

Living Like Children in the Family of Christ
Mark 10:2-16
Oct 3rd, 2021

Welcome

Announcements

- Communion If you are unable to join us in person but would like to partake in Communion please contact Rev. Gerry Gallant at the church – 613-267-2481

- The Children’s Lesson will follow the scripture reading

Call to Worship (Responsive)

God calls us to worship, and we come,
some with laughter and songs of joy.
God calls us to worship, and we come,
some from a sense of obligation or habit.
God calls us to worship, and we come,
some with hearts heavy with grief.
God calls us to worship, and we come,
some with distraction or exhaustion.
God calls us to worship, and we come,
some with eagerness and enthusiasm.
God calls us to worship, and we come,
some with stress, loneliness, or depression.
As God’s dearly loved children,
we bring all our joy and pain, hurt and hope
into this place of Spirit-given grace, love, and hope.

Prayer of Invocation

With you, gracious God,
we move into this time of worship,
grateful that you are never farther
than the reach of our need and our prayer.
You who tower over the universe
are yet intimately present,
always renewing the face of the earth,
always renewing the faith of your children.
Now, in your mercy, make your way past
all that worries and distracts us
to lodge in us anew and to center
our small worship on your great glory. Amen.

Call to Confession

*The proof of God's amazing love is this:
While we were sinners, Christ died for us.
Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness,
so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
Trusting in God's faithfulness and compassion,
let us confess our sin before God and one another.*

Prayer of Confession

*Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*
**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**
*For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.*
**Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.**
*You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.*
**Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.**
*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.*
**Do not cast me from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me. Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

*Take comfort in the assurance
that even those things that are hidden from memory,
or are too deep for our words,
are not beyond God's forgiving love.
God, who knows us completely,
bestows pardon and peace.
Thanks be to God. Amen*

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 8 ESV

To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.

1 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,

4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet,

7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,

8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Music Ministry

Scripture

Mark 10:2–16 ESV

2 And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" **3** He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" **4** They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." **5** And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. **6** But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' **7** 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, **8** and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. **9** What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." **10** And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. **11** And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, **12** and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery." **13** And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. **14** But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. **15** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." **16** And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Children's Lesson

Everyone take a look up at the screen and tell your parents what you see there. Do you know what that is?



It is a welcome mat. Welcome mats are usually placed outside the front door of someone's house. I bet even a few of you might have one in front of your house. Now the hard part, what is the real purpose of a welcome mat?

I bet for many people, especially the ones who end up cleaning the house it means, 'Please wipe off your dirty shoes before you come into the house!' However, we all know that the word 'Welcome' actually means to greet someone in a warm and friendly way. The question I have is are people always welcoming? Do people welcome people the same way if they look different? Or if they speak a different language? How about if they dress very differently than we do? Are they still welcoming to people who may be nothing like them?

How about at Church? Do you think we make the church a welcoming place? How about people who are all different races or who speak different languages? Do you think we make them feel welcome? How about people who are homeless, do you think they would feel welcome if they walked into St. Andrews on a Sunday morning? I imagine the adults all thought of their own answers to those questions, but the next one is really for the children. Do you think children feel welcomed at this church? Even if they are new and do not know what to do and how to act and participate in a worship service, do you think they would feel welcomed? What if they were acting up, or whispering to one another, or even when a baby cries, do you think the children would still feel welcomed?



I think if we were all to answer these questions honestly, we would probably say that even if we wanted them to feel welcome, they might not feel welcome. Children had a very difficult time in the times of Jesus, they were not always welcome. Especially at the synagogue where children were not allowed to go.

In today's scripture we heard about the disciples keeping some children from coming to see Jesus. They were just doing things the way that they had always been done, protecting the Rabbi from the noise and questions of Children. The disciples even got angry at the parents because they were going against what was the normal expectation and told them to stop bringing their children to be near Jesus.



Jesus actually gets angry at them for turning the children away. He tells them to, "Let the children come to me." Jesus tells his disciples to stop getting into the way of the children coming to him and then tells the disciples that the kingdom of God belongs to the children. Then when the children have gathered around him, Jesus takes them into his arms and blesses them.

