

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

**Call to Worship**  
**(Psalm 5:1-8)**

Listen to my words Lord, consider my lament.

**Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.**

In the morning Lord, you hear my voice;

In the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

**For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness; with you  
 evil people are not welcome.**

The arrogant cannot stand in your presence.

You hate all that do wrong.

The bloodthirsty and deceitful you, Lord, detest.

**But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love will enter  
 our house.**

**I will bow down toward your holy temple in fear of you.**

Lead me oh Lord, in your righteousness because of my enemies; make  
 your way straight before me.

**As your family we gather today; not because we have to, but  
 rather because we want to.**

We gather in your holy name to worship you, to offer our prayers and our  
 lives in service to you. **Amen**

**Prayer of Invocation**

Life giving God; gracious and holy one;

You make all things new by your saving and creating love.

We ask you to be present with us in this service today.

May we be redeemed and renewed in our service to you.

We humbly give our thanks for this opportunity to gather as your people to  
 praise and worship you, the all worthy One.

**Amen.**

**Hymn:**                                    **“All My Ways Are Known To You” – CityAlight**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44mVzqGeS-Q>

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 oh 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

**Chorus**

And oh what peace that I have found  
 Wherever I may be  
 For all my ways are known to You  
 Hallelujah, they are known to You!

**Bridge**

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

**Call to Confession**

Our high priest, Jesus Christ, knows all our weakness and the sin that so easily besets us.

He, who was tested in every way we are, yet remained without sin beckons us to himself this day.

Let us come before Him in humility of heart to confess our sins. (Take time to recall our personal sins).

**Prayer of Confession**

**Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear and for what has become for us an all-consuming judgment.**

**Set us free from the past we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more**

**in your likeness and image; though the love of Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven and transformed. Praise be to God! **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 126:1-6**

**1** When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion; we were like those who dreamed.

**2** Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."

**3** The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

**4** Restore our fortunes, LORD, like streams in the Negev.

**5** Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy

**6** Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

### **Ministry of Music:**

**"Christ Is Mine Forevermore", City Alight**

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

1. Mine are days that God has numbered

I was made to walk with Him

Yet I look for worldly treasure

And forsake the King of kings

#### **Chorus**

But mine is hope in my Redeemer

Though I fall His love is sure

For Christ has paid for every failing  
I am His forevermore

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

**Chorus 2**

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

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

**Chorus 3**

But mine is armour for this battle  
Strong enough to last the war  
And He has said He will deliver  
Safely to the golden shore

**Chorus 4**

And mine are keys to Zion city  
Where beside the King I walk  
For there my heart has found its treasure  
Christ is mine forevermore

**Bridge**

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

**Scripture Reading:**

**Isaiah 43: 16-23**

**16** This is what the LORD says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters,

**17** who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

**18** “Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

**19** See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

**20** The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen,

**21** the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

**22** “Yet you have not called on me, Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, Israel.

**23** You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, nor honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Prayer for Illumination**

Hope of the world,

Hope of all hearts

Our hope remains in You.

Speak to us through You Holy Word this day!

Hide your servant behind the cross so that your Holy Spirit may speak to our hearts and minds; for we wait in expectation.

## **Don't Dwell on the Past**

This is the second day of spring.

We look forward to the promise of the new life in spring and all that brings to mind; leaving the cold, grey, dark of winter evenings behind us and looking forward to seeing buds opening on trees and crocus sprouting.

Sure signs of nature awakening and the season moving on. Rather appropriate thoughts in light of our text today.

The words of Isaiah; “Do not dwell on the past but look to the future—see I am doing a new thing.”

When we moved here 11 years ago this June the first month or so just felt like I was on a vacation; but then I felt like I hit a wall. Bouncing back to reflect on the past became both a habitual and melancholy pastime. I had left behind a very busy ministry in Chaplaincy and many colleagues and friends.

I remember being out shopping one day and coming upon a little wooden sign with the word “Believe” written in bold letters on it. I purchased that little sign and set it up on my kitchen windowsill, because I needed the

reminder to keep on believing that God had a plan and a purpose for my life and where I was at that moment in time; even though I couldn't see it. I hadn't lost my faith; but I so needed to believe that God was not finished with me yet.

