

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth**  
**Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**Sacrament of the Lord's Supper**  
**Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin**

**Call to Worship (Isaiah 55)**

Seek the LORD while he may be found;  
 call on him while he is near.

**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.

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
 neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.**

As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
**so are my ways higher than your ways  
 and my thoughts than your thoughts.**

Let us join our hearts together in worshipping the Sovereign Lord of all creation,  
 who is holy, just, righteous and compassionate.

**Responsive Prayer of Invocation**

Let us join our voices to praise the spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ,  
 who has redeemed us from sin and death.

**We, whom he has redeemed,  
 will sing praises and shout for joy this hour;**

because in Christ the Lamb we have redemption through his blood,  
 the forgiveness of our sins in accordance with the riches of his grace.

**Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law  
 by becoming a curse for us.**

Let us praise him by saying:

**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
 to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength  
 and honor and glory and praise!  
 To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
 we give worship this hour and forever and ever. Amen.**

**Hymn #274: “Crown Him With Many Crowns”**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7vo1rh6MJLI>**

1. Crown Him with many crowns  
 The Lamb upon His throne

Hark how the heav'nly anthem drowns  
 All music but its own  
 Awake my soul and sing  
 Of Him who died to be  
 Your Saviour and your matchless King  
 Thro' all eternity

2. Crown Him the Son of God  
 Before the worlds began  
 Let all who tread where he has trod  
 Crown him the Son of Man  
 Who every grief has known  
 That wrings the human breast  
 And takes and bears them for his own  
 That all in him may rest
  
3. Crown Him the Lord of life  
 Who triumphed o'er the grave  
 Who rose victorious in the strife  
 For those He came to save  
 His glories now we sing  
 Who died and rose on high  
 Who died eternal life to bring  
 And lives that death may die
  
4. Crown him the Lord of peace  
 Whose Kingdom is at hand  
 From pole to pole let warfare cease  
 And Christ rule every land  
 A city stands on high  
 Christ's glory it displays,  
 And there the nations "Holy" cry  
 In joyful hymns of praise
  
5. Crown Him the Lord of years  
 the Source the End of time  
 Creator of the rolling spheres  
 In majesty sublime  
 All hail, Redeemer hail  
 For you have died for me  
 Your praise shall never, never fail  
 Through all eternity

### **Invitation to Confession**

**1 Corinthians 11:27** So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body

**and blood of the Lord. 28 Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.**

Let us examine our hearts and lives before the Lord our God.

### **Responsive Prayer of Confession**

God of grace,

we confess that we have elevated  
the things of this world above you.

We have made idols of possessions and people  
and used your name for causes

that are not consistent with you and your purposes.

We have permitted our schedules to come first  
and have not taken the time to worship you.

We have not always honored those who guided us in life.

We have participated in systems  
that take life instead of give it.

We have been unfaithful in our covenant relationships.

We have yearned for, and sometimes taken, that which is not ours,  
and we have misrepresented others' intentions.

**Forgive us, O God,**

**for the many ways we fall short of your glory.**

**Help us to learn to live together according to your ways  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

### **Assurance of Pardon**

This is the message we have heard from God  
and proclaim to you,

that God is light and in God there is no darkness at all.

If we walk in the light, as God is in the light,

we have fellowship with one another,

and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.**

**For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen**

**Responsive Reading: Psalm 91**

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

**I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust."**

Surely he will save you  
from the fowler's snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.

**He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.**

You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,

**nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.**

A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.

**You will only observe with your eyes  
and see the punishment of the wicked.**

If you say, "The LORD is my refuge,"  
and you make the Most High your dwelling,

**no harm will overtake you,  
no disaster will come near your tent.**

For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways;

**they will lift you up in their hands,  
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.**

You will tread on the lion and the cobra;  
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

**"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him;  
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.**

He will call on me, and I will answer him;

I will be with him in trouble,

I will deliver him and honor him.

**With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation."**

**Ministry of Music:** “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me”, City Alight  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zundjUFazfg&feature=youtu.be>

1. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer  
 There is no more for heaven now to give  
 He is my joy my righteousness and freedom  
 My steadfast love my deep and boundless peace  
 To this I hold my hope is only Jesus  
 For my life is wholly bound to his  
 Oh how strange and divine I can sing all is mine  
 Yet not I but through Christ in me

2. The night is dark but I am not forsaken  
 For by my side the Saviour he will stay  
 I labour on in weakness and rejoicing  
 For in my need his power is displayed  
 To this I hold my Shepherd will defend me  
 Through the deepest valley he will lead  
 Oh the night has been won and I shall overcome  
 Yet not I but through Christ in me

3. No fate I dread I know I am forgiven  
 The future sure the price it has been paid  
 For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon  
 And he was raised to overthrow the grave  
 To this I hold my sin has been defeated  
 Jesus now and ever is my plea  
 Oh the chains are released I can sing I am free  
 Yet not I but through Christ in me

4. With every breath I long to follow Jesus  
 For he has said that he will bring me home  
 And day by day I know he will renew me  
 Until I stand with joy before the throne

To this I hold my hope is only Jesus  
 All the glory evermore to him  
 When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat  
 Yet not I but through Christ in me (Repeat)

**Ending**

When the race is complete still my lips shall repeat  
 Yet not I but through Christ in me  
 Yet not I but through Christ in me

### **Responsive Invitation to the Offering**

Give to the Lord the glory due his name;  
bring an offering and come before him.

