

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 17th, 2022
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Christ is Risen
Easter Sunday
John 20:1-18

Welcome

Loving God,
on this celebrative day, many may join us for worship
who do not regularly join with your people.
We pray for the gift of hospitality today,
that our community will welcome them with open arms.
May each worshiper sense the power of the gospel today
and be drawn closer to you, by the power of your Spirit. Amen

Announcements

Call to Worship

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

In our anguish we cried to the LORD,
and he answered by setting us free.
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

The LORD is our strength and our song;
he has become our salvation.
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

We will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

The stone the builders rejected

has become the capstone;
The LORD has done this;
and it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Prayer of Adoration

God, worker of wonders,
 you made this day for joy and gladness.
 Let the risen Lord abide with us this day,
 opening the Scriptures to us
 and breaking bread in our midst.
 Set our hearts aflame and open our eyes
 so that we may see in his sufferings
 all that the prophets foretold
 and recognize him at this table
 as the Christ, now entered into his glory,
 who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
 one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Opening Hymn # 217: "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (V 1, 3)

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
 Sons of men and angels say, Alleluia!
 Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!
 Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
 Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!
 Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!
 Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Loving and life-giving God,
you raised Jesus from the grave
and shattered the powers of sin and death.
But we confess that we remain captive to fear,

**resisting the hope that new life is possible for us.
 We hide in tombs of indifference,
 seeking comfort rather than justice in this world.
 We cling to resentment and disappointment,
 refusing the freedom that comes with forgiveness.
 Forgive us, O God,
 and restore us to joy and wholeness through your great mercy. Amen**

Assurance of Pardon

God, who is rich in mercy,
 out of the great love with which he loved us
 even when we were dead through our trespasses,
 made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—
 and raised us up with him and seated us with him
 in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
 so that in the ages to come he might show
 the immeasurable riches of his grace
 in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

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 20. What do we believe about God's providence?

The story of salvation as told in the Bible reveals a God who continually maintains and nourishes all creation. From the beginning God has actively upheld and preserved the existence of the universe, provided for all creatures and cared for humankind.

Gen 22:8, 14, Job 10:12, Acts 17:24-28

Question 21. Does God rule the world?

All events in this world are under the care of God. But there is a difference between what God permits and what God causes. We do not know how divine care and human

freedom intersect but proclaim a God of love who watches over us and works all things for good.

Ps 23:1-2, Ps 121:7-8, Rom 8:28

Question 22. If God rules why is there evil and suffering?

Evil and suffering are a mystery and fill us with anguish. History reveals the grim march of human cruelty through the ages including our own. We behave horribly to one another, nation to nation, race to race, religion to religion, person to person. Disease and disaster also add to the toll of suffering. In such a world only a God who has entered into our sufferings can help. As we ponder our Saviour upon the cross, we know that God is with us in our pain.

Job 7:11, Ps 10:1-2, Mk 8:31, Heb 2:18

Music Ministry: “He Is Risen” by Choir

Prayer for illumination

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. From everlasting to everlasting, you are God. Speak to us now as you have spoken to us throughout the ages. On this glorious Easter, reveal yourself and your will for our lives, that we might live as your Easter people. We seek your face, O Lord; hear our prayer through Jesus, our Lord. Amen

Scripture

John 20:1-18

20 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ² So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹ for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." ¹⁴ Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

Children's Story

Today's Children's story is one I am sure everyone of us will learn something from. It is about the Easter egg.

Eggs have held a special place in Jewish Religious Tradition even before Christ's Resurrection and Easter. They were seen as a symbol of creation, of spring and rebirth.

Eggs were actually a part of the Passover festival, they were used by the families who could not afford a lamb for their meal, which enabled those families that were poor to still participate in the Passover celebration. Hard boiled eggs were also used in mourning those who had passed away, the egg representing the sadness that Jewish people felt at the destruction of the Temple that occurred in the Old Testament. This meant hard boiled eggs were also a part of the ritual meal of Seder which commemorated the destruction of the temple during Passover and on the eve of Tisha B'av, the actual day that commemorated the destruction of the temple.

So how did the eggs move from the Jewish tradition to the Christian one?

Well, the egg was seen as a symbol of new life, resurrection, and salvation by early Christians. Its shell represented the empty shell of the tomb from which Jesus rose from the dead. Just like the bumper sticker of a fish that we see many modern-day Christians have on their car, it was an egg that was used to signify faith and to share it with others by those very first followers of Christ after his death.