I have learned that looking back can bring nostalgic memories and these memories may sometimes spur us to action in the present, however; **striving to recapture what was, when God is interested in what is, and what will be in our lives is a grievous error.**

**“See I am doing a new thing,” Isaiah says; and is followed up with the words, “In fact I have already started. Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past!”**

But I loved the places and people I ministered to in the past; so, this was a difficult message for me. However; it was what I needed to hear and abide by. I needed to stop focusing on the life and ministry I had and look instead to what God was directing me to in the present. Truthfully, it took me some time to be able to do this, but overtime and in God's time when I was able to come to terms with this, it became crystal clear what God's leading was to do at that time.

I had been doing some home visiting and palliative care support in client's homes for Community Home Support Lanark County and now I felt clearly led to present an offer to the Supervisor of Lanark County Home Support to provide services for a Spiritual Care Program; related to the clients of the Day Hospice, volunteers and the staff as well. It was an exciting prospect and was approved by the Board. This led to many fulfilling and meaningful opportunities to be a part of the lives of others and to provide spiritual and pastoral care. Weddings and funerals, seasonal and special services within the Day Hospice setting; counselling and individual support and pastoral care became opportunities for various types of ministry. I was deeply humbled by the courage and tenacity of people who had lost so much and were facing an uncertain and challenging future physically, materially, relationally; all undergirded by the pain they were suffering. Being here now, at St. Andrew's with you folks, to lead worship is a blessing for me and I am thankful for the privilege of doing so.

So, since I know full well that it is tempting for most of us to dwell on the past, and that God's Word admonishes us not to be caught up in this practice, I think a deeper look into the words of Isaiah is merited.

At the time of the writing of these words of Isaiah, the faith and hope of God's chosen people was at a very low point.

The nation of Israel had been taken captive by the Babylonians. This exile lasted 50 years during the 6th Century BC. It had been a mere 700 years previous to this that the nation had been freed from Egyptian slavery. Unfortunately, it was due to their all too familiar sin of disobedience and idolatry that they found themselves under the rule of the Babylonian captors.

**Psalm 137 depicts the mood and state of mind of these captives.**

- 1** By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept  
when we remembered Zion.
- 2** There on the poplars  
we hung our harps,
- 3** for there our captors asked us for songs,  
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;  
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
- 4** How can we sing the songs of the LORD  
while in a foreign land?
- 5** If I forget you, Jerusalem,  
may my right hand forget its skill.
- 6** May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth  
if I do not remember you,  
if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy.
  
- 7** Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did  
on the day Jerusalem fell,  
Tear it down," they cried,  
"tear it down to its foundations!"
- 8** Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,  
happy is the one who repays you  
according to what you have done to us.
- 9** Happy is the one who seizes your infants  
and dashes them against the rocks.



These people were in deep despair and in need of words of comfort and assurance.

Throughout the book of Isaiah there are recorded the words of that much needed reassurance God gave to these captives through the Prophet Isaiah. It was often repeated using various images of God's love for them.

**Isaiah 43:1-2** “But now, this is what the LORD says- he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. **2** When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”

Here we find that God is referencing the good things He had done for them and their forefathers; a rich history of God's personal involvement, mercy and leading in their lives. These are some of their stories:

At Mt. Sinai God had given the Ten Commandments to their leader Moses. Remember this nation, in captivity now, had been delivered from the bondage of the Egyptians just 700 years earlier. Their forefathers had walked thru the Red Sea to safety, as their pursuers coming behind them, drowned.

Then they had wandered in the desert for 40 years, because of their unbelief; but God had provided for their need with manna and quails daily. Finally; God then led them into the Promised Land, as He had promised He would.

Though the Israelites were unfaithful to God, God would still deliver them from captivity.

As for His chosen people, whatever shame and humiliation they endured, God also endured! He loved His people and as angry as He was with them, He felt their pain. A single, elegant sentence from Isaiah 63: **9** summarizes God's point of view, “**in all their distresses He too was distressed.**” God may have hidden His face, but that face was streaked with tears. God, although angered and disappointed by their disobedience and sin, loved them. The Israelites had watched in horror as the Babylonian axe men had



hacked apart the cedar beams of the temple---but it was God's own house that they were destroying and a personal desecration He felt as well.

