

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, January 23rd, 2022
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Chain Breaker
Third Sunday after Epiphany
Luke 4:14-21**

Welcome

Announcements

Confirmation and New Member Class

Bible Studies!

Committees talk to elders.

Call to Worship

In mystery and grandeur,
We encounter the God of all creation.

In renewed justice and the promise of new life,
We know deep love of Christ.

In the wonderful diversity in every community,
The Spirit of God moves among us.

Let us worship the God of beauty, love, and wisdom.
We will praise God, ever Three and ever One, now and always.

Prayer of Adoration

Creator, Christ and Spirit;
You are the maker of a better world.
You are the creator of lasting peace.
We worship you for the gifts of peace and healing that
You bring into troubled lives.
You have shown us the way to work for justice,
to love friend and enemy alike,

to build a better world.
 In this time of worship,
 inspire us to believe our work in your name makes a difference.
 So may we live to bring glory to you through our commitment to you
 and the communion we share with so many around world
 as your faithful disciples.

Opening Hymn # 27: "As the Deer" (V 1, 3)

As the deer pants for the water
 So my soul longs after You
 You alone are my hearts desire
 And I long to worship You.
 You alone are my strength, my shield
 To You alone may my spirit yield
 You alone are my hearts desire
 And I long to worship You.

I want you more than gold or silver
 Only You can satisfy
 You alone are the real joy giver
 And the apple of my eye.
 You alone are my strength, my shield
 To You alone may my spirit yield
 You alone are my hearts desire
 And I long to worship Thee.

Call to Confession

We cannot come before God
 unless we are first honest with ourselves
 about who we are,
 about the mistakes we make,
 and about how well or poorly we care for others.
 In this spirit, let us offer our prayers to God.

Prayer of Confession

**God of grace and unity,
 we confess we can be divisive when you have called us to unity,**

quarrelsome when you call us to seek peace, and
critical rather than caring.

We have grown used to our own ways
and cannot imagine you would ask us to change
even for the sake of the Gospel.

Forgive us when we mistake our familiar traditions for your truth.
Show us how we can witness to your love
through working and worshipping together.

Assurance of Pardon

God's mercy is from everlasting to everlasting.
It shines into the world and scatters the darkness.
Know that you are forgiven and forgive one another.
Be at peace and walk in the newness of life, led by God's light.

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 19:7-14

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the testimony of the LORD is sure,
making wise the simple;

⁸ **the precepts of the LORD are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the LORD is pure,
enlightening the eyes;**

⁹ the fear of the LORD is clean,
enduring forever;
the rules of the LORD are true,
and righteous altogether.

¹⁰ **More to be desired are they than gold,**

even much fine gold;
 sweeter also than honey
 and drippings of the honeycomb.

¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned;
 in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² **Who can discern his errors?
 Declare me innocent from hidden faults.**

¹³ Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins;
 let them not have dominion over me!
 Then I shall be blameless,
 and innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
 be acceptable in your sight,
 O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

Music Ministry: “Trust in You” by Susan Parsons

Prayer for illumination

Holy One,
 no wisdom or truth comes apart from you
 and so, we seek your guidance as your Word is read and interpreted.
 Send your Holy Spirit to move in and among us
 so that we might better understand your word for us this day,
 and act upon it for the sake of Christ, your Living Word. **Amen**

Scripture

LUKE 4:14-21

Jesus Begins His Ministry

¹⁴ **And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵ And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.**

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. ¹⁷ And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
 He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Children’s Hymn #373: “Jesus Loves Me” (V 1, 3)

Jesus loves me, this I know,
for the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to him belong;
they are weak, but he is strong.

Refrain:

Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus loves me!
Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.

Jesus Loves Me Still Today,
Walking With Me On My Way,
Wanting As A Friend To Give
Light And Love To All Who Live. /Refrain

Children’s Lesson

Today’s scripture is something pretty interesting. Jesus went to church in his hometown and was preaching. He is given the scroll of Isaiah, a really big and long scroll. Jesus opens it to an especially important part, a part that speaks of the coming Savior. He opens the scroll to that part and reads:

Isaiah 61:1-2

61 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;

Then he sits down and tells everyone there, this is about me. Imagine how crazy that would sound. Imagine if someone came in today and said they were going to preach, they read a bit of the book of Revelation, the book about Jesus's return and then said, 'By the way, that person Isaiah is talking about, it is me!'