The egg became a way for Christians to share the gospel, explaining how we waited here on earth to be born into a new life with Christ and a very simplistic way of explaining the trinity. The shell being God the father, the white God the Son and the yolk being God the Holy Spirit. Christians use to greet others with the presentation of an egg and by saying 'Christ has risen.'

Hard boiled eggs became the food of choice on Resurrection Sunday, after the three days fast from Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunday. Then later in Roman Catholicism eggs were forbidden to be eaten for the days of lent and would be enjoyed together on Easter Sunday.

But the question now is why are they colored?

This is where myth comes into play. We have proof that the eggs were eaten in Jewish traditions and in early Christianity they were commonly shared. But the story of why they are colored is more interesting.

Early Easter eggs were red. Only red, did you know that?

Red was the color that was painted on the doors during Passover with the blood of the lamb so that the angel of death would Passover the homes of the Israelites. And red is the color of the blood that Jesus shed for our sins on the cross. When people were presented with an egg and the words 'Christ is risen' early Christians wanted them to know that it was the blood of Jesus that had saved them from their sins.

Red was also the color of victory, the color that armies would hang from their banners as they returned from war to let the people know that they had successfully defeated their enemies. So red eggs symbolized the victory that Jesus has over sin, death, hell, and the grave.

But perhaps the most interesting reason they are said to use red eggs come from something we cannot prove really happened. We can prove that after Pentecost the disciples spread all over the world and started teaching the Gospel, and that eggs were used in the ways I talked about earlier. We know that Bartholomew went to India, Andrew went to Greece, Matthew to Iran and Philip went to the area where Turkey is now.

The story of the red egg comes from where Mary Magdalene went when she left after Pentecost to spread the Gospel of Christ.

The story goes that Mary travelled around haring the Gospel using the egg as here prompt. She shared it everywhere that she went, and she eventually ended up in Rome. Through the workings of the Holy Spirit Mary was provided the opportunity to share the Gospel with the Emperor Tiberias Caesar himself.

She presented an Egg before him and gave him an account of the life of Jesus Christ. She explained that he was fully man and fully God, she explained off the miracles and teachings, she explained about his death, resurrection and his ascension. She explained the ideas of redemption, restoration, reconciliation, and salvation to him. She explains the trinity and then she presented the egg before him proclaiming to him, 'Christ is risen.'

According to legend, Emperor Tiberius listened to her whole tale and doubted its truth. He commented that there would be about as much chance of Jesus being risen as the egg, she had presented in turning red, and when he said those words aloud, the egg turned red.

As this story was shared more and more people began to share eggs with one another as a symbol of the faith. Red eggs became a tradition at Easter in many churches, and if you look at the older painting of Mary Magdalene that exist in churches, she is often depicted with a red egg in her hands.

So, this Sunday as we Celebrate the resurrection of Christ we will take part in this ancient tradition, as you leave today, we have hard boiled eggs to share with everyone as a reminder that Christ has indeed risen in victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave.

Sermon

Christ is Risen! These are the words that were declared by the early Christians. In fact, as we learned in the Children's Story today, they were the words that Mary often used in teaching others about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the scripture we are examining today we see Mary visiting the tomb of the Risen Christ and discovering the truth of his resurrection.

The question we first need to ask before we get too far into the scripture is 'Why Mary?' Why was Mary who is recorded discovering the missing body of Christ. Women in the times of Jesus had almost no legal standing, according to the Mishnah - the Jewish book of law -, a woman's testimony was not even admissible in court. So why was a woman the first person recoded to find the body of Jesus missing, if the gospel writers wanted people to believe in the truth of the gospel, they should have used a respected male character, someone who would be listened to by the religious elders of the time.

Even if they wanted to use a woman, why did they choose Mary. Why did they choose to use a woman who many believe was of questionable character, one who was both formerly demon possessed and a prostitute? Who would believe the testimony of such a woman, even if it were allowed in the courts of the time?

Why does John, the one who records the details of Jesus's life so accurately throughout his Gospel, and not just John but all of the other gospel writers, why do they use Mary and the other women as the ones who discover the empty tomb of Christ?

If you think about it, there is a lot of things in the story of the crucifixion that do not make sense. Why do the gospels all have the disciples hiding after Jesus's execution? Why do the Gospels even talk about Peters denial of Christ, Judas's betrayal, and Thomas's doubt? If the story of Jesus was so important that it had to be believed, why do they make themselves look

so bad, and have a woman as the central figure of the discovery of the resurrection? If the bible was just a story made to make people behave in ethically and morally, they writers should have used a much stronger character as the witness at the empty tomb. So, 'Why Mary?'

