

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, March 13th, 2022
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Lessons in Lent - Citizenship
Second Sunday in Lent
Philippians 3:17-4:1

Welcome

Announcements

Library Re-opening

Library is once again open

2 new books: "Where Do We Go From Here?" by David Jeremiah & book donated by Walter Gemmill, "Where the Light Fell", by Philip Yancey.

Remember to bear in mind that the borrowing time is one month. Sign your book out a second time, if you need more time to finish it."

Esther viewing

Sunday March 27th at 3pm in the sanctuary.

Produced by Sight & Sound in Lancaster

Snacks and drinks at the intermission downstairs.

Bible Studies

Esther has finished. The next bible study on Mondays will be the book of Hebrews.

James will finish in a few weeks. The next study will be the book Revelation.

Sermons by Phone

A new way to connect with the weekly service.

There will be a number you can call and listen to the complete service

Once it is set up we will share the details

Bake sale at Perth Maple festival

April 30th is the Perth Maple festival

We will be having a bake sale

Proceeds from the bake sale will go to support the Sermons by phone

If you can help out with sales or sale items let us know

Refreshing of Church Directory

I am still new and in need to an up-to-date Church Directory
We will be having families fill out a new Church Directory information sheet soon.

Snacks for youth group

If you are willing to provide snacks for the 4:00pm youth group meetings on Friday please send us an email and let us know. We are in the process of organizing a list, so people do not feel burdened in doing so.

Call to Worship

The Lord is our light and our salvation:
Of whom shall we be afraid?

The Lord is the stronghold of our life:
We will wait for the Lord in faithfulness.

Let us seek the Lord's face in this time of worship:
We will honour God's presence in our prayers and our praises!

Prayer of Adoration

God ever creating, ever loving, ever leading:
when things around us feel chaotic, you are peace.
When so much we hear is not reliable, your word is truth.
When we are paralyzed by fear and anxiety, your presence is freedom.
When we feel bereft and helpless, your love gives us hope.
God, you are the Source of all that matters.
We bring you our prayers and our praise this day,
for you reveal yourself to us in the goodness of creation,
in the love and mercy of Christ, your beloved,
and through the energy and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.
We worship you, O God,
ever Three and ever One, world without end. Amen.

Opening Hymn # 462: "Saviour Like a Shepherd Lead" (V 1, 4)

Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy folds prepare:
Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,

Thou hast bought us, Thine we are;
 Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,
 Thou hast bought us, Thine we are.

Early let us seek Thy favor,
 Early let us do Thy will;
 Blessed Lord and only Savior,
 With Thy love our bosoms fill:
 Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,
 Thou hast loved us, love us still;
 Blessèd Jesus, blessèd Jesus,
 Thou hast loved us, love us still.

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**God of compassion,
 We are creatures who seek our own comfort.
 We confess that we prefer our own plans to your purposes.
 We shrink from costly discipleship and put our own interests first.
 Forgive our fleeting commitment
 and the times we have indulged our own complaints.
 Have mercy on us.
 Inspire us with the energy to do your will
 and serve our neighbours in the example of Christ, your Son, and our Lord.**

Assurance of Pardon

Friends in Christ, while it is true that we have all sinned,
 it is a greater truth that we are forgiven through God's love poured out in Jesus Christ.
 To all who humbly seek the mercy of God I say, in Jesus Christ our sin is forgiven
 Be at peace with God, with yourself, 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

Question 5. What as Christians are we to believe?

We are to believe the gospel, a summary of which is contained in the Apostles' Creed. While not written by the apostles this brief confession of the church's essential faith had its origins in the first century and has instructed and guided Christians through the years connecting us in a common faith with the earliest Christian communities.

Mk 1:14, Rom 10:9, 2 Cor 4:13

Question 6. What is this summary of the 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 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.

Question 7. What are the three parts of the Apostles' Creed?

The first is about God the Father, including our creation; the second is about God the Son, including the history of our redemption; and the third is about God, the Holy Spirit, including the church and the Christian hope.