I think we would all be in shock; some people might even be angry or upset. In fact, which is what happens to Jesus, and we will look at that next week. But for now, I want to focus on something he said from the book of Isaiah, something that is important for all of us to understand.

Jesus said he would bind up the brokenhearted. This part is not looked at in the book of Luke, but I think is especially important for young people to know. Life will have many challenges, there will be many times when you are sad or upset and Jesus will be there.

Jesus is there to care for his people always. Just like when you cut yourself and your mom or dad puts on a bandage so the skin can grow back together and heal, or when you might break a bone and the doctor puts on a cast so it is protected and can heal. Jesus is there to bind up our hearts when they are broken, or hurt, so that they can heal.

Jesus loves each of us and wants to protect and care for us the same way as our parents and doctors. He wants to protect and comfort our hearts from the things which hurt it or break it. Jesus is there for us whenever things are bad and he will bind our hearts in him and protect our hearts while they heal from the damages caused by living in this world, we just need to turn to him and pray.

What an incredible thing it is that our Lord does for us, he heals the thing which our parents and doctors cannot through his love for us.

Let us pray,

Loving God,

Bind up all of our brokenness within your loving care. Heal all of our hurts and help us to be strong so that we can help bind up and heal the hearts of others around us who have not found you yet. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Sermon

Last week we learned a bit about the first sign, the first miracle that Jesus preformed. It is these miracles that are often the focus of sermons and studies. These proofs of who Jesus was because of the things he did.

Since the beginning of his ministry after his baptism he has faced temptation in the wilderness, preformed miracles and been preaching on God to all who will listen. He has been busy and getting the attention of the people throughout the region, preaching in their synagogues.

Today's scripture is his announcement to everyone about who is and why he has come. Even in the business of all he was doing, Jesus enters the Synagogue every worship day to participate in the praise, worship and learning of God. He enters the synagogue and to those who were present that day teaches them that he is much more than someone who will perform miracles of healing, much more than freeing those under oppression or suffering in poverty. He tells all those seated around him that he is the one called to deal with the one thing that every man has been faced with, every man has been tormented and troubled by since man's fall in the garden of Eden.

It is for this reason that we see Jesus enter the synagogue and read from the scroll of Isiah while those around him were gathered at his feet waiting for a message from Him.

Luke 4: 18-19

¹⁸ **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**

As he reads from the scroll of Isaiah, he references all of the things that He has been called to do while he is present with his people on this planet. He has been called to 'proclaim the good news to the poor,' 'to proclaim liberty to the captives,' to 'recover sight to the blind' and bring liberty to those who are oppressed' and finally 'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'

It is these things that we will look at today.

Jesus through the prophecies in Isaiah first tells us that he has come to proclaim the good news to the poor. This is a verse that many people refer to when they are preparing for mission work. Proclaiming the good news to the poor is something all of us are called to do through the great commission.

The poor in Jesus' time were the outcast, struggling to survive on the outskirts of a society which did very little to help them. It would make perfect sense for Jesus to tell his people that he was called to help the poor, the people who the religious leaders of the time would have nothing to do with. In fact, many of the religious leaders during Jesus's time were disgusted by those who were physically and materially poor, they despised them and would avoid them at every opportunity.

It also fits that Jesus is speaking about those in need when we look at the rest of the book of Luke, Jesus often makes reference to those who are poor, those that are in need and calls for us to help them. We need to remember this today, and also remember that we are called to not just reach out to the materially poor, but also to those who are wealthy and those in the middle-class, this is what the great commission asks of all Christians.

But let us take a moment to look at how Jesus 'proclaimed the good news to the poor.' Jesus often is seen with the poor, eating with them, fellowshipping with them, teaching them about the kingdom of God.

We all read last week about the power of Jesus to preform signs. He took simple water and turned it into incredible wine. Jesus has the power to do anything he wishes. Yet in all of these interactions between Jesus and the material poor, those who were destitute and on the outskirts of society, do we ever see Jesus just create some money and give it to them to help them out of their physical situation?

