

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
 Sunday, January 2nd, 2022
 Rev. Gerry Gallant

Jesus Eternal
 Second Sunday After Christmas
 John 1:1-5

Welcome

Call to Worship

We have life because God created it.

Life had its beginning in God.

We need not fear the end of life.

In God, it will come to completion and its meaning will be fully revealed.

All creation, including us, will find fulfillment in God.

Now we see in part. Then we shall see face to face.

Let us worship God, who is the Creator of Life and the Victor over death!

Prayer of Adoration

*God of power and might, God of grace and mercy,
 heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

*You chose to become one of us in Jesus Christ,
 sharing our joys and sorrows,*

displaying your greatness in the child of the manger.

*We praise you for your amazing love,
 great enough to embrace the expanding universe,
 yet close enough to enter our humble hearts.*

*During this time worship, surprise us with your grace once again,
 that we, with the whole Church and your precious creation,
 may praise and honour your holy name,*

O God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

Amen.

Opening Hymn # 144: "How Great Our Joy" (V 1, 4)

While by the sheep we watched at night,
 Glad tidings brought an angel bright.

- Refrain:
How great our joy! Great our joy!
Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!
Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!
Praise we the Lord in heav'n on high!

This gift of God we'll cherish well,
That ever joy our hearts shall fill.

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

God of goodness and guidance,
In Christ you sent us light to live by,
yet we seek shadows in which to hide.
In him, you promise new life,
but we prefer with old habits,
nursing grievances and clinging to familiar opinions.
You are generous with your love,
but we reject neighbors and fear strangers who differ from us.
Remake us in the image of your Son with your mercy,
and teach us how to follow him in the year ahead.

Assurance of Pardon

*Here is the good news of the Gospel! Jesus Christ is God's elect, chosen for our salvation.
In him we find God's acceptance. Let us give thanks to God for this gift, and be at peace
with ourselves and with one another.*

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 147:12-20

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!

Praise your God, O Zion!

**For he strengthens the bars of your gates;
he blesses your children within you.**

He makes peace in your borders;

he fills you with the finest of the wheat.

**He sends out his command to the earth;
his word runs swiftly.**

He gives snow like wool;

he scatters frost like ashes.

**He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs;
who can stand before his cold?**

He sends out his word, and melts them;

he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.

**He declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and rules to Israel.**

**He has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know his rules.**

Praise the LORD!

Prayer for illumination

O God, through your Word all things came into being.

In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh in Christ Jesus and lived among us.

*As we hear your written Word, help us to see your truth and to testify to it,
that all might believe in your Living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Scripture

John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

emotions with a simple picture, kind of like the hieroglyphics that the Egyptians used thousands of years ago. So maybe words are not changing as much as we think at times. Yet, we all know that the meanings of words can change over time, a disk could be a 3/12", 5 1/4", CD, Blu-ray or maybe a tape?

Ask anyone who is learning English as a second language and they will tell you the importance of even the little words like articles and prepositions, the ons and ins, a-s and the-s. These are the words that we do not even think of when we speak but are critical to sharing an understanding of something.

Words are critical for us to know and understand in this world, and in today's scripture John is speaking of the Word. He does not say a word, he says the Word. What is the difference, well if your mom or dad says they are going to a bank, it could be any bank in town? But if they are saying they are going to the bank it is the bank with which they usually do business.

John is telling us about the Word, the most important word ever, the one that gives you the breath you need to push up through your lungs and into your vocal cords. He is talking about the Word that existed before everything else existed in the world. The Word that god used to create the heavens and the earth, the water, the birds of the air and the fish of the sea. The word used to create Adam and Eve. The eternal Word that gives us all eternal life. The Word that john is speaking about is Jesus and he wants us all to know that it is the most important word we will ever learn in our lives. It should be the word that we think of and speak of more than any other word in our language.

Jesus is the Word, I challenge all of you, young and old, at least one day this week try to think of Jesus every time you draw a breath to speak. Would he be happy with the words you have chosen to use coming from the breath he has given you?

Let us pray,

Wonderful God,

We thank you for the breath of life that you breathed into each of us with your Word. We thank you for the people in our lives who teach us and help bring us up in your ways. Father, today we pray that you would set the Holy Spirit to work in each of us to remind us of the truth of your word and to help us to live our lives according to your scriptures. Father we pray that you would continue to mold us into the people you call for each of us to be and that we could become the salt and light of our community. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, the eternal Word. Amen.