**We will sacrifice a thank offering to God  
and call on the name of the Lord.**

**We will fulfill our vows to the Lord,  
in the presence of all God's people.**

Let each of us use whatever gift we have received,  
faithfully sharing God's grace in many forms.

**Freely we have received; freely we will give.**

### **Offertory Prayer**

O Lord our God, the author and giver of all good things,  
we thank you for all your mercies,  
and for your loving care over all your creatures.

We bless you for the gift of life, for your protection round about us,  
for your guiding hand upon us,  
and for the tokens of your love within us.

In all these things, O heavenly God,  
make us wise for a right use of your benefits,  
that we may render an acceptable thanksgiving unto you  
all the days of our lives,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Scripture Reading:**

**Philippians 2:25-30**

#### ***The Advance of the Gospel***

**25** I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, **26** for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. **27** Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. **28** I am the more eager to send him, therefore, that you may rejoice at seeing him again, and that I may be less anxious. **29** So receive him in the Lord with all joy, and honor such men, **30** for he nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking in your service to me.

### **Prayer for Illumination**

God of Jesus Christ,  
give us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Christ,

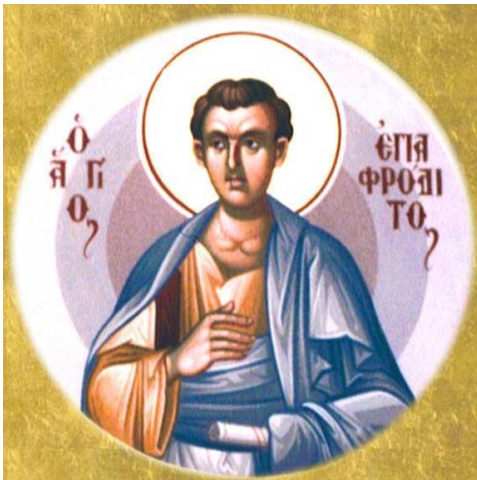
so that the eyes of our hearts might be enlightened.  
 Help us to know the hope to which you have called us,  
 the riches of the glorious inheritance in the saints,  
 and the immeasurable greatness of your power at work in us.  
 Through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

## “Honourable and Courageous Man” Philippians 2:25-30

The United States, despite tending to be an isolationist nation for much of its early history, has been involved in many wars. The most unpopular one, hands down, was the Vietnam War. We have never faced anything like it in Canada. Because this war was so unpopular and fought a long way from North America, when service men and women returned home they were not welcomed. There was no public recognition or outpouring of



appreciation for their service and there were certainly no parades. The American people just wanted to forget the Vietnam War. There was little help for returning vets who were wounded physically or emotionally. It was like the country had corporate amnesia. It took years for a proper monument to be erected for those who gave their lives. I am going to call this the “Vietnam syndrome” and we will be referring back to it shortly.



Last week we met Timothy, a well known Biblical figure. Paul, in sending him to the Philippians said, **20 For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.** Today we are introduced to a young man that you may never have heard of before. His name was Epaphroditus and he came from the city of Philippi. Epaphroditus was young, strong, healthy and godly. He was chosen, probably along with a number of other young men, to carry a considerable gift of money to Rome to

give to the Apostle Paul. Paul was the one who had laid the initial foundation for the church in Philippi and the Philippians held a strong place in their hearts for their pioneer founder. They decided to demonstrate their solidarity with Paul by taking up an offering for him and sending an envoy – a group of messengers – to make the 800 mile journey to Rome. This was no one or two day excursion. This was a serious mission. The purpose of this trip was two-fold. First, they wanted to minister to Paul's needs. Second, they wanted to pay his prison expenses. This was crucial because the Roman prison system did not provide food, clothing or medical care. In our minds this was an abhorrent way to run a prison system – but that was Rome.

Paul had established the precedent of sending, not an individual, but a group when large amounts of funds were moved from one church to another. (2 Corinthians 8:16-22) While they were travelling, Epaphroditus fell ill, so it was fortunate that he was not travelling alone. We are not given the details, but it is most likely that one of his travelling companions returned to Philippi with the news. The others most likely stayed with Epaphroditus, nursing him until he was finally able to make it to Rome. Eventually he was able to fulfill his mission, even though he was a little worse for wear.