Music Ministry: "I Surrender, Lord" by Senoir Choir

Prayer for illumination

God of wisdom, your Word brings light to show us the way you would have us follow. As the Scriptures are read and proclaimed this day, send us your Holy Spirit to aid our understanding and guide us in the ways we live out your truth.

Scripture

Philippians 3:17-4:1

¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

4 Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

Children's Hymn #376: "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (V 1,3)

I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 I have decided to follow Jesus;
 no turning back, no turning back.

Tho' none go with me, I still I will follow,
 Tho' none go with me, I still I will follow,
 Tho' none go with me, I still I will follow,
 No turning back, no turning back.

Children's Lesson

In this week's scripture Paul is trying to teach the people in the city of Philippi what it means to be a Christian.

Paul wants the people who live there to understand what it means to belong to God and his kingdom.

He starts by talking about what it means to live on earth. When we live on earth we are focused on all kinds of things. We worry about what food we will eat, what clothes we will wear, what job we will have, how much money we will make.

Think about how often we are told by media, advertising, or other people what it is we are supposed to wear, say, think or believe. Today's young people face an incredible amount of peer pressure to 'fit into' the world because of the advent of social media.

They are constantly being drawn into a world which wants to dictate every aspect of their lives. This constant pressure makes it hard to recognize anything but the world we live in.

Paul is saying there is something much more important than this world. There is heaven. This world and our time in it is very short compared to the eternity that we have after this life on earth.

Paul is really worried about the people who spend so much time focused on this world. They do what they want, say what they want, they are focused completely on satisfying themselves. And it is because of this focus on the things of this world that they are going to miss out on joining God for all of eternity.

To join God, we need to see past the things of this world and to the truth of God's word. We need to see that if we behave like we want now, it is going to hurt us, because we will not be able to go to heaven and be with God.

Paul wants all Christians, young and old, to know that their first thought should always be to obeying Christ, obey the scriptures, because eternity is much, much longer than this life and the small pleasure we get now is not worth what we lose for all time. We should always be Christian even if the world around us is not.

Let us pray,

Wonderful father we pray that you would always be with us, always be guiding us to seek your kingdom and give up the things of this world that tempt us and draw us away from following you and obeying you. We pray that your Holy Spirit would continue to be at work in us, bringing us closer to you and giving us an understanding of your call in our lives. Give us the strength to stand up for your truths even when the world disagrees with what you teach. In the name of our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ we pray.
Amen

Sermon

Lent is a season of contemplation, a season in which we are called to self-examination and reflection on how we live our lives while on earth. Last week we looked at the call for us to turn to God when we face temptations. It is through Jesus's example in the desert, that we learned some of the ways that we should be turning to God when the things of this world become a distraction for us. How we are called to turn to Jesus, through study of the scripture and prayer when we face temptations. This week in Paul's writing to the Philippians we are going to explore what it means to live the life

that Christ has instructed us to live and the reasons we are called to resist against our sinful nature.

When we look at the world around us, we can see all the ways that the world divides people into groups and categories. Some of the most common ways that people are divided is by ethnicity, gender, or age. These are used by organizations all around the world to figure out their demographic, who they are reaching. These divisions are used in advertising, in statistical reports for government and now even in hiring practices.

However, when we travel around the world, we discover that we divide people primarily by nationality. Nations control their borders by checking someone's citizenship, they check passports to decide who can pass through their borders and how long someone can stay in their country.

As Christians we are called to look at the world a little differently. We are called to not see people by nationality or race, gender or even ethnicity. Instead, we are to see people without divisions of master or slave, male or female, Jew or Gentile. All the different categories and divisions of this world are not as important as our Christianity and faith. Simply stated, we should always be focused on what God is calling for us to be and do above everything else. It is our Christian citizenship that we should be valuing and honoring most in this world knowing that obedience to its teachings means that sometimes we need to go against the divisions, desires, and teachings of this world.

Regardless of all the ways that the world chooses to divide and classify people Paul says that there are just these two types of people who live in this world. Those who have their eyes focused on the world and all the temptations and pleasures that it provides and live their lives accordingly and in contrast to those people are those who have their eyes on heaven and live their lives accordingly.