Jesus knew they were poor, he knew they were suffering in this world, but he knew that the greater problem they had, the greater suffering they would have, would be in the next world, because of their sin. Sin was the real problem that Jesus had come to deal with and when he was with the poor, he was always teaching them of the kingdom of heaven and calling for them to repent and turn to God.

When we realize this and then apply it to the scriptures, we see that Jesus was not limiting this lesson to those who were physically poor and the martially poor. He was delivering this message to everyone; he was delivering this message to those who were spiritually poor. Jesus was not here on this planet to just reach out to those who were on the outskirts of society. He was here to reach out to all of mankind, all who had fallen into the temptation of sin.

The church often fails at this, the church gets caught up in social justice programs designed to create equality of living thinking that is what Jesus meant when he called for us to reach out to the poor. It is true that is part of what he called for us to do, to look after the orphans and widows, to ensure that those who are struggling to survive will survive through the compassion and love of Christ.

In Matthew 6 we are told to look after the needy.

Matthew 6:1-4

6 “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

²“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

We are called to help them, to give to them from our own wealth so that they can survive. Yet later in Matthew we are also reminded that it should always be Jesus who comes first.

Matthew 26:11

¹¹ **For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me**

That it should always be our call to reach out to the spiritually poor. If we are focusing all of our energies and efforts on the social Gospel, if we are focusing all of our strength, efforts, and funds on trying to eliminate poverty and create equity we are doing so in futility, Jesus told us the poor would always be with us, we should be seeking to help them physically while we help them spiritually.

Our God wants all of his people to be saved. Jesus preached to all, the rich and the poor, the prostitute, and the Pharisee, the nobles and the beggar. Jesus preached them all because they were spiritually poor. They were in need to His salvation from the real root of all of the problems in our life, our sin.

Sin has very real and very devastating effects in our lives. It gets a grip on each of us and drags us away from doing those things which help ourselves and help those around us. All sin, regardless of what that sin is, will have an impact on our lives, it will often seem fun, seem enjoyable. It might give us fleeting pleasures, but it will have an impact on our lives and the lives of all who interact with us.

Sins like gambling, adultery, drug addiction and drunkenness are all easy to think of examples of this truth. While someone is participating in these sins, they often feel like they are having fun, they are experiencing a physical or emotional high. The problem with many of these sins is that the more we partake in them, the deeper and deeper we need to go to experience that same feeling.

These sins cause people to chase after them and they become a drain on the persons strength and resources. These sins harm us and they harm those around us. They harm our relationships and cause physical and emotional damage. Yet there are millions of people who struggle with them in a society that seems to want to legalize them rather than recognize them for what they really are, sin.

Sin impacts us physically and emotionally, but it also impacts us spiritually. Sin, all sin, drains on our spiritual bank account as well. Many people caught up in addictions stop going to church, stop studying the gospel, cut relationships with other Christians because they fear being judged, they fear the reality of having to face their sin. Sin bankrupts us spiritually.

While preaching the Sermon on the mount Jesus taught

Matthew 5:3

⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

When we are caught up in our sin, when we have given in to greed, seeking power and wealth, having everything we desire, we begin to fill our minds with the idea that we have done this. We become filled with pride and our ego inflates. We begin to believe we do not need God, or the gospel, because we have everything we need here and now.

Sin strikes on both sides of the poverty line, just in different ways yet with the same results. Slowly draining away or spirituality until we are bankrupt.

Jesus is talking about the spiritually poor, that is who he came to proclaim to, not just the socially outcast, but everyone who has become lost spiritually. Rich or poor, slave or master, jew or gentile. These are who we are called to bring the message of the Gospel to, those who are trapped by sin in their spiritual poverty.

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Where we invest ourselves is where our spiritual bank is located. The things we treasure tell us where our heart lies. When we see a friend or family member about to invest in a pyramid scheme we stop them, because we know they are about to lose their money. We see people who become suddenly rich through a windfall inheritance, or winning a lottery, fall back to poverty almost every time, because they do not know how to manage their wealth, they blow through their wealth on trivial things, pleasurable things, and before they know what has happened, they are broke again.