There are the times it is good for us to look at our past and remember how God made a way for us or healed us; forgave us or led us to a resolution of our problems. This "looking back" helps us to remember that He is our God; a relational God, who keeps His promises and through the death and resurrection of Jesus provides a way of redemption for us.

The captive Israelites had a strong history to remember; but not unlike us sometimes, they had trouble believing that God could do some things, but for some reason He might not choose to do other things in their life!

Perhaps it was acknowledging their longstanding issue of sin; idolatry and disobedience to the commandments of God that made them see deliverance as hopeless and led them to enter into lament.

When we repeatedly struggle with a particular issue or sin, we can also become so defeated by our failures that we begin to believe that God will not forgive us or restore us. It's the devil's choice lie.

Sometimes we just like to hold onto the past too long or choose to live in the past, no matter what presents as opportunity in the present or future.

The "good old days" can be very vivid in our minds sometimes.

Some even romanticize the events of the past; so that the clear picture of the way it really was is softened, distorted or lost. There may be a fear of what is new, when the known of the past is so comfortable and familiar. Or the issue might be just plain reluctance to change.

This story comes to mind:

Back when electricity was first being introduced in a little Scottish village almost everyone in a particular church switched from propane lanterns to electricity as soon as it could be hooked up. However; the oldest couple in the church couldn't get their electricity because they were waiting for the poles to go up and the wires to be strung. They continued to use their propane lanterns.

Finally, the day came when electricity was delivered to their house.

Everyone came to celebrate the festive event with them. The man waited for it to get extra dark and then instructed his wife to turn on the switch.

When she did the light filled the room and everyone gave cheer.

The man grinned from ear to ear. Picking up the propane lamp and said: 'It sure makes lighting my lamps easier.' And with that his wife turned off the electricity!

The Bible records numerous stories concerning our tendency to dwell on the past and or our reluctance to move ahead in the present or future. Some of these stories led to dire consequences. But let's look at a story that reminds us of God's faithfulness.

**Let's look to the beginning Genesis 41: [51](#) Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, "It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and my entire father's household."**

If you recall: Joseph's life had many heartaches and troubles. He had suffered much in his father's house at the hands of his jealous brothers, who finally sold him into captivity. He ended up serving as a slave under an Egyptian official Potiphar who was captain of the guard for Pharaoh. He was made master of Potiphar's household, but was wrongfully placed in prison because of the lies of Potiphar's wife; who had tried to seduce him and was vengeful when he refused her advances. There he was put in charge of all the other prisoners. He helped one of his cell mates to get released by giving to him the interpretation of Pharaoh's dream and asked to be remembered by him if this man was restored to his role as cupbearer; but the other forgot all about poor Joseph. Finally, God made a way for Joseph and he was released from prison after he himself had opportunity to interpret one of Pharaoh's dreams to him.



God blessed Joseph as he became the advisor to Pharaoh and ruler of the affairs of the land under Pharaoh. He was placed by God in this strategic position in order that he could save his family when they arrived as beggars seeking assistance in a time of famine. Joseph could have been bitter, hateful, vengeful, but; Joseph recognized God's hand in his life, refused to dwell on the past and followed God's purposes for him. As he said "God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's family." Genesis 41: [51](#).

Why was this so important? Because Joseph could not have fulfilled the leading of God and his ultimate destiny if he was focused on his past troubles; if he became bogged down in ruminating about what his brother's had done to him.

**Proverbs 4: 25** says, “**Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you.**” That is exactly what Joseph did to the glory of God and the fulfillment of His will.

This is what Joseph had to do! It’s what we need to do! And it’s not easy sometimes; but God has plan and a purpose for our lives. We can trust in that.

In Luke 9: [62](#) we read the words of Jesus: “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

There are a number of implications regarding these words, but today we will focus on the need to not dwell on the past.

Philippians 3: [14](#), Paul gives the advice we all need to take in. Forgetting the past; I press on toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

But history tells us that looking back; dwelling on the past, has always been a problem for God’s people.

