

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 25th, 2021
Worship Leader: Rev. Stephen Dunkin

Welcome

Call to Worship

Come and celebrate!
 Shout joyfully to the Lord, your God!
 Glorify him with your praise!

**Everything on earth will worship you;
 they will sing your praises,
 shouting your name in joyful songs.**

Come and see what our God has done,
 what awesome things he has done for us!

**Let the whole world bless our God and sing his praise.
 For our lives are in his hands,
 and he keeps our feet from stumbling.**

Prayer of Invocation

Praise be to you, O God the Father:
 You created all things by your power and wisdom
 and so loved the world that you gave your Son to be our Savior.
 Praise be to you, O God the Son:
 You became human like us in all things, except sin,
 died for our offenses, and rose again for our justification.
 Praise be to you, O God the Holy Spirit:
 You lead us into all truth and spread the love of God in our hearts.
 All praise and glory be to you, O God,
 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
 for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Hymn #407: "Praise My Soul The King of Heaven"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GyRIVbdsi4c>

1. Praise, my soul, the King of Heaven;
 To His feet thy tribute bring.
 Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
 Who like thee His praise sing:
 Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise him!
 Praise the everlasting King.

2. Praise Him for His grace and favor
To our fathers in distress;
Praise Him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King.

3. Father like He tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame He knows;
In His hands He gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King.

4. Angels, help us to adore Him,
Ye behold Him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;
Dwellers all in time and space,
Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise Him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King.

Call to Confession

God's Word assures us:

If we say that we have no sin,
we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
If we confess our sins,
he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In humility and faith let us confess our sin to God.

Prayer of Confession

Triune God,
we praise you as the God of love and life.
Though Jesus prayed that we would be one,
we confess that we fail to live in unity with each other and with you.
We break our communion through hostile words and unkind actions.
We long for your Spirit to heal us and to correct us.
We long for you to help us experience communion
with you and with each other
as we gather around your Word.
Even now, dependent on your grace, we commit ourselves
to live more fully in the unity you desire.

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

Assurance of Pardon (based on Romans 8:15-17)

You did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,
but you have received a spirit of adoption.

When you cry, "Abba! Father!"

it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit

that we are children of God,

and if children, then heirs,

heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, we are forgiven.

Thanks be to the triune God.

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 20

May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble!

May the name of the God of Jacob protect you!

**May he send you help from the sanctuary
and give you support from Zion!**

May he remember all your offerings

and regard with favor your burnt sacrifices! Selah

**May he grant you your heart's desire
and fulfill all your plans!**

May we shout for joy over your salvation,

and in the name of our God set up our banners!

May the LORD fulfill all your petitions!

**Now I know that the LORD saves his anointed;
he will answer him from his holy heaven
with the saving might of his right hand.**

Some trust in chariots and some in horses,

but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

**They collapse and fall,
but we rise and stand upright.**

O LORD, save the king!

May he answer us when we call.

Ministry of Music: “There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood”, Norton Hall Band
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b25-LJjrGQA>

1. There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains
Lose all their guilty stains
Lose all their guilty stains
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains

2. The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day
And there have I, though vile as he
Washed all my sins away
Washed all my sins away
Washed all my sins away
And there have I, though vile as he
Washed all my sins away

3. Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more
Be saved to sin no more
Be saved to sin no more
Till all the ransomed church of God
Be saved to sin no more

4. E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die
And shall be till I die
And shall be till I die
Redeeming love has been my theme
And shall be till I die

5. When this poor lisping, stammering tongue
Lies silent in the grave
Then in a nobler, sweeter song

I'll sing Thy power to save
 I'll sing Thy power to save
 I'll sing Thy power to save
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song
 I'll sing Thy power to save

Scripture Reading:

Philippians 3:1-9

1 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

2 Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. **3** For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— **4** though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. **7** But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. **8** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ **9** and be found in him...