Sermon

The book of John holds a special place in my heart, it is the gospel that was written by the disciple who was the dearest to our Lord. It stands out from the synoptic gospels; Mark and Luke, tell the story of Christ life as written by devote believers who gathered the details by gathering eyewitness accounts and Matthew who wrote through the eyes of the devout disciple. But John, it was written by one in the inner circle, one who was with Jesus when the other disciples were busy elsewhere. John heard and witnessed much more than the other disciples because of his relationship with Jesus. This is a book that gets us as close to the reality of who Christ was as we are going to get in this world.

The Gospel of John was one of the last books of the NT to be written. It appears to have been written from the city of Ephesus, where the apostle served as pastor after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 AD. From all indications, he wrote this gospel toward the close of the 1st century. The Synoptics had already been written and circulated as well as the letters of Paul and Peter. Their story of Christ is well known and being circulated among the early Christians as John sits down to pen his book.

John writes his book not as a chronological biography of Jesus, the synoptics fill that purpose, he does not need to re-record the details of Jesus's ministry. In fact, it is only towards the end of his book we learn his purpose for his writings.

John 20:30-31

³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John's focus is on telling us who Jesus is and why it is we should believe in Him as our Lord and Saviour. It is actually for this reason that I suggest the book of John to many Christians when they want to explore their faith. John tells us through his writings that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and we should believe in Him because of who He is and because he will provide eternal life to those who believe in Him.

John focuses upon something that makes Christianity different from all the other faith traditions in this world. Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, Paganism, and almost all other traditions focus on the teachings, ideas, and philosophies of those who founded them and their teachers. Christianity focuses on a Person, a person who is central and fundamental to our faith, Jesus. If you try to take Jesus out of Christianity you end up with nothing, it would be like trying to see without light or, breathe without air. Jesus is a critical component of Christianity.

Christianity is about a personal relationship with Jesus, a real person. This is why throughout history we see more books written, music composed, pictures painted, and dramas performed about Jesus than any other person. Other people rise in fame and fall

away, yet here we sit in 2022 and Jesus is still as Central as he was almost 2000 years ago.

Ask yourself, 'Why do other famous people rise and fall from popularity?' What makes Jesus so central to this world that people will rally both for him and against him. What makes Jesus so critical to human life that people will endure through suffering and persecution because of their belief in him? What makes Jesus so important, that people will attack him and ignore the teachings of other religions that teach things that go against their beliefs? Who is the person of Jesus...? That is what John wants to tell us in the beginning of his book.

John wants for us to discover for ourselves who Jesus is and why we should believe in him. It is for this reason he begins his book differently than the other synoptic gospels. Mark begins with the story of John the Baptist and how he prepared the way for Christ, Luke goes back further and gives a detailed description of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus based on his interviews with the people that were there, Matthew decides that he should begin with the genealogy of Abraham and the roots of Israel. John does not focus on the things of this world; he wants us to know who the deity of Jesus.

John 1:1-2

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

'In the beginning,' I hope those words sound familiar to you.

Genesis 1:1

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

John starts by bringing us back to God. Back to the very beginning of the bible, this is where John begins. Back when there was no time, just God and his eternal purpose.

I am sure most of you know who the Word is without having to think too hard on it. So, we need to ask ourselves why did John not use the name, why did he use the term The Word to describe this eternal being?

The Word in Greek is 'Logos.' While not a very well-known word today in the modern world it was a very commonly used word in the first century. This is why John chose to describe Jesus as the Word, it made it possible for those from non-Christian backgrounds to understand who Jesus was in their own frame of mind.

To the Greeks the Logos was something incredibly special. It was the rational principle that they believed everything came from, it was the creative, stable governing force of

the world in which they lived. If you have ever seen a Star Wars Film, the Force is the equivalent of the Greek Logos.

The Hebrews also knew of the Logos, but to them it was something they identified with God himself. The Logos was connected to God's active power. It is the word Logos that appears in the Greek form of Genesis 1:1, It is the word Logos that appears in the Psalms when speaking of creation, revelation, deliverance, covenant, guidance, and judgement. To the Hebrew readings John's book Logos represented God's actions and God's self-revelation.

The term Logo's appealed to both the Jew and the gentile. It was a concept that those who were faithful followers of God could understand and at the same time something the Greek philosopher could understand. It was so commonly used for these ideas that even the commoner could understand what Logos meant. John had managed in this simple word to capture the attention of many different audiences and then he goes on to explain what it means to the Christian.

John 1:1-2

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

In this very brief statement John is telling anyone who reads his book that the Word has existed sine the very beginning, in fact the Word existed before the beginning of things as we know and understand them. Before time began, before the world was created, the Word was, the Word was already present.