Jesus knew what it meant to be welcoming. He knew how to make the children feel like they were wanted, even if they did not know what to do, or how to behave.

As a church we are supposed to be like Jesus. We are supposed to be a place where everyone feels welcome, even if they are not like anyone else there, or even if they do not know what to do or how to behave.

I have homework for all of you again. Think about how we can make the church more welcoming for everyone, but especially for young people and children. After you think about it share it with your parents, your teachers, other church members and me so that we can all make this church more like Jesus.

Dear Father, we want to learn the lesson that Jesus taught us. Help us to make everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, feel welcome in our homes, in our church, in our schools, and in our circle of friends. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Prayer for illumination

*O gracious God and most merciful Father,
you have given us the rich and precious jewel of your holy Word.
Assist us with your Spirit, that it may be written in our hearts
to our everlasting comfort,
to reform us, to renew us according to your own image,
to build us up into the perfect building of Christ,
and to increase us in all heavenly virtues.
Grant this, O heavenly Father, for the same Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.*

Sermon

I will be honest with you, this weeks scripture is challenging. It was challenging to read, it was challenging to research, it is going to be challenging to preach and it is going to be challenging for you to hear. However, I pray that all of us keep our hearts and minds open to the message of the holy spirit as we contemplate the word today.



In my research I read some very troubling things. I read about the decline of family values in society. The deep concern that fewer and fewer women are wanting to invest their time in motherhood and the raising of their children. More and more families forced to hire people to raise their kids as they pursue their own desires and careers. The increasing divorce rates and rise in marital infidelity that is becoming more prevalent and acceptable in society. Fathers becoming less likely to be family leaders and no longer showing a desire to be involved in the raising of their children. The overwhelming concern that the decline of traditional family values is leading to a society that will crumble and dissolve into chaos.

Does any of this sound familiar to the people in the room? I am sure it does, these issues have been raised by many people over the last one hundred years. However, I bet you will be surprised to know that these concerns were raised by many Roman authors about one hundred years before the birth of Christ.

In the era that surrounded the birth of Jesus, these were the concerns of many of the people. So much so, that when Caesar Augustus came to power in the year 31 AD, he introduced legislation that attempted to bring the traditional family values back to the people of the Roman empire. The reality is that even though we may have advanced in technology, we are still driven by the same earthly desires that humankind has been driven by since the fall in the garden of Eden.

The Romans had one of the highest levels of reverence for the family in the world at the time. They believed that the family you lived with upon the Earth was the family you lived with throughout all time. They believed that the family should be placed above everything, above the rules of society, above the rules of the government, even above the Gods you worshiped. The loyalty to the family should overrule everything in your life, and this is why they were so concerned the decline of family values that was taking place in their society.

Christians have different reasons for lamenting the loss of the family values that have taken place since the time of Jesus. Christianity teaches us that God himself designed marriage and parenthood. This means that we acknowledge that God has a plan for ourselves, and our family and we have obligations to them that are based upon the scripture. We also acknowledge that there is scripture that calls for us to place our obligation to God over those to our family.

So how are modern day Christians to balance this call to place such importance and value on our family and at the same time hold God in the reverence that he deserves in our lives?

The Christian is challenged to be more intentional on how they stay focused on God in their lives. They need to consider their faith and how it influences who they date, who they marry and how they treat their spouse. How does being a Christian influence how children are taught and raised? This is how the Christian concept of family values differs from the Roman view. Christians are not concerned with the traditional family values in a sense of tradition, such as the concept of the nuclear



family, instead they should be focused on the applying of the Christian values into our families in the modern era.

We are going to start with one of the most controversial topics we can.

Mark 10:2–3 ESV

2 And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” 3 He answered them, “What did Moses command you?”

As soon as Jesus crosses over into the lands that are controlled by Herod Antipas the Pharisees asked Jesus a question about divorce. This is not a simple innocent question; it is one that is asked with intent. Earlier in the book of Mark we are told the story of Herod Antipas who had divorced his wife and then remarried a woman named Herodias, his own brother’s wife. John the Baptist had been speaking out about the sinful nature of this marriage, and while Herod was struggling with his understanding of John as a wise and Godly man, his wife Herodias just wanted John dead so she could live in her life of sin peacefully. When Herod’s stepdaughter, after seductively dancing for the King and his court is promised anything she wants, at her mothers’ bequests she asks for the head of John the Baptist on a platter. And Herod caught up in his sin, follows through with her request.