The story of [Lot's](#) wife begins in [Genesis 19](#) after two angels arrived in [Sodom](#) at eventide and were invited to spend the night at Lot's home. The men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and gathering outside his house they demanded Lot send the guests out to them so that they might have their way with them. Instead, Lot offered up his two daughters; but they refused. As dawn was breaking, Lot's visiting angels urged him to get his family and flee, so as to avoid being caught in the impending disaster for the iniquity of the city. The command was given, verse [17](#): **"Flee for your life! Do not look behind you, or stop anywhere in the plain; flee to the hills, lest you be swept away."** While fleeing, Lot's wife turned to look back, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

The message had been clear and specific—leave and don’t look back! Don’t stop anywhere on the plain! This was given, not so much to protect them from seeing what was about to happen to their city; but to encourage them to forget the ties to this sinful place and go ahead, trusting in God’s leading.

But Lot’s wife could not let go of what she had been accustomed to, familiar with. She paid a price for her disobedience and was transformed into a

pillar of salt! John Gill in writing his “Exposition of the Bible” noted that Josephus wrote that the pillar continued to his times and that he saw it. Additionally, Irenaeus and Tertullian speak of it in their times. It was a longstanding, sober reminder that we all pay a price when we continuously look back at what was; or do so in direct disobedience to God’s will.



So why then would we be caught up in looking back? Like Lot’s wife the past may be a familiar, comforting place. We may be romanticizing the past. Perhaps we have enshrined certain things, people or events from the past. We may have a fear of the unknown or what lies ahead which becomes crippling to us. The good old “olden days”, a friend of mine calls them, as she wistfully thinks about how things were so much better back then. Of

course, this is with no knowledge of what her grandparents had to endure throughout the wars and Great Depression. It is her plea for a simpler way of life. We can all understand that!

Forgiveness may be an issue that is keeping us trapped in the past. Sometimes there are people we need to forgive and we can’t move on because we can’t forgive. Sometimes we need to forgive ourselves for our past sins and failures which can seem forever before our face in memories and living consequences.

Ethan was my office clerk when I worked at Warkworth Institution. He was a brilliant young man who had suffered unbearable emotional and sexual abuse from his mother, who literally kept him trapped as a prisoner in their home; denying him friends and outside activities. One day he had made a date to meet a girl he had met at school and his Mother tried to bully him with a baseball bat into his room. He just lost it and the result was deadly for her. The one thing Ethan could not do was forgive himself. He could forgive and rationalize her actions; but never could he forgive himself. Mother’s Day services left him in shambles. I spent many hours counselling and praying with him. The following scriptures started to make sense to him.

**Hebrews 10: [16-17](#)** “This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.” **[17](#)** Then he adds: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more.”

**Isaiah 43: [25](#)**, “I, even I, am he that blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember your sins.”

**Isaiah 1: [18](#)** “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

**Romans 8: [1](#)** “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

Ethan knew these and many other Scriptures in his intellect but; transferring that knowledge into a heartfelt awareness and experience of God’s forgiveness was another matter. Seeing himself as loved by God was so unthinkable to him after what he had done.

One of the greatest risks of recidivism is often found in a person who does not enter into forgiveness. Therefore, Ethan was at greater risk to reoffend because he viewed himself as one who could never be forgiven for what he had done. Having that mental picture of himself left him more apt to act out again. Sort of like: “this is who I am” or this is what I and everyone else expects of me. It’s complicated; but it can be like a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Ethan needed to accept God’s forgiveness and forgive himself.

This is true for all of us. Nothing can change the past; but it can be a premise from which we proceed with God’s forgiveness and help.

**Not unlike The Israelites, we need to hear these words of the Prophet: [Isaiah 55:7](#) Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.**

Our Worship Service each Sunday provides a very important opportunity in the Call to Confession wherein; we are called to recall our personal sins and failings.

The Prayer of Confession provides an opportunity for us personally; yet communally, to request and acknowledge forgiveness from the only one who can forgive us; our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

But it doesn't end there because we need to hear the Words of Assurance that follow and be reminded of God's unfailing love, grace and mercy.

The Christian story is about a God who, forgives, restores, liberates, and heals. The story tells us who God is and who we are as God's people. Whatever became of the poor exiles in Babylon? They got to go home. God made a way. The Persians arose and conquered Babylon; and Cyrus, the King of Persia freed the exiles and allowed them to return to Zion. Joseph was restored to the very family who had betrayed him. After Jesus died on the cross; to many of his followers and others, it seemed there was no way for the story to go on. But the stone was rolled away and Jesus arose from the dead!

I am reminded of a song that I love. A friend and I, before the vocal nodes caused me grief, used to sing it at Chapel service every Good Friday. For those of you worshipping with us from home; if you would like to listen to this song just click on the link.