Simply put, they do so because it is true. The gospel is the truth, the resurrection is a truth, not some myth created to make people believe, otherwise they would have used better characters in these critical roles. They writers of the Bible recorded the truth, and Mary was the first to see the rock rolled away and the emptiness within the tomb. And when she discovered this her first thought was that someone has robbed the tomb and stolen the body, so she runs back to the disciples and tells them what she has seen.

Did you know that grave robbing was a major issue in the ancient world? Many of the stories we have today of the walking dead and ghosts and goblins in graveyards are actually myths that were started by graverobbers so that they could carry on their thievery in peace under the cover of night. Graves were great places for thieves to make easy money, all it required was a little hard work in moving a stone and the robber could steal whatever had been buried with someone, all their jewelry and other valuables sometimes even the spices and linens themselves were very valuable. Grave robbery was taking place so often in the region that one of the Roman Emperors declared it an offense punishable by death in an attempt to deter people from it as a form of thievery.

Is this where Mary got the idea that Jesus's Grace was robbed?

On Good Friday, when Jesus was taken down from the cross and buried, his body was wrapped in a valuable linen, and treated with expensive spices and ointments. The myrrh and aloes alone would have been worth many months' wages to a common worker. Making robbing his grave a very tempting target for those who were struggling to survive under the rulership of the Roman Empire.

Furthermore, when we read about the disciples after Jesus's crucifixion, we do not see a group of men gathered together and plotting on how to carry on the ministry that they had been working in for three years by stealing the body of their leader. Instead, we see a group of boys, terrified by what has occurred, panicked, and fearing for their own wellbeing, preparing to scatter into the wind and forget what they had just witnessed.

The religious leaders were not going to take any on the body going missing either:

Matthew 27:62-66

⁶² The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³ and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' ⁶⁴ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." ⁶⁵ Pilate said to them, "You have a

guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.”⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

They needed to prove that Jesus was a hoax. They know he had talked of being raised from the dead, so they set about to ensure that there was no way that anyone could steal the body from the grave.

This means that after his crucifixion, Jesus’s body was laid in an empty tomb, with a large heavy stone placed at the entrance and a seal placed upon that stone so any would know if it was moved or tampered with, a group of guards to stand in front of the stone to deter anyone from even considering robbing the grave and his disciples not planning a grave robbing buy instead in chaos and preparing to run in fear.

Yet despite all of this, we begin today’s scripture with Mary discovering the seal broken, the heavy stone rolled aside and the missing body of Jesus. Despite all of the precautions taken by the religious leaders and Pilate to ensure the body of Christ could not be stolen, Mary assumes that someone had broken in and stolen the body of our Lord Jesus.

Which results in Peter and John engaging in a foot race to the tomb. The younger of the two, John outpacing Peter and arriving at the tomb first. Stopping to look into the empty tomb and seeing the grave linens and spices sitting where the body should be located. Peter arriving moments later and stepping into the tomb also sees the linens and spices, even the head covering is laying on the stone where the body should have been laid to rest.

They must have been trying to understand why grave robbers would take a body and leave the valuable linens and spices behind. It makes no sense at all. Why would grave robbers take the time to unwrap the body, if that was what they were after, would it not make more sense to take the body and unwrap it elsewhere, and then why would they take the time to lay the linens out carefully back on the gravestone, would they not just be wadded up in a pile if someone removed them. Something beyond a simple explanation of grave robbery had happened here in the tomb of Jesus.

Imagine being one of the first people to the tomb, looking in and discovering the body of Jesus missing. Just the body! What would be our first thought? We would probably have the exact same first thought as Mary, someone has stolen the body of Christ. We would think this because it is the most reasonable expectation, people do not just get up after death and continue on living, death is one way in our world.

When the disciples arrive, they would have the same initial thought. But in the scriptures, we see John go through a very rapid realization of what has actually happened here at the tomb.

When John first arrives, he ‘looks in,’ in Greek it is the word *blepei*, meaning a cursory glance. He looks in quickly, perhaps afraid to enter into the tomb because of the Jewish fear of being

contaminated by coming into contact with a corpse. He looks in quickly and sees the linens and the spices. Standing at the door he cannot see much other than those simple things.