The Pharisees are not just asking about divorce, instead they are asking, “Was it lawful for Herod to divorce his wife?” As you can imagine this question was intended to force Jesus into a confrontation with Herod and potentially into the same condemnation that John the Baptist had received.

Jesus is not going to be caught in this trap. He responds by questioning the Pharisees on what Moses had commanded of God’s people in regard to divorce. Jesus brings the Pharisees away from the trap they had been setting up for him regarding the views upon marriage of the world and of non-believers and instead forces them to focus on what it is that scripture says about marriage.

The Pharisees immediately quote the law.

Mark 10:4 ESV

4 They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”

This was based upon their understanding of what is written about marriage in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 24:1 ESV

1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

However, if you look at the verse that they quote it is not law, but instead it speaks of the process of divorce. It does not make it clear what the grounds for divorce are, instead it makes it easier to understand what the process of divorce should be for the people of Israel.

Women were regarded differently in those times and the procedure of divorce that is in the scripture was meant to protect the woman who was divorced. Once she had received the written certificate from her husband, she was then free to live her life and marry someone else without her previous husband laying any claim upon her or accusing her of infidelity.

So, while the procedure was defined, the reasoning was still left up to interpretation. This was as hotly debated in Jesus's time as it is today in the modern church. Two rabbis were at the center of the battle about justifiable reasoning for divorce.



The first was Rabbi Shammai, he stated that the only reason a man could have for considering divorce of his wife was marital infidelity. He came to this conclusion based upon his study and his understanding of the Hebrew word that we see translated as 'indecency.' In Rabbi Shammai's understanding, unless she had committed adultery, unless she had been physically unfaithful not just mentally, she could not be

divorced. In fact, he also believed that even though divorce was allowable for this reason, it was not necessary.

Then there was Rabbi Hillel. Rabbi Hillel had a different interpretation of 'indecency.' He instead saw indecency as any disappointment that the husband experienced in his wife. In Rabbi Hillel's understanding, a husband could divorce his wife because of adultery, if she cooked a meal poorly, if she did not keep the house clean, or even if he found another woman more attractive than his current wife. He claimed this because he believed these were all justifiable deficits in the wife in her husbands' eyes.

I am assuming you can guess which Rabbi's views were more popular with the men who wanted to divorce their wives. Those Pharisees knew that by asking Jesus about divorce they were not just placing him in a position where he could offend King Herod, but also one where he could offend his Jewish followers who might differ in the understanding of divorce based on whether they believed Rabbi Shammai or Rabbi Hillel. They were probably patting themselves on the back, thinking that they had finally asked him a question which he could not answer without ruining his reputation with his followers or drawing the attention of the law.

Jesus knowing all of this instead draws out this distinction between what is the law and what is permissible.

Mark 10:5–9 ESV

5 And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

Jesus goes back to scripture, back to the original intention of marriage. In the book of Genesis, before the fall of man and the introduction of sin into the world; God made both man and woman in his image.

Genesis 1:27 ESV

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Emphasizing that both men and woman are equally made in the image of God. He then quotes Genesis 2:24

Genesis 2:24 ESV

24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Jesus presents this as God's intention behind marriage. That a man should leave the care and protection of his family and be merged into a new family with his wife. In the Hebrew that is used in the book of Genesis, the word for 'leave' and 'become' both carry the connotation of a conventional relationship. Simply put one severed the deep relationship they had with their family and began a new deep relationship with their spouse. It called for the husband and wife to redefine who they are in relationship to their parents and their spouse.

Jesus says it was because of the hardness of human hearts, the inability of human hearts to obey this that the concession for divorce in the book of Deuteronomy is written.

Jesus through his words is giving the scriptural definition of marriage without falling prey to all of the traps that the Pharisees thought they had laid out before him. Marriage according to scripture is when two flesh becomes one, when the two lives become so intertwined that they become inseparable. They essentially become dependent upon one another for life, I can tell you with absolute honesty that I would be absolutely lost without my wife in many ways.