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

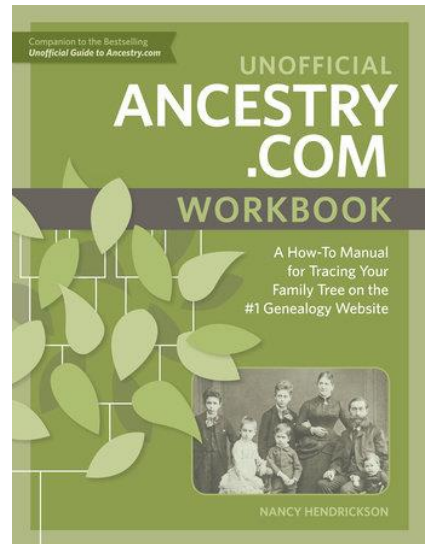
Prayer for Illumination

Lord, we do not always find it easy
 to recognize your coming to us.
 Come, reveal yourself to us.
 Meet us in the breaking of the bread.
 Set our heavy hearts on fire with love for you,
 and send us on our way rejoicing.
 For your name's sake, **Amen.**

“There Is No Future In The Past”

Philippians 3:1-9

One area of increasing interest in recent decades is in genealogy. There are a growing number of people who are interested in tracing their family line and finding out about their heritage. It is a great pastime. I know because in years gone by, I have been bitten by the bug and it is fascinating. I have not been able to pursue it in the way I would have liked, but one of these days, when I retire (!!!), I would like to take it up again in a serious manner.



For me, learning about my ancestors and where I have come from is very important. It has helped me to understand my family and the forces that have made us who we are. One of my uncles is reported to have said, "I don't care about where I came from; only where I am going." That is a very sad statement. I believe that our past is invaluable. I too am very interested in where I am going, but knowing where I came from is also important to me.

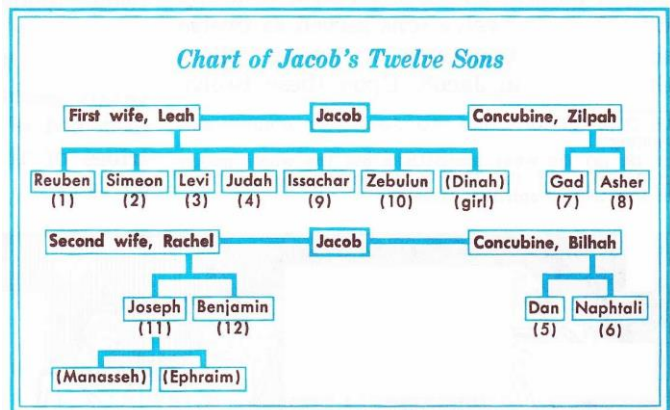
Along the north shore of Lake Ontario near Kingston runs Bath Road which is also known as The Loyalist Parkway. I know from preaching in that area years ago that



there were always some in each congregation who were interested in knowing if you came from United Empire Loyalist stock. If they discovered that you were counted among those you came north to settle in Upper Canada after the American Revolutionary war in 1776 and that you were a true United Empire Loyalist, you rose in their estimation a number of degrees. Although the Dunkin

family had American roots, because my ancestors didn't come to Canada until the 1820's, I never was able to cash in on that popularity.

You might think that this interest in tracing ones genealogy or heritage is something new, but it is not. People in ancient times were just as interested as we are in where they came from. They could be just as proud of their pedigree as some of us are. The Jews of New Testament times were



very interested in a person's pedigree. All through Jewish history, a person's ancestry was important to them. The Patriarch Jacob had 12 sons and from those twelve sons were descended the 12 tribes of Israel. There was status attached to belonging to certain of those tribes.