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=He+Grew+the+Tree&&view=detail&mid=B1E059E582D5CCEEA8E6B1E059E582D5CCEEA8E6&&FORM=VRD GAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3DHe%2BGrew%2Bthe%2BTree%26FORM%3DHDRSC3>

He Grew the Tree

He molded and built a small lonely hill that He knew would be called Calvary;  
Then He made the seed that would grow to be thorns that would make His Son bleed.

Then He made a green stem, gave it leaves and then gave it sunshine and rain and sheltered it with moss.

He grew the tree, He knew would be, used to make the old rugged cross  
chorus:

Nothing took His life, with love He gave it: He was crucified on a tree that He created.

Great love for man made God stick with His plan



He grew the tree so that we might go free.

With tears in his eyes, God looked down through time  
 Saw him spat upon, rejected and mocked.  
 Still He grew the tree He knew would be used to make the old rugged  
 cross.  
 Nothing took His life with Love He gave it  
 He was crucified on a tree that He created.  
 With great love for man  
 God stayed with His plan  
 He grew the tree so that we might go free!  
 Looking down thru time God saw him mocked, spit upon and crucified  
 Still He grew the tree He knew would be used to make the old rugged  
 cross!

If ever there is anything to look back and dwell on, it is God's sacrifice of  
 love in the life and death of His only Son Jesus!

Today, based on our faith in Christ; we are called to believe and to watch  
 for the new thing God is about to do; in our world, in our country, in our  
 community, our congregation and our lives. And the beauty of God's word  
 is that it has the power to speak to us; wherever we are, as if speaking to  
 us personally, directly!

**Isaiah 42: 9, "Behold the former things have come to pass,  
 And a new thing I declare:  
 Before they spring forth I tell you of them."**

Let us pray.

Father God you have brought us out of the mire of sin and shame. You  
 have created in us a clean heart and given our lives a new start in Christ  
 Jesus.

We are your people, called to Your service and purposes and although we  
 often cannot see what Your plan is, we can trust in Your abiding love,  
 mercy and forgiveness,

Help us to remember all that You have done for us in the past with  
 thanksgiving; but to keep our eyes on the goal You have set before us; so  
 that our lives will bring your pleasure and glory. In Jesus name we pray.

**Amen.**

## Hymn: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" - Austin Stone (Worship Live)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2eQ1oal44wU>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father  
 There is no shadow of turning with Thee  
 Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not  
 As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be

### **Chorus**

Great is Thy faithfulness  
 Great is Thy faithfulness  
 Morning by morning new mercies I see  
 All I have needed Thy hand hath provided  
 Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me

I could not love Thee, so blind and unfeeling,  
 Covenant promises fell not to me  
 Then without warning, desire, or deserving,  
 I found my Treasure, my pleasure in Thee

I have no merit to woo or delight Thee  
 I have no wisdom or power to employ  
 Yet in Thy mercy, how pleasing Thou find'st me  
 This is my pleasure that Thou art my joy

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth  
 Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide  
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow  
 Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

### **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:**

At this point in our service, we remember the words of Jesus who said” It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Acts 20: 35

The very first words of the Bible record God’s own generosity. God gave us gifts of a beautiful creation, an earth full of promise and abundance. So, this spring morning we come together to give thanks to God and to offer our gifts so that the ministry of this church will continue to grow and be a blessing.

### **Offertory Prayer**

Heavenly Father, thank You; through Your great bounty and blessing, You satisfy our needs. Your word says that we should give honor to You with the first fruits of our labor and wealth. Accept our tithes and offerings as a gift of worship unto You this day.

Multiply what we give for the effective growth of your kingdom

In Jesus name we pray. **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 all 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. Some continue to be isolated from their loved ones; an ongoing 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 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.

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; as the seasons come and go, for better, for worse, in sickness and in health. You are there in watchfulness as we sleep and in each new day that dawns, You walk with us on our life journey.

With gladness and gratefulness in our hearts we express thanks for Your mercy, steadfast love and faithfulness.

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" (Lyrics) – 1**

<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**

Song of Solomon 2: 11-12

For Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;  
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come,  
and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. Go from this place  
today reinvigorated in this new season; it is the season of Resurrection.  
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and each other.