Epaphroditus was sent to carry funds to Paul, but he was also sent to minister to Paul's needs – to care for him. However, it wasn't long before Paul sent him back to Philippi. Paul explains some of his reasons for sending Epaphroditus back to them and he gives specific instructions as to how they were to receive them. He wants them to give him a proper welcome. The Philippians would have been surprised at his early return and that he didn't stay with Paul as long as expected. They may not be entirely happy with Epaphroditus for his early return and would possibly give him little more than a perfunctory acknowledgement of his return without expressing any appreciation for what he had done and the risks he had taken. Without Paul's words, this would have been an excellent opportunity for the "Vietnam Syndrome" to kick in.

A church that does not recognize the sacrifice of its members for the sake of the Gospel is making a big mistake. I personally do not ever want the contribution of anyone in our church family to be unappreciated, overlooked or taken for granted. Paul wants to make sure this doesn't happen in Philippi. The selfless conduct of Epaphroditus is a living example of Philippians 2: **4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...**



I expect that Epaphroditus was a humble young man with a quiet demeanor. No way when he got home would he have proclaimed his arrival like the Genie in the 1948 Bugs Bunny cartoon “A Lad-In His Lamp”:

*“I’m here! I’m here!  
Let the bells ring out and the banners  
fly!  
Feast your eyes on me!  
It’s too good to be true,  
But I’m here!! I’m here!!!”*



To which Bugs Bunny replies: “Ahhhhh, what’s up, Doc?”

Paul provides no drum roll introduction but he does go out of his way to re-introduce their messenger. **25 I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need.**



Paul calls him “**my brother**”. This young man is not a just a money carrying messenger, the ancient equivalent of an e-Transfer of funds. There is a note of affection here. Some may use words like “brother” or “sister” off-handedly, but not Paul. This young man is a true believer, a true brother in the faith.

Next Paul refers to him as “**my fellow worker**”. This elevated Epaphroditus. He was a Christian worker, but he was more than that. He was Paul’s fellow worker or co-worker. Paul was the front man while Epaphroditus worked behind the scenes, yet they were equally co-workers.

Next, Paul elevates this young man even higher by referring to him as “**my fellow soldier**”. Here is how Paul viewed the



work of the Gospel. In Ephesians 6 he writes, **12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.** In this great cosmic battle, the two men were **fellow soldiers**. In that Roman prison, they fought shoulder to soldier. In battle, Roman soldiers stood side by side – shoulder to shoulder. Their shields were locked together, their swords were drawn or their spears held ready. Epaphroditus was a warrior, injured in battle, who was being sent home to rest and recuperate. He was worthy of a hero's welcome.

He meant all this to Paul, and more. He had served the Philippians with distinction, as their messenger and servant to Paul's needs. Epaphroditus was a simple layman. We would never know he even existed if it were not for Paul's reference to him. He was not a pastor who shepherded a flock. He was not an evangelist taking the gospel message to an unreached group of people. He never wrote a single word that we know of. No, he faithfully discharged his duty by delivering a bag of money to Paul and then looking after him. For this he was called **my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need.** To serve in an unnoticed, humble and unrecognized place in Christ's Church is as much the work of Christ as public ministry.

Make no mistake, though, Epaphroditus was not a super hero. For instance, this young man suffered from homesickness. Paul writes, **26 for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill.** That



would probably not be very well accepted back home, but homesickness was a reality of life. In the days before the internet and cell phones, and when even telephone service was not available in remote areas, missionaries would be out of contact with the outside world for months. When you are in a strange country, not able to

speak the language, at least not very well, then it is not unusual for even the most committed Christian workers to experience homesickness. We are given a feeling for how intensely this young man experienced mental suffering when the word "distressed" is used to describe his anguish. Do you know that the only other time that the word here translated **distressed** is used in the Greek New Testament is to

describe the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. In Mark 14 we read: **33 And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.** Epaphroditus really struggled with deep homesickness. A big part of his problem was that the folks back in Philippi probably had no idea whether he had gotten better or died. So Paul is basically saying: “Don’t let the Vietnam Syndrome kick in here. Receive him properly.”

What is most surprising to me is Paul’s attitude to his homesickness. It was not what I would have expected of Paul. In the past, Paul had considered someone’s returning home as a result of homesickness as tantamount to a soldier deserting his post. When a young man named John Mark – the same one who would later write the Gospel of Mark – returned home as a result of homesickness, Paul was furious. Later when Barnabas suggested that they give John Mark another chance and take him with them on another missionary journey, Paul lost it. He was so adamant against taking this young man that he and Barnabas had a falling out and parted company, going on separate journeys. Barnabas took John Mark while Paul set off with a man named Silas. Years later, Paul changed his attitude to John Mark. In 2 Timothy 4 Paul writes to Timothy and says: **11 ... Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.** I believe that the years mellowed Paul and so he took a completely different approach to dealing with the homesickness of Epaphroditus.