When Peter arrives, he steps inside the tomb, and he 'saw,' in Greek it is the word *theoreo*, a word that means to look at closely. Peter stepped into the tomb and looked around, he saw a little more than John could see from the entrance, he saw the linens, the spices and even the headcloth folded up and placed neatly on the gravestone.

Then we have John's realization as he too stepped into the tomb, when he 'saw and believed,' the Greek word is *eidon*. He perceived, he looked and understood what happened in the tomb. John stepped into the tomb and knew that Jesus risen from the grave.

John knew because when he looked upon the evidence in the empty tomb it was the only logical conclusion, he could come to that would explain what he was witnessing. Grave-robbers could not be to blame, there was a sealed stone with Roman guards outside, they surely would have arrested anyone who had chosen to try to attempt to rob the grave. The spices were not gone, adding to the evidence that a grave robbery was unlikely.

It was the linens that told him what had actually happened. They were left coiled up as if the body inside had simply disappeared. Again, lending to the proof that grave robbery had in fact not occurred. Why would the linens be laid out in the form of the body, the only logical explanation is that the body had disappeared, it had left, and the things that had wrapped it in death were left in the grave. Christ had indeed risen and at that moment John knew it as truth.

So, Peter and John return to the house in Jerusalem to share what they have discovered with the rest of the disciples who are still in Jerusalem. Mary remains at the tomb, alone. She stays and weeps. She had been the one to discover the tomb opened, the one who first thought the body stolen. She now stands outside the tomb of the Lord and weeps, a weeping of confusion and broken heartedness. She cannot understand what has happened, why someone would do such a thing, she has no clue how much her life is about to be changed as she is there alone at the tomb.

After John and Peter leave, she looks into the tomb. She does not see just the linens and spices that John and Peter saw. It's not the empty linens that help her understand that Christ is risen, instead it is the two angels that she sees sitting at the head and foot of where his body had been laid on the gravestone.

John includes this very minor detail, the angels seated at the head and foot of where the body was laid. It might seem insignificant, but John puts every detail in his gospel for a reason. When Mary looks into the tomb, she sees two angels sitting on top of a flat stone roughly six feet apart. She saw a representation of the ark of the covenant from the Old Testament. The ark was a gold covered box that symbolized the place where God met his people in the Old Testament and dealt with their sins. The Ark was kept in the Holy of Holies, the very center of the temple, behind the thick curtains, which had two angels on either end of its cover,

overshadowing the center between them which was known as the 'mercy seat,' the place on which the high priest would present the annual blood sacrifice for the sins of the people.

John does not expressly say that this is a representation of the Ark of the Covenant, but perhaps he is seeking for those who know their Old Testament to make the connection between that sacrifices that happened yearly for the forgiveness of the sins of the Israelites and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the final and ultimate sacrifice that is for the sins of all people and allows all to reconcile themselves with God by repenting of their sins and returning to the Family of God.

These angels ask her, 'why are you crying?' Mary in her sorrow responds truthfully, 'they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' She then turns around and sees a figure standing before her, who once again asks her why she is weeping, who it is that she is seeking.

Mary in her broken heartedness cannot recognize that the one before her is Jesus. She assumes he is the gardener, the one who is there to maintain the graveyard. For some reason through her grief and tears she cannot recognize that the man before her is Jesus. She even asks him to please tell her where the body of Jesus has been laid. It is not until the moment that he speaks her name that she recognizes that it is Jesus, resurrected and alive who is standing before her. When he simply speaks her name, she instantly knows he is her Rabbi, her teacher.

She had likely fallen to her knees in the traditional Jewish manner of greeting someone the revered and was clinging to the feet and legs of Jesus. I am sure we can all understand her reaction, she had feared that his body was stolen and just finding his body would have been a relief, what joy she must have felt at finding him alive. She had believed he was gone and now he had returned, and she never wanted to let him go. Yet Jesus tells her not to cling to him in that moment and instructs her to go and tell the others of his resurrection.

And this is what Mary does, she gets up and leave Christs side at that moment, To tell the disciples and the rest of the world that on this day 'Christ is Risen.'