In his book to the Philippians Paul is trying to teach us how we can keep our eyes focused on our Christian Citizenship.

Citizenship is something that was very important to the people, even in Paul's times. The citizens of Philippi were a Roman Colony, one that was often described as the 'Rome away from Rome'. They took a great pride in their Roman Citizenship in Philippi. They adhered to Roman Law, Roman Custom, Roman Language, Roman Culture and even Roman Dress. So, Paul sets forth to explain to the people of Philippi just as they were far away from Rome and adhered to Roman ways because of their Roman citizenship, that those who were Christians yet far away from heaven should still hold onto and adhere to their Christian ways because of their Christian Citizenship.

Paul begins simply with 'Follow my example'. It is not the first time that Paul has instructed people of God to follow his example. In his letters to the Thessalonians and

the Corinthians, he also appealed for people to follow him and by doing so become followers of Christ.

Perhaps the clearest example of this is in the book of Corinthians

1 Corinthians 11:1

11 Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.

The directive is clear. Follow me and by doing so follow Christ. Was Paul doing this because he sought to create a huge following that was under his discipleship? Probably not. Was Paul telling people to follow him so he could effectively become the first mega church pastor of the world? Unlikely. Maybe he was seeking to live a comfortable life off the tithes that were presented every week, or the fame and power associated with having so many followers? Considering how his life ended also definitely untrue.

Those of us that have studied Paul's life and letter know that he wrote this because he sought to live his life as an example of Christ like living. He wanted people to see in him and the way he lived all the teachings of Christ that himself and all of the other disciples and church leaders of the early Christian church were teaching to newly joined people of the faith.

Paul wanted people to see how he lived, how he taught, how he cared for others. He tried to live his life and preserve in his writings the best possible examples of Christian life that he could attain. He was trying to give the Christians of his time a life they could look towards and imitate if they sought out Christ. He wanted to be an example of Christ for others to follow.

How many of us would be comfortable telling others to look to our lives as an example of the Christian Faith? How many of us would tell others 'Look to me and live as I do' or would we prefer the classical, 'Do as I say not as I do.'?

I am sure that many of us would be ok with people following our example sometimes, maybe even most times. Yet, if we are truthful with ourselves, we will also admit that we have times in our lives where we know we are not living a Christ like life, and we would not want anyone to see or hear about our thoughts, words, or deeds at these times.

As Christians we do not have the option of telling others to not use us as an example of Christianity. When people know that you are a Christian, they will begin to judge all Christians based on your example. For this reason, we are called to behave like Christians at all times, in all places, in everything we think, we say, and we do.

We are called by our faith and trust to let the Holy Spirit be at work in us, molding our lives into that Christlike example for our families, especially our children, who will determine their trust in God and in Christianity based off the examples we give them in

our lives. Furthermore, we have our brothers and sisters in Christ who look to other Christians for examples of living a Christlike life, people who they can imitate and learn from in study and fellowship and who can become mentors in the faith. Beyond that we have a whole world full of people, our neighbors, our friends, our classmates or coworkers, and the other people with whom we interact and who see us interacting with others every day, who are looking towards us as an example of Christian life.

Paul then gives the Philippians some examples of the types of people who are not following his example, those who are citizens of the world, living in the world.

1 Philippians 3:18-19

¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

Paul says that he wrote this with tears, he was deeply hurt by the people who claimed to be Christian yet lived their lives in a manner that went against God's teaching. He was not hurt because it offended him, or because they had rejected his teachings. He was hurt because he had a deep love for them, a Christian love for God, neighbor and even enemy, and their rejection of Christ hurt him because Paul knew what God can do in the lives of those who love him. He was also hurt by the example that those who claimed Christianity were setting for the world and how their bad example would draw people further from God, rather than towards God.

Over time there have been many biblical scholars who have tried to figure out who Paul is writing about here specifically. Was it the Judaizers he spoke about earlier in the letter to the Philippians, or perhaps it was to members certain of the Philippian congregation? Others think perhaps it was a general statement or directed towards one of the groups who had adopted a false teaching or followed a false teacher in the region? I believe it could have been any of these, and regardless of who the particular group was, it could be equally applied to all of them in Paul's day, and it should be equally applied to all of these different groups of people in this day and age.