In New Testament times, just as now, there were arguments as to who was better. There was a jostling for superiority. Obviously, this was an issue in the church at



Philippi. It was of enough importance that it caused Paul to “throw down the gauntlet” so to speak. Today this phrase means to challenge or confront someone. In medieval times it was a physical action intended to issue a formal challenge to a duel. So what Paul is doing here is issuing a challenge to the Philippians. He is saying, “Alright, if you want to boast, let's see who has the most to boast about! If you think you have reasons to boast, I have more. My credentials are impeccable!”

Some of Paul's credentials were his by virtue of his birth and some were his by virtue of achievement. He begins to list the ways by which he excelled in this show down. Verses 5 and 6 of Philippians 3 list seven items of which he could boast. Today we would call them bragging rights. Let's look at them one at a time. And realize that what Paul was faced with in the Philippian church was probably a group of Hebrew Christians who saw themselves as superior to the Gentile Christians.

1. **5 Circumcised on the eighth day.** This is Paul's way of saying, “Look, right from the very start of my life, my pedigree is faultless. My initiation into the Jewish faith was exactly as prescribed by Jewish law.” I once had a conversation with a Catholic priest in which he referred to “cradle Catholics”. I had never heard the expression before and had no idea what he was referring to. He explained it by saying that it was a way of referring to people who had been Catholics all their lives. Their parents were Catholic; they were baptized as Catholics; they had gone to Catholic schools; and they had been confirmed as Catholics. They had been part of the Catholic Church all their lives. They had been Catholics from “the get go”. It made me think that if it is possible to have “cradle Catholics” then you must also be able to have “bassinet Baptist” and “playpen Presbyterians”!

2. **Of the people of Israel.** Paul insists that he was a fully fledged member of the people of God and therefore God's chosen people. He had been given this privilege by right of birth.
3. **Of the tribe of Benjamin.** Paul could trace his family origins. He belonged to a favoured tribe. Saul, the first King of Israel, was from the tribe of Benjamin. Before he was known as Paul, this apostle's name was Saul. Saul is a Hebrew name which means "Dedicated to God". Paul is a Latin name which means "little". You can guess that he was probably not a big man. In fact, people probably called him "little man". Saul was Paul's namesake and he was a big man who stood head and shoulders above his countryman. So there was status in belonging to this tribe. This was the tribe that Moses called "**blessed of the Lord**".

Between Strathcona Park Presbyterian Church and the start of Barnabas House, I did some tutoring at what was then called The Native Bible College at Deseronto. I don't think it exists any longer but it wouldn't be called that today. It would be called The Aboriginal Bible College. We think of aboriginals as simply being aboriginals. We lump them together as a single group, but they are not a homogeneous group. The reserve at Tyendenegia is Mohawk Territory. One of the students that I tutored was from northern Quebec. She was Cree. Her 8-year-old son got picked on all the time at school by other aboriginal students. He was Cree, not Mohawk, and that made him different from all the other kids. As far as the other students were concerned, he was from an inferior tribe. So belonging to a certain tribe gave some more status than others.

4. **A Hebrew of Hebrews.** By this Paul meant that he was a pure Jew. He was a Hebrew born of pure Hebrew stock. He was not a half-breed. He was not a mixed blood. Paul had an impeccable pedigree.
5. **As to the law, a Pharisee.** In The Amplified Bible, a version that you rarely hear of any more, it goes like this: **As to the observance of the Law I was [of the party] of the Pharisees.** Paul not only had status by reason of his birth, but was also a high achiever. He became a Pharisee which happened to be the strictest sect of Judaism in terms of keeping the law. In Galatians 1 he makes this boast. **14 And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.** His study of, his knowledge of, and his zealousness for the traditions of his ancestors was unquestionable.
6. **6 As to zeal, a persecutor of the church.** This may sound odd in a letter written to Christians, but this statement makes very clear his level of commitment to the Jewish faith – the faith of his Fathers. Christians were seen

as heretics or blasphemers by many of the Jews. Paul had been radical in his opposition to these Christian upstarts.