We need to remember that the disciples were good Jewish men; so even though they have been faithfully following Jesus, seeing his miracles and learning his teachings, they are still challenged when he teaches them something that does not align with what the Rabbi's of the time were teaching as the law. We have seen this many times over the past few weeks in terms of their understanding of who was the Messiah and his role in the Kingdom of heaven.

Mark 10:10–12 ESV

10 And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

This is difficult to understand to men who have been educated in the teachings of Rabbi Shammai or Rabbi Hillel. So, Jesus lays it out clearly, yet this is still debated by the modern church. Is divorce permissible, and if someone divorces what should happen to them? The human dilemma is that we always seek to make rules and follow them, instead of living out the intention of the scripture.

My own grandfather was excommunicated from the Roman catholic church because my grandmother had divorced him when she fell in love with another man. Through no fault of his own he was no longer allowed to participate in the sacraments and fellowship of the church. He

spent almost 20 years and finally was able to receive a Papal disposition that forgave him of his divorce and allowed him to return to fellowship and to partake in the elements once again.

This is mans doing, when we take scripture and create rules and regulations that go beyond what is written we are becoming like the Pharisees. So instead of focusing on whether divorce is permissible or not, lets look at what the scripture teaches us about relationships.

It is clear from what Jesus quoted in the book of Genesis and then later to the disciples that as a follower of Jesus we should seek a marriage that has lifelong fidelity. This was God's intention when he designed marriage. The Pharisees are instead focused on what is allowable. It reminds me people asking questions about sin. People will often approach a pastor and ask if something is a sin, and then start to look for the loopholes. For example, kids ask; If I take money from my mom's wallet, is it a sin (stealing)? What about if she drops it on the floor and does not notice, if I take it then is it a sin?



They are not worried about sin as an action instead they are just looking for what they can do and justify it in the eyes of God. Instead of asking 'Is this a sin?' we should be asking 'Does this please God?'

The problem with the focus of the Pharisees on what is permissible is that it is based on the assumption that divorce is inevitable in marriage. Instead of thinking of the great gift of a spouse that God has given them and seeking to please God in their marriage, they are thinking 'what more can I get from this relationship? or 'is there a better relationship out there for me?' The Pharisees start where something is broken, and Jesus begins where something comes together.

This is why we are called to seek marriage that has lifelong fidelity. However, we also have to acknowledge that the plan as laid out in Genesis 1 and 2 was laid out before the fall of man. If the world had never fallen into sin, perhaps we all could have enjoyed this type of marriage, yet the reality is that man has fallen, and sin is part of our world. This is why divorce is a reality in our world.

Jesus knows this, he knew the original plan and how it was meant to be, he knows the concession because of the Human heart that was given to mosses and here he is teaching us that we should all reach for the ideal.

Yet in the book of Matthew Jesus acknowledges that marital infidelity is a reality that Christians will face.

Matthew 19:9 ESV

9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

He concedes that while lifelong fidelity is the goal, that sins of the flesh will cause infidelity and marriages to fall apart. How I wish that I would have been able to argue this to the Roman Catholic on my grandfather's behalf. Jesus himself acknowledges here that as a protection to a husband or wife who has experienced the pain and loss of trust because of adultery should be given the chance to divorce and remarry. Notice it does not say they must divorce because of infidelity; it allows for it. Many marriages are able to be rebuilt and recover if both spouses are committed to rebuilding the foundation of their marriage, and others will never be able to do this. For this reason, God has graciously allowed a way for those who can find no reconciliation a way to leave a broken marriage.

What happens when someone comes to Christianity later in life. Like in the early church, the modern church faces the reality of many people seeking to become Christian when they are older, and often they have been divorced, perhaps even several times in their life. How were they going to deal with this idea of divorce? Paul, who was familiar with many of the gentiles who were coming to the church, gives us an answer in his letter to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 7:17 ESV

17 Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.