I spoke with an investment banker recently and he said he wished he would have known all he had learned about investing when he became a banker when he was younger. He wished he had known and understand GIC's, RRSPS and short- and long-term investments because he could have utilized and amassed his personal wealth instead of squandering it away on things he enjoyed. I bet everyone else here is the same. Imagine if we felt the same about our faith, I bet there are more than a couple of the older people here who wish they could go back to their younger self and explain the importance of God, just as much as what stock to buy.

So, how much more important is it for us to stop people around us from making bad spiritual investments. When we see our friends and family investing in sin, should not we seek to stop them the same as we would if we saw them investing in a pyramid scheme. When we see them driving themselves into spiritual poverty should not, we be the ones coming to them and seeking to teach them the Gospel and teach them of Jesus so that they can begin to make some good investments and raise themselves out of their spiritual poverty.

But Jesus did not come just for the spiritually poor. He also came 'to proclaim liberty to the captives.'

Who are the captives? To use the word captive denotes a prisoner, someone who was taken in a war, or imprisoned for a crime. A captive is someone who is being held, usually against their will by someone. So, was Jesus coming to save all the prisoners of war? Or perhaps those falsely accused of crimes and imprisoned? Or like when he just spoke of the poor is a deeper meaning to the usage of the word captive?

Have you ever met an addict, someone who is addicted to drugs, or alcohol or gambling? The person that is so caught up in their addiction that it is not only robbing them spiritually but is starting to be everything they are in life. People who have fallen into the depths of addiction no longer have freedom of choice, they often cannot willfully choose to quit because of the physical and mental issues that come along with stopping their addiction. They are held captive; they are prisoners of their sin.

Prisoners of their own vices, unable to stop, even when they are fully aware that what they are doing is killing them. I have spoken with drug addicts who claim they want to quit, who claim they know the dangers and damage of their addiction. Some even go

into programs to help them get clean, yet they fail over and over again because of the addictions power over them. They are held captive by the sin.

What is worse is that we are living in a culture that promotes the idea that doing whatever you want to do equates freedom. You do not need to live by the rules or obey the laws of God. Go out and enjoy life, it is the only one you get. Live free and enjoy it. YOLO, you only live once, is the motto of the current generation and they seek to find all of the pleasure and excitement they can in life. And it is often this desire to seek what they believe is freedom that leads to them being prisoners, to being enslaved by the sins of pleasure.

Jesus is telling all of us that he has come for all of us who are enslaved by sin, he has come to offer forgiveness and freedom from the sins that are holding us captive.

John 8:34

³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

We are all slaves to sin; we are all captives of our vices and Jesus has come to free us from them. Jesus has come to set us all free from the things which drain our spiritual bank and take us away from our salvation.

Romans 6:16

¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Jesus is offering us a way to break free of the slavery that sin is holding us in and the inevitable death that will come from sin. Instead, he offers us a path of obedience to his laws which will bring us into His righteousness and eternal life with Him.

We are called to proclaim the gospel to all who are held captive by their sin, to all who are enslaved by the things which pull them away from Christ and into the darkness and death of sin.

Jesus sets people who are enslaved, people who are held captive by their sin free, so that they can live their life free.

John 8:36

³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

This is real freedom, not the false freedom that is offered in this world.

So how does Jesus intend to bring freedom to those who are enslaved by their sin?

One way is by recovering the sight of the blind.

The truth is that many people are blind to their sin. They are completely unaware of the damage that their sin is doing to themselves and to those around them. They are like a people who are enslaved, locked up in their own lives, unaware of the chains and walls that imprison them.

People enslaved by sin, believe that they are being freed by their sin, the world tells them that they are free because they get to do anything that they want. They believe that the enjoyment and pleasure they get from it must mean it is good for them and they believe that even if it harms them, it does not do damage to anyone else, so it must be ok.

We live in a world, a society and a culture in which sin is being normalized. Where people who are being enslaved by sin and going spiritually bankrupt believe they are living in freedom.

We see this is in our friends and family. We see them doing things which are harmful, engaging in behaviors which are dangerous and when we speak to them nothing seems to get through, because they believe they are free.