7. **As to righteousness under the law, blameless.** Another translation puts it this way. **As far as keeping the law was concerned, I kept it perfectly.** That is an incredible statement. In terms of observable conduct, this man had a perfect score card. There were no observable blemishes on his record.

It is not unusual for people to feel pride in their heritage, in their nationality, in their denomination or in what they have accomplished in their lives. In my family, there has been a definite pride in being a DUNKIN. The way that some of my uncles used to speak – there are none of them living anymore – there was great pride in the religious heritage of the family. To my knowledge, Dunkin's have always been committed believers. You can trace that path back through their affiliation with Baptist churches, the United Church, the Methodist Church (forerunner to the United Church), their Quaker affiliation and the Puritans. So far as I am aware, the family has produced 8 ministers covering 3 generations. All of them were Baptists except for you know who!



I am the black sheep of the clan. All of my grandparents 25 grandchildren married



and only two of those marriages have ended in divorce. For most of the family, there is great pride in the family heritage. I just don't happen to be one of the reasons for that pride. Mine is not a perfect scorecard. In some ways I have been a

disappointment to the Dunkin tribe. Unlike Paul, my credentials are not perfect.

I want to comment on how I feel about all this. I want to say that I am very thankful for my heritage. It has been a blessing in many ways. It is not a perfect heritage, even if it did produce an abundance of Baptist ministers! However, one of the major distinguishing features of the Dunkin family has been pride. As you know, pride is one of the seven deadly sins. Pride is very damaging. Pride results in self-righteousness, a sense or feeling that we are somehow better than other people. It can produce a feeling of superiority. A proud person is like this person in Luke 18. **11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.**

One of the problems of prideful people is that they cannot let others see them as they really are. They hide behind a front or façade that is not real. Our word “personality” comes from the Latin word *persona* which literally means “a mask”. Our personality is frequently a mask behind which we hide. It stops other people from seeing the real “us”. Our spirits are like tuning forks that reverberate with what is going on around us.



However, because of our fears and insecurities, we build a *persona* around our spirits that is like stone. It is hard and cannot be penetrated. This is what the Bible calls a **heart of stone**.

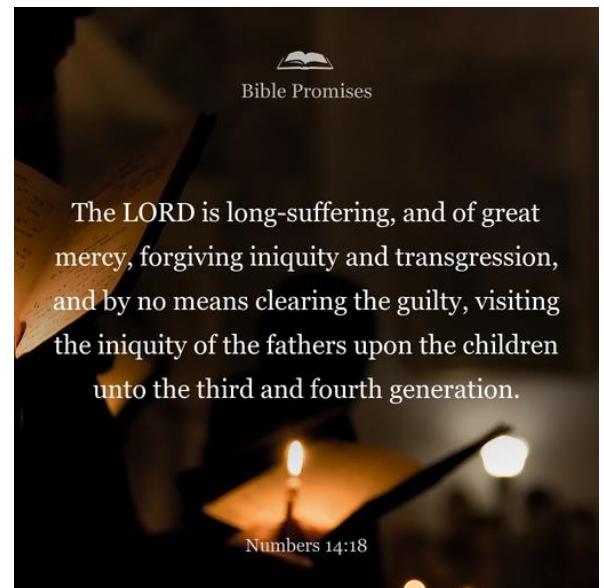


Paul, with all his impeccable heritage and credentials had a heart of stone. His life was ruled by fear and hate. Inside that stone persona he had built up was a man desperately calling out for a meaningful relationship with God. You would think that with all his religiosity he would know all about God, but there is a vast difference between knowing about God and having a meaningful relationship with him.

That is why Paul goes on to make this statement about all his pride of heritage and his

self-righteousness, **7** **But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.** In other words, there was a time when he thought his nationality, his tribe, the sect of Judaism he belonged to and his ability to keep the laws of his people perfectly was to his benefit. Then he came to the realization that these things were useless. Rather than being a benefit, they actually became a hindrance. It became clear to him that there was no future in the past.