Paul begins by naming them, 'enemies of the cross of Christ.' This could have been targeted at people who specifically taught or preached something other than the saving power of the cross, Christ's sacrifice and blood that was shed upon it. Our salvation comes from Jesus's death on the cross and the blood that he shed to pay the debt for our sins, and in Paul's day and still in the modern world there are people who teach something different. There are many people who claim Christianity as their faith who do not understand the Doctrine of Salvation and how Justification and Sanctification play into it. There are people in the world who claim Christianity and yet they do not understand the significance of Lent, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday beyond the few extra days off they get from work, and these are the people that Paul could be naming specifically here.

It could also be a much more general statement. One that is meant to group together all the people who are 'enemies of the cross of Christ' because they lead others away from Christ, both those who do intentionally and unintentionally through their thoughts, words, or deeds.

Either way it is intended, the truth is that those people who lead others away from Christ are, whether through a specific action, teaching the have, or unintentionally through their words and deeds are an 'enemy of the cross of Christ'.

To these people he states that their 'end is destruction'! This is biblical, and there are a lot of people out there who do not like it! However, the truth of the scripture is that those who oppose Christ, those who refuse to let him into their lives are destined for destruction. We are often told that 'you will reap what you sow' if someone sows a life filled with sin and destruction, if they sow a life of leading people away from Christ, then the only natural outcome is for them to reach the day of judgement where their destruction and an eternity being removed from God's presence and His kingdom is inevitable.

Next Paul tells us that their 'god is in their stomach'. Notice it is a lower case 'g'. A false idol that they put in the place of God. Paul is not specifically speaking to the act of Gluttony here; he is speaking much more generally. Paul is speaking about all the people of this world who live for themselves, who have given into that inward curve. People who are primarily concerned about love of self, self-image, self-promotion, self-preservation, and self-protection. People who never turn to God and instead live to feed their appetite for sin, focused on the things of this world and the appetites of the flesh, making them into false idols, little gods that they worship.

Since the beginning of time, since the fall of Adam and Eve there have been people who live their lives focused on getting the things that they seek out of this world. These types of people will always be part of the world we live in, and Christians are called to live as a counter example of those who create little gods out of the things of this world.

To drive home his point, Paul tells us that 'their glory is their shame'. How I wish this message could be proclaimed far and wide in today's world. The people that create idols out of their sins, those who create their own little gods, usually proclaim, and boast about their sin. They seek recognition and for others to admire them for their ability to get what they want from this world.

This is the businessman who is ruthless in his dealings, who looks for backdoor deals, and cost cutting ways, the one who underpays his employees and gouges the consumer, then brags about how they get away with it and how much money they have made.

This is the adulterer who sneaks around behind their spouses back, who might have more than one partner and the brags about it with their friends and colleagues. The one

who is so proud of their ability to get away with all the secret affairs, fulfilling all their fleshly desires with no thought to the people they cause harm to along the way.

Or any of the other sinful behaviours of this world that people partake in because they are acceptable by the secular world. The ones that are against God's scriptures but legalized by secular society. People who take pride in their ability to live their life as they wish without a thought about how their words and deeds impact or harm the lives of those around them or their relationship with God. They are bent on their own inward curve, focus so much on their own fleshly desires, their own self-satisfaction that they create their own little god in their sin, losing focus on the world around them, making their little god first and demanding that the whole world come and bow down to it.

Finally, he describes them in general by saying that they have their, 'minds set on earthly things'. These are the citizens of the world. They are the people who focus all their resources, their talents, their time, and their treasures on the things of this world. For these people the most important aspect of their life is the here and now. The things that they can enjoy today, the power, fame, and pleasures they can enjoy in this moment, in this lifetime, after all you only live once. They may claim to have a focus on God, but their lives and false idols show that they are instead focused on the things of this world. They are caught in the traps of this world laid out by the devil and by the flesh, they have been spiritually blinded and deafened.

Paul is making it clear if we are to be citizens of Heaven we are not to be like these citizens of earth, because their destination is not the eternal joy and life of Heaven that the citizens of Heaven will enjoy.