Parents have all seen this, when their child is spending time together with someone who is no good for them, or perhaps even dating them. Their friends, parents and even strangers may warn them of the dangers of the relationship, of its eventual bad outcome. Yet they ignore everyone because they are blinded to the truth of the relationship.

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Sin blinds us to the truth of God's word. Sin keeps us from seeing who Jesus Christ is and keeps us from receiving His light. The modern world has it all backwards, it is promoting those who partake in sin as the only people who are truly free while it condemns those who are promoting the truth of God's word and the real freedom it brings to those who follow and obey the scriptures.

The world believes that sin is good, sin is pleasurable, sin is freedom, but it is not, it binds us, enslaves us, and imprisons us with its power. It makes us blind to the truths of the damage it really does, and it is only through the Gospel, through the teachings of Jesus that we can have our sight restored.

We are blinded by the gods of this world, the things we idolize, money, power, fame, pleasure all of these false idols we place above God. We are blinded in our pursuit of the false pleasures they bring and many walk blindly through this world unable to see the light of the gospel.

John Newton knew and understood the power of the gospel to set people free when he penned the famous words of Amazing Grace. He wrote 'I was blind but now I see,' those of us who are fortunate enough to have Christ come into our lives have our vision restored and we can be freed from the shackles of sin which bind us as captives in slavery.

This is what is meant by setting free the oppressed. Jesus will set free those people who have been held down by their sin, who have had their lives bruised and damaged by the path they walked in darkness before they came to the light of Christ.

The weight of sin is heavy on one's shoulders. It constantly hangs onto them, weighing them down, the monkey on their back. The desire to chase the pleasures of sin creates emotional, mental, and financial burdens in the lives of those who are caught up in their life of sin.

Jesus wants to free sinners of this oppression, he wants to lift the burdens from their shoulders.

Matthew 11:28

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest

Jesus wants to remove those mental, emotional, and financial burdens that sin causes in our lives. He wants to give rest and reprieve from the weight of the sin on our hearts, minds, and souls.

When we look around the world, we see people who are struggling, people who are unhappy, people who are looking for a cause or meaning in life. During this pandemic more and more people are seeking to understand their purpose, understand their life, they are spiritually hungry, even starving. Yet, they struggle, they jump from social cause to social cause seeking out some form of spiritual sustenance. Seeking some way to relieve the burdens of life they are feeling on their shoulders.

Jesus wants to help people with these burdens, he wants to bring the good news of the gospel to them and to help them set aside the sins and desires of this world which only offer fleeting happiness and invite them into a relationship with him where their happiness is eternal.

Jesus seeks to bring all sinners from under the yoke of sin that oppresses them, he seeks to undue the lock that holds it over the shoulders and give them the chance to step out of the prison it entraps sinners in, so they can enter into a world of true freedom in Christ.

And Jesus does all of these things by proclaiming the kingdom of the Lord.

Luke 4:21

²¹ And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus reads out all of the prophecies of Isaiah about the healing salvation that is coming and sits down to speak on the scripture as a teacher. Everyone leans in to listen to the words that will come from his mouth, and he simply says, it is fulfilled by my presence here.

This is a mic drop moment. Jesus has just read one of the most important parts of prophecy from the book of Isaiah and then he says, 'by the way, everything I just read about is me!'

Jesus was telling everyone there that he was the Savior, he was the Messiah. Jesus would be the one who would free the sinner from their sin. He would bring them the good news of their salvation, set them free from their captivity, heal their blindness, lighten their burdens, and grant them all the pleasures of the kingdom of heaven through his grace and mercy.

This is what the favorable year of the Lord is, Jesus's coming to bring sinners back into relationship with God. Jesus came to earth to fix the problems that sin creates in our life and in our relationship with God. He did so by going to the cross for us and paying the debt for our sin with his blood.

Jesus did not come to earth for social justice, he did not come to bring an end to poverty, disease, or social inequalities. Jesus came for a much more important reason; he came to free us from the blindness we have to the harm and imprisonment that sin is causing in our lives. He came to free us from the bondage and burden of sin so that we could reconnect and restore our relationship with God.