You see, in the spiritual realm, it doesn't make any difference how good or religious your parents or grandparents were. It doesn't make any difference that they may have been saints who could walk on water. It makes no difference what denomination they belonged to or if in three or four generations the family produced 100 ministers. Yes, when righteousness is part of a family heritage, then those blessings are passed down from generation to generation. However, that is not all that is passed down from generation to generation. **18** **'The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.'** (Numbers 14) So we need to be aware of this: Not only do our children reap the sin we have sown, but so will our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. You and I reap, not just the sins of our parents, but of our grandparents and great-grandparents as well.



The reality is that regardless of our heritage, and the positive or negative effect that heritage has on us, you and I are ultimately responsible before God with what we do with our lives – with whether we follow him or walk in our own rebellious ways. God only has children! He doesn't have grandchildren and great-grandchildren!! With you are a child of God because you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, or you are not a child of God. You don't automatically have a relationship with Jesus because your parents had one. There is no future to the past.

Paul discovered that all the things he once considered were to his benefit, were actual of no benefit at all. **8** **Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may**

gain Christ [9](#) and be found in him... When compared to knowing Christ, everything else was like ashes. Everything else seemed like rubbish – mere garbage. However,

- knowing Christ as his Saviour and Lord;
- following him as his Lord;
- serving him and him alone;

these things were so important that Paul had willingly lost everything in life that was once so important to him. He lost his privileged position. He was rejected by the very people who had once been so impressed with him. He had no home, no family, no money in the bank, no pension and no RSP's. He had few friends and many enemies. He had lost his health and his freedom. He had nothing – except **Jesus!!** Yet he can truthfully say: "I gladly give it all up because I know Christ. Now, all that is important is that I now have a relationship with Jesus."

Let me close by saying this. There is no future in the past. The future – your future and my future – lies with the present. It is in knowing Jesus now. Don't put any stock

in your heritage or pedigree. Thank God for whatever blessings are yours as a result of your families Christian heritage, but don't be perturbed if there is no Christian background in



There is no **Future** in the Past

your family. What is all important is your relationship with Jesus now. If you know Christ and walk with him, then it doesn't matter if you came from a line of pastors or swindlers. Christ can wash you clean from all of your own sin, and his cross can stand between you and the sins of your ancestors. The Cross of Christ is able to block all the garbage that is normally passed from generation to generation. ***If you know Christ and are found in him, then you have it all.***

Prayer

Jesus, you know all the sin in my life. Wash it all away by the cleansing power of your blood, shed for me on the Cross of Calvary. I understand how this works. But I feel powerless to deal with my families' past. I thank you for all the blessings that accrue to me from the righteousness of my ancestors. I now understand that the power of the Cross of Christ is not just limited to my sin alone, but that same Cross can act as a shield to protect me from the sins of my families' past. I ask today that you place your Cross between me and all

the iniquity of past generations. And Lord, I ask that your cross stand between my sin and lives of my children. I ask this in the mighty name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Hymn: “When I Survey The Wondrous Cross” with Katharyn Scott

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBdP9EsoDFQ>

1. When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.
2. Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.
3. See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
4. Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul,
Demands my soul,
Love demands my soul
my life, my all.....

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 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 (Matthew 10:8)

Jesus said, “Freely you have received, freely give.”
Let us present our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

Offertory Prayer

Generous God, you have given us life,
 a place to live in,
 and people to live with.
 Open our eyes to each other
 and to all our brothers and sisters,
 especially the poor, the oppressed, the alienated.
 Make us humble enough to help and comfort them,
 so that your love and justice and peace may come to them.
 We make bold to consecrate ourselves and our gifts
 to you and to the service of others,
 through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Call to Prayer

God calls us to be a praying people.
 Let us join in prayer, offering our praise, thanksgiving, and intercession to God.

