presenting across our nation we ask for Your intervention in this situation; to protect all those in front line work and as our economy begins to open up, we pray that wisdom and commitment to keeping safe would be in the forefront of each of our minds and intentions.

To the many who are grieving the loss of loved ones we ask that You would be the God of comfort to them.

We continue to pray for all those involved in our education system that they would be safe; teachers, students, custodial persons, bus drivers, volunteers and parents.

We are mindful of those with connection to our congregation specifically; but all who are residing in long term care and senior's residences; isolated from their loved ones. It continues to be a long season of loneliness for them. May those who care for them be Your hands extended to them during this difficult time.

We pray for those who are struggling physically, emotionally, mentally, financially and in relationships that they will know that You are their hope and salvation and may God's people offer what they can to help them in their situation.

For the leadership of St. Andrew's, we pray for discernment, and direction. Thank you for those who labor faithfully in various capacities to ensure the needs of the congregation are best met. May You lead and guide in the search for a Pastor for this assembly; one who would have Your heart for the people and Your vision for the future of the congregation.

We pray for the Alpha Prayer Team, the Alpha Host and Helpers Team and all participants in the Alpha program that the course will enlighten and enrich their lives in the knowledge of our Lord. Special prayers that the technology in use will function well.

We pray today for all those listed in our Prayers for the People, that You would continue to meet their need, bless and heal them. Thank you for the encouraging report regarding Joanna Savage and of others. We pray especially for Ann Savage; hear our prayer for healing O God and may the healing virtue of Jesus Christ flow through her body. Thank you for all these faithful ones.

Lord we are so grateful for the ways You remain constant to us, in season, out of season, for better, for worse, in sickness and in health. You are there in watchfulness as we sleep and each new day You walk with us on our life journey.

With gladness and gratefulness in our hearts we express thanks for Your mercy, steadfastness and faithfulness to each of us.

Our hope in life and in death is in Your prevailing love.

We are forever grateful Lord for Your loving presence in our lives.

And so, we pray in Jesus Name. **Amen.**

Hymn: "O Master Let Me Walk with Thee"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXwXQnsaL3A>

O Master let me walk with Thee
 In lowly paths of service free
 Tell me Thy secret
 Help me bear the strain of toil
 The fret of care

Teach me Thy patience; still with Thee
 In closer, clearer company
 In work that keeps faith sweet and strong
 In trust that triumphs over wrong

In hope that sends a shining ray
Far down the future's broad'ning way
In peace that only Thou canst give
With Thee, O Master, let me live

Benediction

Go now and walk in the Spirit; even though you might be led into unfamiliar or hard places.
With repentance and trust give yourself to God, with fasting and prayer so that you are strengthened against the ways of the tempter.

And May God enfold you in tender and lasting love.
May Christ be beside you in times of struggle.
And may the Spirit guide you back to the path of righteousness whenever you stray.

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