There is an entire world, billions of people who are held in bondage by sin, who believe they are living in freedom and cannot even begin to see the chains and yokes that their sinful life is actually placing upon them. This is the reason Jesus came, these are the people we are meant to bring the knowledge of Christ to in the great commission.

Do you accept him as your lord and saviour? Are you willing to remove the blinders to your sins and ask for his help in being freed from the prison of your sin, to have the yoke

lifted from your shoulders? Are you willing to go forth from this sanctuary today and bring the good news of salvation from sin to everyone you meet? This is what believers do, they accept Jesus into their lives and obey his commands, knowing that by doing so they are called to repent and give up sin from their life and the eternal death it brings and by doing so are granted eternal life through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ.

Let us pray,

A Prayer of Thanksgiving and for Strength

We give you thanks upon thanks,
 O Lord our God,
 Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,
 by all means, at all times, in all places.
 For you have sheltered, assisted,
 supported, and led us on
 through the past times of our lives,
 and brought us to this hour.
 O good and loving,
 grant that we may pass this holy day,
 and all the times of our lives, without sin,
 with all joy, health, salvation,
 sanctification, and fear of you.
 O Lord God, drive away from us
 and from your holy Christian and apostolic Church
 all envy, all fear, all temptation,
 all the working of Satan,
 and all conspiracy of wicked men.
 Supply us with things good and profitable.
 In whatever ways we have sinned against you,
 in word, deed, or thought,
 pass over in your love and goodness.
 Do not forsake us, O God,
 for we hope in you.
 Lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from the evil one
 and from his works;
 by the grace, compassion, and goodness
 of your only Son. Amen.

Source: The Divine Liturgy of St. Mark, in Bright's *Ancient Collects*,

Music Ministry: “How Sweet the Sound” by Susan Parsons

Invitation to Offering

The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are part of one body, each of us and all of us. The gifts we offer in Jesus’ name are all needed, each of them and all of them. Together, the body of Christ accomplishes many things through the gifts we share.

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

Creator God, you made each of us in our uniqueness,
and together, all of us to bear your image in the world.
Accept our gifts, unique as they are, and bless them for the sake of your Son, Jesus.
May they bear his grace and mercy into the world you love so your purposes will be fulfilled.

Closing Hymn # 324: “Great Is Thy Faithfulness” (V 1, 3)

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

Refrain:

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

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
 Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
 Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
 Blessings all mine with 10, 000 beside. /Refrain.

Pastoral Prayer

God of life, God of love.
 You created us and set us in relationship with each other:
 In families and neighbourhoods,
 in churches and communities,
 in cultures and nations.
 We give you thanks for the rich gifts of arts and culture,
 of home life and community celebration
 which bring meaning and encouragement to our lives.
 Help us contribute our gifts
 to the traditions and imagination that sustain the best of our common life
 from one generation to the next.

God of mercy and forgiveness,
 You call us to live together in peace and unity.
 we pray that your Spirit will create understanding and co-operation
 among all who bear Christ's name.
 Help us share our gifts with each other
 so that churches within our community may flourish
 and our common mission will find new energy after months of challenge.
 Lead us to reach out to those of other faiths and no faith
 so that, together, we may be a blessing in the world you love.

God of healing and hope,
 We pray for our neighbourhoods and our nation.
 Where people are divided and bitterness turns into resentment,
 show us how to work for reconciliation.
 Inspire our leaders at every level of community life
 to work together for the care of the most vulnerable
 and to restore the goodness of our common life
 as we recover from the effects of these months of pandemic.
 Make us generous citizens and careful stewards
 of the land you entrust to us together.

God of justice and mercy,
 We pray for the world you love, the world Christ died to redeem,
 so deeply divided by religious and political animosities,

by ancient bitterness and current conflict.
Encourage world leaders to work for peace and understanding,
especially in places torn by violence,
and areas still struggling with the effects of the pandemic,
by poverty, hunger, and the effects of natural disasters.
May the hope Jesus embodies encourage us all to work for positive change.

God of courage and comfort,
We remember those of our congregation and community
in need of your special attention today....
Use us as agents of your healing and hope
as we offer ourselves as your humble servants in Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Benediction

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
remain with you always.
Amen