Pastoral Prayer

We worship you, Jesus, our Savior;
 you conquered death by your cross:
 you are the stone rejected by the builders;
 you have become the cornerstone:
 make all of us living stones in your church.
 We pray to you for all Christians:
 may they live in the joy of the resurrection
 and be a visible sign of your presence by their mutual love.
 We pray to you for the leaders of your church:
 as they celebrate your resurrection with all your servants,
 may they be strengthened for your service.
 We pray to you for the leaders of the nations:
 may they exercise their office as servants of justice and peace.
 We pray to you for all who are suffering
 from illness, grief, old age, and exile:
 may your resurrection be a source of comfort and aid for them.

Father, our hearts are burdened today as the COVID-19 pandemic deepens in our country and especially in this province. As numbers continue to rise and our hospitals and healthcare system face the prospect of being overwhelmed, we face the uncertainty of what the future holds. We ask that increasing doses of vaccine may be made available, particularly to the vulnerable and those on

the frontlines. We pray for those who are afraid to take the vaccine because of the misinformation sown in people's minds by those that have a particular political or religious agenda. We pray for those homes that have been devastated by this disease, especially those who have lost loved ones through death and those who are finding it difficult to survive emotionally and financially through this pandemic. Lord, work out your purposes in our lives, in our churches and in our community. We thank you that in your Sovereignty this comes as no surprise to you. Thank you that we are never out of the sight.

Lord, we pray for those who are facing other diseases and need surgery in these days. We pray especially for those requiring more than day surgery for cancer, heart disease and any other conditions. We pray that they will receive treatment in a timely fashion. We pray for healthcare workers that are feeling overburdened and stressed, by too few people having to face overwhelming conditions. It is our prayer, that all of these would in this time look to Jesus and find in him the One who is able to carry even the heaviest of burdens.

We pray for our Church. In these uncertain times, we thank you that while we are unable to meet in person, we can still continue to worship you in our homes through these services, provided either in written form or over the internet. We pray especially for our Search Committee and our Elders, who continue to receive profiles and applications from candidates, interview ones who seem promising and are tasked with presenting to the congregation who they feel should be the next minister of St. Andrew's. Give them wisdom to discern the person of your choosing.

We pray for those who are shut in and in nursing homes. Lord, they are able to receive little in the way of visitors and find the days long and themselves cutoff from live. Minister your presence to them. May they know the encouragement of Christ, who promises to stick closer to us than any relative.

We ask all this in the powerful name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Closing Hymn:

"Ancient of Days", CityAlight

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxFMal-Ely0>

1. Though the nations rage
Kingdoms rise and fall
There is still one King

Reigning over all
 So I will not fear
 For this truth remains
 That my God is the Ancient of Days

Chorus

None above Him none before Him
 All of time in His hands
 For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
 All the power all the glory
 I will trust in His name
 For my God is the Ancient of days

2. Though the dread of night
 Overwhelms my soul
 He is here with me
 I am not alone
 O His love is sure
 And He knows my name
 For my God is the Ancient of Days

Chorus

None above Him none before Him
 All of time in His hands
 For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
 All the power all the glory
 I will trust in His name
 For my God is the Ancient of days

3. Though I may not see
 What the future brings
 I will watch and wait
 For the Saviour king
 Then my joy complete
 Standing face to face
 In the presence of the Ancient of Days

Chorus

None above Him none before Him
 All of time in His hands
 For His throne it shall remain and ever stand
 All the power all the glory
 I will trust in His name
 For my God is the Ancient of days

Tag

For my God is the Ancient of Days

Benediction

Go now with your trust in the good shepherd,
and let us love, not just in words, but in truth and action.
Believe in the name of Jesus Christ,
and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

And may God be at your side, even in valleys of death.
May Christ Jesus be the cornerstone of your life.
And may the Holy Spirit abide in you
....and tend you with love and mercy all the days of your life.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.