Paul teaches that we should seek to remain in the position we were when we come to faith. If we have been divorced and then remarried, we should seek to keep our marriage. The truth is we can never go back and undo our past. There are aspects of our lives that everyone present in this room probably wishes they could undo, however as Christians we are called not to focus on our past, but instead be focused on our present and our future. Living our lives for Christ.

Then there is the reality of the modern world that the people did not have to face nearly as often even 50 years ago. While many Christians are married, not all of them are married to fellow Christians. Many people are married to Christians of other denominations or to non-Christians. What are we to do when someone wants to divorce because they no longer can believe or support their spouse in their faith? We are once again told by Paul 1 Corinthians 7:15

1 Corinthians 7:15 ESV

15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.

The creation of the "no fault" divorce has led to a world where people can leave their spouse for almost any reason, real or imagined. In many cases there is absolutely nothing that can be done, even if one of the married couples does not want to be divorced. Once the procedure has begun, the outcome is inevitable, the spouse who wants to keep the marriage has no legal way to force their partner to work on the marriage.

This is the reality of marriage and divorce in our world, much the same as it has been through out time. While we are to uphold the ideal of lifelong fidelity as our goal, churches need to acknowledge the realities that exist in the human relationship we call marriage.

Jesus calls for us to live our lives to a standard that is different from the world. He calls for us to live as Christians, in all aspects of our life; at work; at the grocery store; with friends, with family;

with our spouse. This means we should be living our lives with the idea of a lifelong marriage, with two flesh becoming one. The truth is that divorce is taken too lightly in our society and often churches will never talk about the subject out of fear of offending someone. Jesus told us we will offend others when we speak his word and that we should not be ashamed of that. We should call upon one another and help one another reach the ideals set out in the scripture and not allow ourselves to be led instead by the ways of the world.

We also need to acknowledge and understand that no one is perfect. None of us lives a sinless life. While God may have intended perfection, it is not attainable because of the corruption of sin. For this reason, our church needs to be an example of God's grace in the world, a place where those who have experienced divorce can find safety and support, a place where they can find fellowship and healing. Many people who have experienced divorce feel like they are wearing a scarlet letter when they walk into a church, and we should seek to help them let go of their past and instead focus on living their now and future in Christ.

Lifelong fidelity is another of the things we are called to have as Christians, just like, taking up your cross, dying to self, loving your enemies, and forgiving others. These are all difficult aspects of Christianity and we all will struggle with them differently. Yet through spending time with God's people in fellowship, study and worship and spending our personal time in the study of God's word and prayer we can become closer to the ideal that God laid out before us in his plan.

Mark 10:13 ESV

13 And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them.

Jesus has just finished explaining the virtues of marriage to the disciples. Parents are seeking Jesus so that he can offer a blessing to their children and the disciples being guarded are trying to prevent the children from bothering their Rabbi.

Remember that children at this time were not regarded highly, they were often overlooked and left out of social engagements. The disciples likely felt they were doing something beneficial, protecting Jesus from the nuisance of children crawling on him and asking him questions.

Yet, as we have seen many times in the past few weeks, the disciples have gotten it wrong again. Jesus gets angry at the disciples and insists that they stop keeping the children away from him.

Jesus then teaches us a very important lesson.

Mark 10:14–16 ESV

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them.

Jesus makes two statements:

- The Kingdom of God belongs to children

- Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.



The first statement is much easier to understand. He has taught the disciples previously how children are just as valued in the Kingdom as any other person. This should remind us of all of the importance of raising children in Christ. The importance of teaching them scripture and catechism so that they are able to participate in the Kingdom of God throughout their lives.

The second statement however is new and much more interesting. What are the traits that children exhibit when they receive the Kingdom of God?

I think the first thing that Jesus saw in the children was humility, something we are called to have often in our relationship with God and in our relationships with one another. The humility that children have means that they do not place themselves above others, they do not try to separate people the same way that adults do. Instead of focusing on the laws around marriage and relationships, they are focused on the meaning of family. I see this often in young children who will run up and make friends with anyone, even those that their parents may shy away from.