What does citizenship in heaven mean to you? A life eternally in the presence of God in his kingdom, versus a life eternally separated from God in the lake of fire. How would a citizen from heaven differ from a citizen of the world?

How would the language that is used by people everyday differ between someone who is earthly and someone who is heavenly? I think we touched on this when we spoke about loving your enemy a few weeks back, and the James bible study group really dug into it a when we studied the dangers of the tongue and the fire and poison it can create.

How do the laws of heaven differ from the laws of the world? Think about things which are declared sinful by God and yet sanctioned as permissible by man. Does it make it ok if it is legal in the eyes of man, or should a citizen of heaven always try to live their lives by the laws of God?

How is an earthy leader different from a heavenly leader? Where do their focuses lie, on their own wealth, power, and benefits or on the good of the people who they are called to serve. Are they tyrants or servants in how they rule?

How do earthly causes differ from heavenly causes? What is the difference between social justice and biblical justice? This is a question which many people struggle with in a world that is caught up in social activity and not necessarily God's work.

It is when we start to ask ourselves these questions, when we start to explore how far apart the ideas of this world are from the ideas of heaven that we come to the realization that those who are focus on this world are indeed worlds apart from those who are focused on Heaven.

The challenge for all Christians is that we are living in this world and yet we are citizens of heaven. We are called to live by heavens guidelines in a world in which they are not respected. We are meant to live in a way that says, 'this world is not my home...'

Philippians 3:20-21

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Heaven is indeed our home, and Paul begins by describing citizens of heaven can be identified by the fact that they are waiting for the return of Christ.

John 14:3

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."

In the book of John, Jesus told the disciples that he would go ahead and prepare a place for them, and then come back and take them to that place.

Acts 1:9-11

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

Then later after the resurrection, the apostles stood and gazed on as Jesus ascended into heaven, lifted up and out of their sight. Only to be reminded by two angels that Jesus would return the same way that they had just witnessed him leaving.

Some of the last words written in the book of revelation are

Revelation 22:20

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

So, for a Christian, a citizen of heaven, the truth of Jesus returning is undeniable. When we think about his return and the apocalypse that is described in the book of Revelation taking place it is not with a sense of fear, a feeling of dread, or of apprehension. Instead to a citizen of heaven this will be a time of joy, our Lord, our God has come back to lead us home, into the land of our citizenship and away from this world where the desires and focuses are so alien to what God and the scriptures call for us to do. It is the truth of His return that gives those who suffer because they uphold the laws of God in this world confidence and hope as disciples of Jesus and citizens of heaven.

It is a confidence and hope that comes from the knowledge that Christ is enough. The hope and confidence that we have in that no matter what happens while we are dwelling here on earth, nothing is beyond the power of Jesus. While he was on earth Jesus performed many miracles. He cast out demons, healed the sick, raised the dead and controlled very nature itself. He showed his power over this world in many ways, and we know from the scriptures that he is the creator and sustainer of everything on earth. We can have confidence that Jesus, the one who rules over the citizens of Heaven has the power and authority to do whatever he desires, and the truth of his word will be done, because he is God.

Furthermore, he has provided us with all we need to carry out what he is asking of each of us while we dwell here on earth. He has called each of us to become citizens of his kingdom and provided us with the various gifts of talents, treasures, and time to carry out the things he is asking from each of us, if we stay focused on him while we live here in this world.

Finally, we see that through him we will be transformed. We will be changed not just in this world through our salvation, through our journey of justification and sanctification. We will be changed from being citizens of this world focused on the worldly into citizens of heaven, focused on the eternal through the works of the Holy Spirit. Yet, even greater than that is the fact that we will be resurrected in the eternal kingdom of heaven in new sanctified bodies, our resurrected bodies when we return with Jesus to our home in his kingdom at the end of times.

So, we need to ask ourselves where does our citizenship lie? Which citizenship dominates our life, our citizenship here in Canada on earth or our Citizenship in Heaven received through Christ our lord.

Who are we following as our example of Citizenship? The people of this world, the businessmen, the actors and actresses, the political activists, the social justice warriors, the influencers, the cheats, and thieves? Or instead, are we following the example of those faithful brothers and sisters who focus on their citizenship in heaven first, those

who do not get drawn away by the things of this world and instead stay focused on God's call in their lives? The ones who are truly loving God first with heart, mind, body, and strength and loving their neighbors as themselves.

Therefore, Paul called for people to follow his example. To follow him, because he was following Christ and by default if you are following him, you too are in the line to Christ. Instead of finding mentors and heroes who are successful in this world we should be finding mentors and heroes who are further ahead of us in their journey towards their citizenship in heaven. People who have struggled with the sins of the flesh and the inward curves of desire and defeated them by turning to Jesus. These should be the people we seek to be like. People who do not point us to the things of this world but instead keep us pointed towards the Lord.

Where are you orientated? Are you orientated on the things of this world or are you oriented on the things beyond this world, the eternal life that is so much longer than our short time here on earth? What do our goals, our hopes and our values say about us? Are all of these things based upon things of this world, or do they reflect the higher order of things which we are called to be focused on, the loving God and loving of enemies and neighbors that all Christians are called to place first.

Paul lived his life as a citizen of Heaven even though he was a dweller on this earth.

Colossians 3:1-4

3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Do not be caught up in this world.

Set your hearts and minds to seek the things above this world. Set them on the things of Heaven where your citizenship lies. When we are reborn in Christ we have died in this world and been reborn into Citizenship in Heaven. A citizenship that grants us eternal life and eternal glory in his kingdom for all time.

Where do you claim your citizenship?

Let us pray,

Confirm our Faith and Hope in Your Grace and Mercy

Lord God, heavenly Father,
may your Holy Spirit strengthen our hearts

and confirm our faith and hope
 in your grace and mercy.
 Although we have reason to fear because of our conscience,
 our sin and our unworthiness,
 we may nevertheless, with the woman of Canaan,
 hold fast to your grace
 and in every trial and temptation
 find you a very present help and refuge;
 through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one true God, now and forever.

Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Lent 2

Music Ministry: “Nobody” by Glenda & Mark Gould

Invitation to Offering

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 If you have an Offering Envelope #, please include it 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

Living God, we offer our gifts today in hopeful gratitude.
 Bless these gifts and use them to increase the goodness enjoyed by those in need.
 Bless our lives that, through our relationships,
 others will be touched by the hope we know in Christ Jesus
 and find their lives blessed by his love and mercy. Amen.

Closing Hymn # 435: “What A Friend We Have In Jesus” (V 1, 3)

What a friend we have in Jesus,
 all our sins and griefs to bear!
 What a privilege to carry
 everything to God in prayer!
 O what peace we often forfeit,
 O what needless pain we bear,
 all because we do not carry
 everything to God in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden,
 cumbered with a load of care?
 Precious Savior, still our refuge--
 take it to the Lord in prayer!
 Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?
 Take it to the Lord in prayer!
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee;
 Thou wilt find a solace there.

Prayers for the People & Pastoral Prayer

God of strength and comfort,
 in the quiet calm of your presence,
 we pause in the whirlwind of concerns around us,
 and set aside our own interests and distractions
 to pray for the world you love.

Today we remember before you:

All people in their daily life and work...
 our families, friends, and neighbours,
 those we work with,
 and those whose faces we recognize regularly but do not know.
 Be with all who find these times stressful or exhausting:

We remember before you this congregation,
 our presbytery, and congregations of other traditions near us,
 as well as those who serve in church leadership and all who nurture faith in others.
 Help us support each other and look to the future with hope.

We pray for this community, our country, and governments throughout the world, as well as all those who work for justice, freedom, and peace.
Send your Spirit, the Advocate, to speak for the voiceless and challenge injustice.

We pray for victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression,
for all who struggle to rebuild their communities
after natural disaster and the effects of the pandemic,
and for all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble.
Bring them comfort and courage, and the support of their neighbours.

*Loving God hear all these spoken and unspoken prayers that we share with you
today in the name of your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen*

Benediction

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
guard 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.