The word was not just present, it was with God. This is important because this is the beginning of the understanding of the trinity. The Word was with God, meaning the Word and God were in relationship with one another. The Word which has existed all throughout time, even before the advent of time, and the father are two separate entities, which have co-existed throughout eternity.

Now we reach the tricky part 'and the Word was God.' Note that that is Capital G god, not lower-case g god. The Word is God. As much as the Father is God. As much as the Holy Spirit is God. The Word was with God, and He was God. The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit, all are equally God.

In these five words John is laying down one of the most vital components of understanding Christ the person. John is explaining that the Word is God in his very essence, in the very nature of what composes him, He is God. Even with the Father and the Son being two separate entities, they are one God in their essence.

Jesus Christ is God, not just a man who possessed divine qualities, not a prophet or a healer, he is the Word. The Word that is eternally God, there was never a time when Jesus was not the Son of God, he has always existed and was not created, he superseded created order. He is telling us that Jesus is equally God, the Word is as much God as the Father and the Holy Spirit are God. Jesus is God. Everything that we know and understand as being God, all of his divine powers and qualities are in Jesus, it is Jesus's very nature. The Word is God.

This is the mystery of the trinity; God is three in one. God is three very distinct and separate entities; Father, Son and Holy Spirit that are at the very same time one essence. Theologians throughout time have tried to explain this with Analogies of water, eggs and even the sun, but none of them can really explain the Trinity. God does not change from one form to another, he is always all three at once, nor is God 3 separate parts that make up a whole. We have to simply accept and understand on faith that these 3 separate beings are in fact one essence, our God.

Having established that the Word is God, fully and equally John moves onto His relationship with creation.

John 1:3

³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Everything that exists, everything, owes its existence to the Word. The Word is the creator and apart from him there is nothing that can exist. John intentionally moves to this after establishing the truth that Jesus is both separate from the Father and yet fully God with the Father.

God has revealed himself to us in two ways. He has revealed from us through all of creation and through his Word. His Word is composed of all of the scriptures and the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:15-17

¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

All of Creation is tied to Jesus. Everything owes its very existence to Jesus and that means that there is absolutely nothing outside his domain. He is the creator of the

Word, Lord over everything. He controls it all, He holds the patent, the deeds, and the copyrights.

John 1: 4-5

⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Life itself is the domain of Jesus Christ. The idea that Christ is the key to life and spiritual life is emphasized in John more than any other book in the New Testament. The book of John references life 36 times in its chapters, the next nearest New Testament book references it 17 times. John wanted all of us to understand just how critical an understanding of our life and our relationship with Jesus Christ is for us spiritually.

Jesus is the originator of our physical life and our spiritual life. Everyone gets the physical life; however, it is only through placing your faith and trust in Him and becoming a follower that you gain the spiritual life and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus is the originator of light, spiritual light. We often see light used to contrast the darkness in the New Testament.

Jesus himself stated:

John 8:12

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

He is the light that delivers us from sin and the repercussions of our sinful ways. John is telling us all that this light cannot ever be overcome by darkness. The goodness of Christ can never be overrun by the wickedness of sin.

The truth is that this world is constantly in spiritual conflict. Good vs. Evil. Light Vs. Dark. Ethics and Morals vs, Pleasure and Power. However, you want to think about it. John reminds us here that Jesus is the light that will not be overcome by darkness. The spiritual light in Christ and in his followers cannot be extinguished by the dark. This is why we are often called to be the light of the world.

I was curious, so I looked it up. Did you know that a single light bulb in perfect condition can be perceived by the human eye that has adapted to the dark around it at a distance

of up to 100 km if we did not have atmospheric extinction? Photographers have taken pictures where we can see lights at distances of 80 km.

Light penetrates the darkness! Shadows and darkness are created by the absence or blocking of light. Wherever there is a clear path light will penetrate and push away all of the darkness. John knew this, he knew this because he Knew Jesus was the Son of God. HE wrote this book after having witnessed the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ! If you have never read the book of Revelation, here is a spoiler. Jesus wins!

This is why we should place our Faith in Jesus. He is the originator of both life and light. He raises us from our spiritual death, he takes our hearts that are dead and sinful and brings them to spiritual life. He helps us find joy in life and in serving others. He brings light to all of the darkened souls of those who have been lost. Jesus is the light and the life, the living waters.

John in his opening statement is forcing us to think about Jesus. He is making us question whether we will believe what it is that John is telling us about Christ and therefore accept him as our Lord and Saviour?

John in these first five verses is telling us all of the reason we should believe!