Children are also obedient. Yes, I acknowledge that kids act up and disobey their parents all the time. Yet if we are truthful in our assessment of their behaviour, we would have to admit that they are generally obedient in their behaviour, especially in matters of importance. Is this not what God expects of us. God has a set of expectations for us in marriage, and yet he still acknowledges that because of our fallen nature we may deviate from his plan.

Children are also very trusting, perhaps to a fault. Young children look up to the adults around them and seek to learn everything that they can. They ask questions and admit that they know very little of how the world works. This often presents adults with an opportunity to have a bit of fun explaining how things work, only to later correct themselves and teach the child the truth.

Their fault is that they can also be very trusting of all adults. Children do not look at any person and immediately assume they are bad people. Children will often make friends with complete strangers on a plane, train, or bus. They are trusting of people by nature and want to believe the best in others. It is unfortunate that we have people in society who will take advantage of this trust and abuse it. Yet we can learn from this and perhaps as adults we can begin to see past the preconceived notions and bias, we have and try to see the good in people rather than the evils we may have experienced or learned about in the past.

Perhaps the most wonderful aspect is they have a short memory. Children often forget something bad that has happened to them or some injustice they have experienced. They forget it and therefore never have to experience the difficulty of trying to forgive someone for some wrong they have done to us.

Children have humility, obedience, trust, and forgiveness as traits of childhood.

And how do they accept the Kingdom of God - as children; small, powerless, with no expectations and no entitlement and at Jesus's time as the overlooked and often dispossessed of society. Children had nothing to bring to the Kingdom of God, instead whatever they received they received with grace on the basis of their neediness rather than by anything they had done.

As Christians we are called to recognize our call to follow Christ:

- To recognize that there is nothing we can do that will ensure our salvation.
- That obedience to a law is not what we are called to do to ensure our salvation
- That a ritual of showing up to church without any real faith will not earn our salvation

Instead, we must give ourselves fully to Christ and his teachings in the scripture, knowing that we will falter and fail, knowing that we will make mistakes but focus on the intent and not the law. Living like children, with humility, obedience, trust, and forgiveness of one another in our marriage, in our family, in our fellowship and in our communities so we can live as the salt and light of this world.

Let us Pray,

Your Compassion is Boundless

*Almighty, merciful God, heavenly Father,
your compassion is boundless.
you are patient, gracious,
and are rich in love and faithfulness.
You forgive rebellion, trespasses and sin.
We have sinned and have become evil,
and have often angered you.
Against you alone have we sinned
and done evil in your sight.
But Lord,
do not think about our past misdeeds.
Let your great mercy be on us,
for we are miserable.
Help us, God of our Salvation.
Redeem us and forgive our sins
for the glory of your most holy name,
and for the sake of your beloved Son,
our Savior Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one true God, now and forever.
Amen*

Source: Pomeranian Agenda, in *Gebetbuch, enthaltend ...*, #591.

Confession of Faith

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

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN.

Declaration of God's Invitation and Promises (Communion)

*Hear the words of the institution
of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ:
Jesus said to his disciples,
"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.
For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment
in the kingdom of God."
After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said,
"Take this and divide it among you.
For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine
until the kingdom of God comes."
And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it,
and gave it to them, saying,
"This is my body given for you;
do this in remembrance of me."
In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
which is poured out for you."*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

This text is based on one of the earliest prayers of thanksgiving from the early church, often attributed to Hippolytus (c. A.D. 215).

*The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up to the Lord.*

*Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right for us to give thanks and praise.
We give you thanks, O God,
through your beloved servant, Jesus Christ,
whom you have sent in these last times
as Savior and Redeemer and messenger of your will.
He is your Word, inseparable from you,
through whom you made all things
and in whom you take delight.
You sent him from heaven into the virgin's womb,
where he was conceived and took flesh.
Born of the virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit,
he was revealed as your Son.
In fulfillment of your will he stretched out his hands in suffering
to release from suffering those who place their trust in you,
and so won for you a holy people.
He freely accepted the death to which he was handed over
in order to destroy death and to shatter the chains of the evil one;
to trample underfoot the powers of hell
and to lead the righteous into light;
to fix the boundaries of death
and to manifest the resurrection.
And so he took bread, gave thanks to you, and said,
"Take, and eat; this is my body, given for you."
In the same way he took the cup, saying,
"This is my blood, shed for you.
When you do this, do it for the remembrance of me."
Remembering therefore his death and resurrection,
we set before you this bread and cup,
thankful that you have counted us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you as your priestly people.
We ask you to send your Holy Spirit
upon the offering of the holy church.
Gather into one all who share these holy mysteries,
filling them with the Holy Spirit and confirming their faith in the truth,
that together we may praise you and give you glory,
through your servant, Jesus Christ.
Through him all glory and honor are yours, almighty Father,
with the Holy Spirit in the holy church
now and forever. **Amen.***