Let’s turn and look at his illness. **27 Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.** Epaphroditus did not just have a bad dose of stomach flu. He was seriously ill. He was close to death. The fellows he was travelling with had given up hope that he would survive. This young man came close to death in the service of Christ. So we could label Epaphroditus as being a courageous man.

Paul says of Epaphroditus that he was **near to death**. Then he adds a phrase that when you read the passage will probably slip right by you. **But God had mercy on him.** We live in a period of history when we are surrounded by the wonders of modern medicine. We look to the medical community when we are sick, but there wasn’t much of a medical community back in the first century when Epaphroditus got deathly ill and what medical help there existed was based mostly on old wives tales. When someone was as seriously ill as he was – when an individual stood at death’s door – few returned from the brink. How did Epaphroditus get better? This was a case of God’s direct healing. God had mercy on him. Apart from God’s intervention, he would have died – and Paul’s sorrows would have been multiplied.

**But God had mercy on him.** Paul was not afraid to death personally, but to have one of his team members die before him would have been much harder to bear. We do not know how we will react to bad news, but there are things that are worse than our own personal death. When our friends, family and young people precede us it can be a great source of grief and sorrow. This passage reveals to us Paul's humanity. Physical is a terrible stressor but the good news is found in verse 27. **God had mercy**, because he is a Merciful God.

**Invitation to Communion Hymn:** **“Lamb of God” by Twila Paris**  
 (Click on the link below to play the hymn. Lyrics will be displayed on the screen.)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2QGNUDsQ6fl>

1. Your only Son no sin to hide  
 But You have sent Him from Your side  
 To walk upon this guilty sod  
 And to become the Lamb of God
  
2. Your gift of love they crucified  
 They laughed and scorned Him as He died  
 The humble King they named a fraud  
 And sacrificed the Lamb of God

**Chorus**

O Lamb of God sweet Lamb of God  
 I love the holy Lamb of God  
 O wash me in His precious blood  
 My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God

3. I was so lost I should have died  
 But You have brought me to Your side  
 To be led by Your staff and rod  
 And to be called the Lamb of God

**Chorus**

O Lamb of God sweet Lamb of God  
 I love the holy Lamb of God  
 O wash me in His precious blood  
 My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.  
 O wash me in His precious blood  
 My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God.

**Let us confess our common faith in the words of The Nicene Creed.**

We believe in one God,  
 the Father almighty,  
 maker of heaven and earth,  
 of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
 the only Son of God,  
 eternally begotten of the Father,  
 God from God,  
 Light from Light,  
 true God from true God,  
 begotten, not made;  
 of one being with the Father.

Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven;  
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
 and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;  
 he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven  
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory  
 to judge the living and the dead,  
 and his kingdom will have no end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life,  
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
 and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
 who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### The Invitation to Communion

Jesus said: **28** “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11) As we come to Communion today, I want to stress to you that this is an open and not a closed Table. It is open to all who know and love Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and desire to walk with him in obedience. It does not matter what church you

belong to. This is the Lord's Table and all of his children are welcome to come and share in this feast. **8 O taste and see that the LORD is good.** (Psalm 34)

### **Prayer Before Communion**

Lord Jesus, as we come to your Table today, we may come with a sense of our unworthiness to take part in such a sacred meal. Thank you that when we come to you in repentance for our sin, we do not have to worry about our worthiness or goodness. You make us worthy through what you accomplished for us in your death on the Cross. Lord, these elements of Bread and Wine are symbolic of your body and blood. We now set them aside from all common uses to this one holy use. Draw near to us in a special way as we share together in this time of Communion. Through Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

### **The Communion**

Take the Bread, and say after me:

**The Lord Jesus, on the night before he died, took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it and said: "This is my body that is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me."**

**The body of Christ broken for me.**

You may partake of the bread.

Take the cup and say after me:

**In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying: "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Whenever you do it, do it in remembrance of me."**

**The blood of Christ shed for me.**

You may drink of the cup.

Say your own prayer of thanksgiving for this special time of Communion.

**Hymn #349:**

**"My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1LtGQLZ87c>

1. My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
And I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

#### **Chorus**

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

2. When darkness seems to hide His face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.
3. His oath, his covenant, His blood  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.
4. When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in Him be found!  
Dressed in his righteousness alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne!

### **Benediction**

Go now, with God's foolishness and weakness  
as your only wisdom and strength.

Proclaim Christ crucified,  
and seek riches only in the love of God's Word  
and in zeal for God's house.

And may God's just demands be your nourishment & delight.  
May Christ be the power and wisdom of God to you.  
And may the Holy Spirit keep you, thought and word,  
in God's good grace.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.