- Jesus is the Son of God, and fully and equally God himself.
- Jesus is the creator of the World and everything that exists.
- Jesus is the originator of Life, both physical and spiritual.

If you deny Jesus, you are turning away from God himself, from the one who created everything we know. To deny Jesus is to continue to stumble around in the darkness and eventually reach move from a physical death to an eternal spiritual death. To choose Jesus is to gain a light to guide us here in the physical life and an eternal spiritual life.

God came to us, in a physical and fully human form. He came to us, the ones who were living in the darkness, living in our sinful ways to bring light and life to each of us. The creator went out into his creation because he loved it so much, he wanted to keep it with him for eternity.

Jesus is the light and the life, the way and the truth, the key to eternal life and joy and all that we are required to do is believe, truly and deeply believe in him as Lord and Savior. To develop that personal relationship with him and to know and acknowledge him as the Creator and originator of our physical life and spiritual life.

Believe in Him, you will find life in Him!

Let us pray,

Adoration

O good and omnipotent God,
 you care for every one of us,
 as if you cared for each alone,
 and you care for all as if all were one!
 Blessed is the one who loves you,
 and who loves his friend in you,
 and who loves his enemy for you.
 For with you, we lose none dear to us,
 to whom all are dear.
 You, our God,
 who made heaven and earth and fill them,
 and by filling them you create them.
 Your law is truth, and truth is yourself.
 I see the things of this earth pass away,
 and I see other things take their place,
 but you remain forever.
 Therefore, my God and Father,
 to you I entrust all I have received from you,
 for then, I can lose nothing.
 You, O Lord,
 have made me for yourself,
 and my heart can find no rest
 until it rests in you.
 Amen.

Source: Augustine of Hippo, Fourth Century

Communion**Declaration of God's Invitation and Promises**

*Hear the words of the institution
 of the Holy Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ:
 The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,
 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,
 "This is my body, which is for you;
 do this in remembrance of me."
 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,
 "This cup is the new covenant in my blood;
 do this in remembrance of me."
 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup,
 you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Opening

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.

Thanksgiving to God

*It is truly right to glorify you, Father,
and to give you thanks,
for you alone are God, living and true,
dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and forever.
Fountain of all life and source of all goodness,
you made all things and fill them with your blessing;
you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.
Countless throngs of angels stand before you
to serve you night and day,
and, beholding the glory of your presence,
they offer you unceasing praise.
Joining with them,
and giving voice to every creature under heaven,
we glorify your name
and lift our voices in joyful praise:*

Acclimation of Praise

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of
power and might, heaven and earth are full
of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Thanksgiving to Christ

*We acclaim you, holy God, glorious in power;
your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love.
You formed us in your own image,
giving the whole world into our care
so that, in obedience to you, our creator,
we might rule and serve all your creatures.
When our disobedience took us far from you,
you did not abandon us to the power of death.*

*In your mercy you came to our help,
 so that in seeking you we might find you.
 Again and again you called us into covenant with you,
 and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.
 Almighty God, you loved the world so much
 that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior.
 Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
 he lived as one of us, yet was without sin.
 To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation;
 to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy.
 To fulfill your purpose, he gave himself up to death
 and, rising from the grave, destroyed death
 and made the whole creation new.
 And that we might live no longer for ourselves
 but for him who died and rose for us,
 God sent the Holy Spirit,
 God's first gift for all who believe,
 to complete God's work in the world,
 and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.
 When the hour had come for him to be glorified
 by you, his heavenly Father,
 having loved his own who were in the world,
 he loved them to the end:
 at supper with them he took bread,
 and after giving thanks to you,
 he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,
 "Take, eat. This is my body, which is given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me."
 After supper he took the cup, saying,
 "This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
 shed for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins.
 Whenever you drink it,
 do it for the remembrance of me."
 Holy God, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
 Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead,
 proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand,
 awaiting his coming in glory,
 and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us,
 this bread and this cup,
 we praise you and we bless you.*

**We praise you, we bless you,
 we give thanks to you,
 and we pray to you, Lord, our God.**

*Living God,
 send your Holy Spirit upon us
 as we share your heavenly meal;
 nourish us with your grace
 so that we are strengthened
 to do your work in this world;
 unite us with you so that we are renewed;
 and join us with your covenant people
 throughout time and space
 so that all divisions will be healed.
 May we gratefully and joyfully remember that Jesus, our Savior,
 lived, died, and rose to give us new life
 and make us new creations in him.
 May we live in the hope
 we discover through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen*

The Apostles Creed (Affirmation of Faith)

**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.**

The Passing of the Peace

*Lord Jesus Christ, you told your apostles,
 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you."
 Grant us always this peace and guide us
 toward the perfect unity of your kingdom for ever.
 Amen.*

Let us give one another a sign of reconciliation and peace.