Preparation of the Bread and Cup

*Is not the bread that we break
a sharing in the body of Christ?
**We who are many are one body,
for we all share the same loaf.**
Is not the cup for which we give thanks*

a sharing in the blood of Christ?

**The cup that we drink
is our participation in the blood of Christ.
Holy Father, in thanks for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ,
in the joy of his resurrection,
in the hope of his coming again,
we present ourselves a living sacrifice
and come to the table of our Lord.**

Communion

(Invitation)

*Congregation of Jesus Christ,
the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him
and trust in him alone for their salvation.
All who are truly sorry for their sins,
who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus
as their Savior,
and who desire to live in obedience to him as Lord
are now invited to come with gladness
to the table of the Lord.*

(Taking of the Elements)

*Take, eat, remember, and believe
that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.*

*Take, drink, remember, and believe
that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
was shed for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.*

Response of Praise and Prayers

*O Lord, our God, we give you thanks
for uniting us by baptism in the body of Christ
and for filling us with joy in the eucharist.
Lead us toward the full visible unity of your church,
and help us to treasure all the signs of reconciliation you have granted us.
Now that we have tasted the banquet
you have prepared for us in the world to come,
may we all one day share together
the inheritance of the saints in the life of the heavenly city.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end. **Amen.***

Invitation to Offering

*God has shown us the meaning of generosity
in the beautiful diversity of creation,
in the overflowing love of Jesus Christ,
in the never-ending gift of the Holy Spirit.
God has abundantly blessed us and called us
to be a community that honors each other,
to serve others with joy,
to share our love and material possessions.
Let us rejoice in what we have been given
and in what is ours to give.*

Offering

Presenting our tithes and offerings is an act of worship. I want to encourage you to write a cheque and drop it in the mail to the church using your envelope, if you have one. (St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, PO Box 161, 1 Drummond St W, Perth, ON K7H 3E3) We also have another option for you for giving and that is you can make an e-Transfer.

This note from our treasurer. E-transfers are now accepted. Please note the new email address for this purpose only. standrewspertthoffering@gmail.com Please include your Offering Envelope # in the message section of the INTERAC transfer page you fill in. If you wish any part of your donation to go to a specific fund (e.g., Presbyterian Sharing) please mention this in your message.

Offertory Prayer

*Generous God,
we marvel at your lavish gifts to us:
life and breath,
food and shelter,
opportunities for work and play,
and, most especially, hope and peace in Christ.
We now pledge ourselves
to mirror and reflect
the glory of your self-giving love,
to continue in the pattern of generosity
we see perfectly revealed in Christ,
through whom we pray. Amen.*

Pastoral Prayer

*No matter where we are, where we are going, or what we are doing,
we know that we find our help in you, our Lord.
You are the creator and sustainer of all
that has been made and will be made.
And yet, the immensity of creation does not distract you
from caring personally for every person in it.
We know that is true of your care for us too!
You do not daydream or become weary in that care.
We thank you that you not only watch over us with diligence
but that you will guide us so that we will not fall—
so that we won't even stumble.
Whether we are awake or asleep, you are there,
sheltering and protecting us from all that would hurt us.
We know that you watch over all our living—
you have in the past, and we know you are now.
Your promise holds for the future and for eternity,
and we praise and thank you for that. **Amen.***

Benediction

*May God go before you to lead you.
May God go behind you to guard you.
May God go beneath you to support you.
May God go beside you to befriend you.
Do not be afraid.
Let the blessing of God—the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit—
come upon you today and settle in around you.
Do not be afraid.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.***