Let us Pray,

Raise Us to Eternal Life

Lord God, heavenly Father,
 you gave up your Son for our offenses
 and raised him again for our justification.
 Give us your Holy Spirit,
 that he may rule and govern us
 according to your will,
 graciously keep us in the true faith,
 defend us from all sins
 and after this life

raise us to eternal life;
 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, Quinquagesima

Communion Hymn

REAFFIRMATION OF THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT FOR THOSE MAKING A PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH

PRESENTATION

Elder

(names) are presented by the session,
 for the reaffirming of the baptismal covenant
 into which they were baptized.
 They now desire to profess publicly their faith
 and to assume greater responsibility
 in the life of the church,
 and God's mission in the world.

Minister:

We rejoice that you now desire to declare your faith
 and to share with us in our common ministry.
 In baptism you were joined to Christ,
 and made members of his church.
 In the community of the people of God,
 you have learned of God's purpose for you and for all creation.
 You have been nurtured at the table of our Lord,
 and called to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hear these words from Holy Scripture:

Minister:

Eph. 2:19–22

You are citizens with the saints

and also members of the household of God,
 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
 with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.
 In him the whole structure is joined together
 and grows into a holy temple in the Lord;
 in whom you also are built together spiritually
 into a dwelling place for God.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The testimonies of the candidates will be given here.

Minister:

Now, as you publicly declare your faith,
 I ask you to reject sin,
 to profess your faith in Christ Jesus,
 and to confess the faith of the church,
 the faith in which you were baptized.

RENUNCIATIONS

Minister:

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God,
 do you turn from the ways of sin
 and renounce evil and its power in the world?

I do.

Do you turn to Jesus Christ
 and accept him as your Lord and Savior,
 trusting in his grace and love?

I do.

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,
 obeying his Word and showing his love?

I will, with God's help.

PROFESSION

Minister:

With the whole church,
let us confess our faith.

ALL CONGREGATION

**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. Amen.**

Minister:

You have publicly professed your faith.
Will you be a faithful member of this congregation,
share in its worship and ministry
through your prayers and gifts,
your study and service,
and so fulfill your calling to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Candidates:

I will, with God's help.

Minister:

Let us pray.
 Gracious God, by water and the Spirit
 you claimed us as your own,
 cleansing us from sin, and giving us new life.
 You made us members of your body, the church,
 calling us to be your servants in the world.
 Renew in (name) and (name) the covenant you made in their baptism.
 Continue the good work you have begun in them.
 Send them forth in the power of your Spirit
 to love and serve you with joy,
 and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth,
 in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
 Amen.

LAYING ON OF HANDS

The candidates kneel.

The minister lays both hands on the head of each of the candidates in turn, while offering one of the following prayers. The sign of the cross may be marked on the forehead of the candidate. Oil prepared for this purpose may be used.

O Lord, uphold (name) by your Holy Spirit.
 Daily increase in him/her your gifts of grace:
 the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
 the spirit of counsel and might,
 the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord,
 the spirit of joy in your presence,
 both now and forever.

The candidate answers:

Amen.

Minister:

Ever-living God,
 guard these your servants with your protecting hand,
 and let your Holy Spirit be with them forever.
 Lead them to know and obey your Word,

that they may serve you in this life
and dwell with you forever in the life to come;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

WELCOME

Elder

(name) and (name), by publicly professing their faith,
have expressed their intention
to continue in the covenant God made with them in their baptism.
Let us welcome them as they join with us
in the worship and mission of the church.

ALL CONGREGATION:

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you
to share with us in the ministry of Christ,
for we are all one in him.

THE PEACE

Minister:

The peace of God be with you.

ALL CONGREGATION

And also with you.

Shake Hands and Gifts

Communion

Declaration of God's Invitation and Promises

*Now let us hear the story of how this sacrament began.
On the night on which Jesus was betrayed,
he sat at supper with his disciples.
While they were eating, he took a piece of bread,
said a blessing, broke it, and gave it to them with the words,*

*“This is my body, which is for you.
Do this to remember me.”
Later he took the cup, saying,
“This cup is God’s covenant,
sealed with my blood.
Drink from it, all of you, to remember me.”
So now, following Jesus’ example and command,
we take this bread and this cup,
the ordinary things of the world,
which Christ will use for extraordinary purposes.
And as he said a prayer before sharing,
let us do so too*

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.**

*Send your Holy Spirit upon us, we pray,
 that the sharing of the bread that we break
 and the cup that we bless
 may be for us the communion of the body and blood of Christ.
 Grant that, being joined together in him,
 we may attain to the unity of the faith
 and grow up in all things into Christ, our Lord.
 And as this grain has been gathered from many fields into one loaf,
 and these grapes from many hills into one cup,
 grant, O Lord, that your whole church
 may soon be gathered from the ends of the earth
 into your kingdom.
 Even so, come, Lord Jesus!*