Preparation of the Bread and Cup

We celebrate this feast in obedience to Christ's example and mandate.

(Bread Breaking)

*The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread,
and after giving thanks to God,
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
"Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."*

(Cup Lifting)

*In the same way he took the cup, saying,
"This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Whenever you drink it,
do this in remembrance of me."*

*Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord
until he comes.*

Invitation

*The gifts of God for the people of God.
Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you
and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.*

Taking of the Elements

*Take and eat.
This is the body of Christ, which is [given] for you.
Do this, remembering him.*

*This cup is the new covenant
sealed by Christ's blood,
which was shed that the sins of many
might be forgiven.
Drink from it, all of you.*

Response of Praise and Prayer

Praise the LORD, my soul;

all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
 Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
 who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
 who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion.

*Loving God,
 you graciously feed us
 with the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.
 May we who have received this sacrament
 be strengthened in your service;
 we who have sung your praises
 tell of your glory and truth;
 we who have seen the greatness of your love
 see you face to face in your kingdom.
 For you have made us your own people
 by the death and resurrection of your Son, our Lord,
 and by the life-giving power of your Spirit. Amen.*

Hymn # 152: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" (V 1, 3)

I heard the bells on Christmas day
 Their old familiar carols play,
 And wild and sweet the words repeat
 Of peace of earth, good will to men.

And in despair I bowed my head:
 "There is no peace on earth," I said,
 "For hate is strong, and mocks the song
 Of peace on earth, good will to men."

Invitation to Offering

The season of Epiphany begins January 6, the day celebrating the journey of the Magi to greet Christ, the new-born king. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Our gifts are not so exotic, but what we offer today and throughout the year honors Jesus as Lord of our lives and Saviour of the world.

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.

Offertory Prayer

God of majesty and mystery, we bring our gifts to you, grateful that you are with us in good times and hard times. We do not know what the year ahead will hold but your love shines like a star to guide us. Bless these gifts that they may keep the light of Christ shining through the church to offer the world truth and wisdom, healing, and hope in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Hymn # 151: "Good Christian Friends Rejoice" (V 1, 3)

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
give ye heed to what we say:
News! News! Jesus Christ was born today.
Ox and ass before him bow,
and he is in the manger now.
Christ is born today!
Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice
with heart and soul and voice;
now ye need not fear the grave:
Jesus Christ was born to save!
Calls you one and calls you all
to gain his everlasting hall.
Christ was born to save!
Christ was born to save!

Pastoral Prayer

*God of all time and space,
 as we gather in prayer, we recognize that our lives are but small details
 in the vast expanse of your universe.
 So we thank you for attending to the details of our lives.
 We thank you for the year just past,
 for walking through the good days and the hard days with us.
 The pandemic has been exhausting in so many ways
 but we are grateful for your steadfast love.
 We give thanks for all the ways ministries have been able to adapt
 and for faithful generosity to support the needs we confront.
 Thank you for friendships and relationships that sustain us in uncertain times.
 We ask for your Spirit to guide us into the future,
 and create new possibilities for ministry and mission through our congregation.*

*God of all people and places,
 The year just ending has held sorrows for so many in our community and around the
 world.
 We remember dear ones of have died
 and pray for those who look ahead in loneliness or sadness....
 We pray for those who have faced challenges in health, in their families or at work....
 Support each one who needs you close by.*

*God of light and love,
 As we face the year ahead, so much around us is still uncertain.
 We seek your strength and guidance in each challenge we will face.
 Draw near to each one who must confront illness, loss,
 economic hardship or changing circumstances....
 Guide those for whom new opportunities appear and choices must be made*

*God of community and commitment,
 We pray for wisdom and courage in the year ahead.
 Strengthen us as a congregation to be a lively and committed witness to your love.
 Help us reach out to our community in faithfulness and service.
 Guide leaders in our nation and around the world
 so that justice and peace may prevail,
 especially in troubled places and vulnerable lives.
 Show us all how to honour and protect your creation,
 even when that takes sacrifice on our part.
 Receive our humble prayers
 and encourage us onward in the name of Jesus our Christ, the creator and sustainer of all
 life. Amen.*

Benediction

People of God, hear now these words of blessing.

*The grace of Christ attend you,
the love of God surround you,
the Holy Spirit keep you
now and forevermore.*

Amen.