**Through him, with him, in him,
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 all honor and glory are yours,
 Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.**

The Apostles Creed (Affirmation of Faith)

**We believe in one God,
 the Father almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth,
 of all things visible and invisible.**

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,

**the only Son of God,
 begotten from the Father before all ages,
 God from God,
 Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made;
 of the same essence as the Father.
 Through him all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven;
 he became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
 and was made human.
 He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered and was buried.
 The third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures.
 He ascended to heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again with glory
 to judge the living and the dead.
 His kingdom will never end.**

**And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord, the giver of life.
 He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
 and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
 He spoke through the prophets.
 We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
 We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
 We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
 and to life in the world to come. Amen.**

The Passing of the Peace

*Thanks be to God: Christ makes us one.
 The peace of Christ be with you all.
 And also with you*

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.*

**Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, grant us your peace.
Amen**

Invitation

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

Taking of the Elements

*Take 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

We thank and praise you, Jesus Christ,
 for these gifts of bread and wine,
 signs of your great sacrifice for us
 and, by your Spirit's presence and power,
 a means for us to commune with you.
 We eat this bread and drink this cup
 to refresh our hearts,
 to strengthen our faith,
 and to rouse our hope
 that soon we shall take our places at your heavenly banquet
 to eat and drink with you and all you have redeemed.
 For all your gifts, we bless you, Lord.
 Above all, your heavenly food,
 pardoning grace, and life-giving Word
 motivate us to sing that you are good. Amen

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

God of surprising generosity,
 Jesus encouraged his disciples to keep fishing when they thought their nets were empty.
 Encourage us to keep giving even when needs seem overwhelming and resources scarce.
 We entrust our gifts to you with the faith you can surprise us and others through all they can accomplish in Jesus' name. Amen.

Closing Hymn # 226: “The Day of Resurrection” (V 1, 3)

The day of resurrection!
 Earth, tell it out abroad;
 the passover of gladness,
 the passover of God.
 From death to life eternal,
 from earth unto the sky,
 our Christ hath brought us over,
 with hymns of victory.

Now let the heavens be joyful!
 Let earth her song begin!
 The world resound in triumph,
 and all that is therein!
 Let all things seen and unseen
 their notes of gladness blend,
 for Christ the Lord hath risen,
 our joy that hath no end.

Pastoral Prayer

God of power and possibility,
 you broke open the tomb that held our Lord.
 Now break open your church,
 tense and tired after months of pandemic restrictions,
 worried over differences and disagreements,
 uncertain about the way ahead in mission and service.
 Guide us with your wise and creative Spirit.
 Resurrect, renew, and revive your church!

God of resurrection and new life,
 you broke into the hearts of Jesus’ fearful friends.
 Now break into our relationships with one another.
 Where they are vibrant and life-giving, nurture them.
 Where they are strained by misunderstanding or neglect, reconcile them.
 Heal us with your merciful and engaging Spirit.
 Resurrect, renew and revive our life together!

God of might and mercy,
 you broke open the schemes of those who stood in the way of your love.
 Now break open the governance of your world.

Stir the minds and hearts of leaders to work for peace and justice.
Where laws are corrupt, where deceptions masquerades as truth,
and where people suffer under the schemes of those who lust for power,
confront people with your Spirit of truth and compassion.
Resurrect, renew and revive the community of nations!

God of healing and hope,
you broke the bonds of death which tried to shackle new life.
Now break into situations of illness, pain, grief, and loss.
Wherever people are sick in body, mind, or spirit,
and wherever people mourn the loss of a loved one or a cherished future,
embrace each one with your Spirit of comfort and courage.
Resurrect, renew and revive our lives!

God of Easter Renewal and Resurrection,
you have broken into our lives again this day.
Break into all our moments of celebration and joy,
By your Spirit, give us gratitude, generosity
and the grace to understand each other.
Resurrect, renew and revive our souls and spirits!

We pray these prayers as well as all of the unspoken prayers that are in our hearts this
day in the name of the one who has died and risen, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Benediction

Grace to you and peace
from him who is and who was and who is to come,
and from the seven spirits who are before his throne,
and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead,
and the ruler of the kings of the earth.
To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood,
and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father,
to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen