

**St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, May 29th, 2022
Rev. Gerry Gallant**

**Jesus is Coming
Ascension Sunday
Revelation 22:12-21**

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

This is the day that you have made, Lord.
Help us to rejoice in it and be glad!

Remind us of the privileges we enjoy as your people:
to come to you in these moments,
**to confess our sins,
to receive forgiveness and give it,
to pray and sing and listen,
to renew our fainting spirits,
to rest in all your promises.**

Open our eyes to see you, Lord.
Open our ears to hear your Word.

Visit us through your Holy Spirit,
and help us to celebrate our faith. Amen

Prayer of Adoration

God of glory and majesty,
God of mystery and mercy,
in Christ Jesus
you came to live among us, sharing in our joys and sorrows.
After he suffered and died for our sake,
you raised him and took him up in glory so that he might fulfill all things.
As our ascended Lord,
he gives hope to your people in all places,

in every generation and every situation.
 So we claim that hope this day,
 for ourselves and for the world you love,
 offering you our praise and worship in the name of Jesus Christ,
 who now lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 one God, now and forever. Amen.

Opening Hymn # 571: "Lord I Want To Be A Christian" (V 1, 4)

Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart in my heart
 Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart in my heart
 In my heart in my heart
 Lord I want to be a Christian in my heart in my heart

Lord I want to be like Jesus in my heart in my heart
 Lord I want to be like Jesus in my heart in my heart
 In my heart in my heart
 Lord I want to be like Jesus in my heart in my heart

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

**O Lord, great God,
 all holy, Father most gracious,
 filled with mercy and steadfast love,
 we are embarrassed to come before you,
 for we have preferred the ways of this world to your ways,
 for we have rebelled against your wisdom
 and we have gotten into trouble,
 for we have rejected your fatherly guidance
 and have gotten lost altogether.
 To you belongs righteousness, O Lord,
 and to us confusion of face.
 O Lord, great God,
 all holy, filled with awe,
 Father, most gracious,
 filled with mercy and steadfast love,
 incline your ear to our troubles.
 Hear us when we pour out our sorrows before you.
 Forgive us,**

not on the ground of our own righteousness,
 but on the ground of your great mercy.
 On the ground of your great mercy
 in the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ.
 It is in his name that we pray,
 for he is our Savior and the mediator of the covenant of grace. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

While it is true that we have sinned,
 it is a greater truth that we are forgiven
 through God's love in Jesus Christ.
 For all who humbly seek the mercy of God it is said,
 in Jesus Christ, your sin is forgiven

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 37. What is the significance of affirming that Jesus is truly human?

Jesus was human in every respect in order that from within our humanity our sin may be redeemed. Tried and tested as we are, yet without sin, Jesus is able to help all those who are being tested.

Heb 2:14-18, Phil 2:5-8

Question 38. How can Jesus be both truly God and truly human?

Jesus' divine-human unity is a mystery. He was fully divine and fully human. His humanity and divinity were neither mixed nor divided but joined in one person. How this can be, eludes our comprehension. Yet only someone who is truly God and truly human can be our mediator bridging the distance between God and ourselves.

1 Tim 2:5-6, 1 Tim 3:16

Question 39. How did Jesus bridge that distance?

By assuming, fulfilling, and transforming the ancient offices of prophet, priest and king, Jesus reconciled us to God. As prophet, he speaks most clearly the word of God; as priest, he offered himself for us; as king, he rules over us.
Rom 5:10, Col 1:21-22

Music Ministry: “There Is Joy In My Heart” by Choir

Prayer for illumination

Lord, our God,
in the reading and proclamation of your Word,
we pray you will illumine our minds and hearts
so that we may hear and understand your Word,
know and live according to your Word,
and become living letters of your Word,
equipped to follow Jesus
in every part of our lives,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ, our Lord, the living Word. Amen

Scripture

Revelation 22:12-21

¹² “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

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

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Children's Hymn: "Shine Jesus Shine" (V 1, 3)

Lord, the light of your love is shining
 In the midst of the darkness, shining
 Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
 Set us free by the truth you now bring us
 Shine on me, shine on me

Shine, Jesus, shine
 Fill this land with the Father's glory
 Blaze, Spirit, blaze
 Set our hearts on fire
 Flow, river, flow
 Flood the nations with grace and mercy
 Send forth your word
 Lord, and let there be light

As we gaze on your kingly brightness
 So our faces display your likeness
 Ever changing from glory to glory
 Mirrored here may our lives tell your story
 Shine on me, shine on me. [Refrain]

Children's Lesson

Sermon

Do you remember playing hide and seek as a child? You would gather with your friends, find some way to figure out who would be the seeker. They would count to ten while everyone else ran off to try to find someplace to hide where they could not be found. The seeker always makes a big deal of the count, '6, 7, 8, 9, and TEN!, ready or not, here I come!' Then off they would go to find all their friends who have hidden in the designated area.

Hide and seek is one of the oldest games that is played by mankind all over the world. In fact, I believe it was the very first game played by man, in the Garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve have eaten the fruit of the tree which they were instructed not to, they hide, or at least try to hide from God.

Adam and Eve are not the only ones who have tried to hide from God. Jonah when he was told to go to the people of Nineveh, decided it was something he really didn't want to do, and God found him, and put him in the belly of a fish.

David in his Psalms recognizes his sins against God and wishes over and over that he could hide his sin from God's eyes, yet he knows he could not. God will always be able to find you, he will always know the truth of your heart, the same way he always knew the truth of what was happening in the heart of David.

Hide and seek is one of mans earliest games, one which man all throughout history has played with God and one that is played all over the world today. People try to hide their sinful thoughts and actions from both the world and from God. The truth is that we may be able to hide them from the world, but we will never be able to hide our true nature from God, he has known us since the very beginning of time and there is no part of us that he does not know.

The truth is that no matter how confusing the book of Revelation can be, no matter how hard you try to interpret the meaning of the seals, the vials, the bowls, the beasts, the number, all the events that can be both real and visionary, the whole book can be summed up very simply.

'Jesus wins, be ready'

The game of hide and seek always ends with the one who is seeking finding everyone. Here at the end of the book or Revelation, Jesus is telling us that he is done counting, mankind's opportunity to try to hide their sins from God is over and that we should know that He is coming soon.

The truth of the book of Revelation is that Jesus is Coming, we will all be found by Him no matter how hard we try to hide from Him, and all will stand before him when he sits on the white throne and determines our eternity.

If you knew that today was the day you were going to be found, today was your last day on earth before you were judged what would you say.

Steven, the first martyred Christian died while saying; 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'

Michelangelo, the artist who painted the Sistine Chapel ceiling last words were; 'I give my soul to God, my body to the earth, and my worldly possessions to my nearest of kin. Charging them to remember the sufferings of Christ.'

Mother Teresa gave her whole life to God, her final words were 'Jesus, I love you. Jesus, I love you.'

John Huss, one of the men who inspired Martin Luther, who was executed by the church died with his final words being; 'What I taught with my lips, I seal with my blood.'

Over and over all throughout history Christians have gone to God with final words of praise, of adoration and of respect for His word and His teachings.

As their time of being found approached they all knew the truth, Jesus is Coming, and you cannot hide from Him. So, you better be ready for when He comes. They were looking forward to his second coming, the eternal life he would bring, the joy that would be found living in his eternal presence in the New Jerusalem.

'Jesus is coming' use to be a phrase that rung out from the pulpit week after week across the world. During the great revival period pastors who preached of the end of times would take the pulpit and preach on the return of Christ and how we need to get ourselves right with God so that we can be ready for His return.

They reminded congregations that Jesus is coming, and we do not know how or when He is coming, but we do know that He will come.

Jesus himself told us.

Matthew 24:36-44

³⁶ "But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

Only God knows when the day of reckoning will happen, Only God knows the truth of how the rapture of his faithful will happen, but every Christian should know that while we do not know the time, we should know the signs.

When the disciples asked Jesus of the end of times, he told them.

Matthew 24: 4-14

⁴ And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. ⁶ And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the beginning of the birth pains. ⁹ “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. ¹⁰ And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹² And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³ But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Jesus has told us that when he returns the world will be falling away from Him and His teachings. Wars and rumors of wars, we live in a world that is constantly in conflict. The birth pangs of the tribulation, things of the world becoming worse and worse before He appears to take His children into His protection.

People being led astray, by false teachers. People who will preach the ways of the world and not the ways of Christ.

Timothy summed this up very effectively.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

In the words of Joel Olstein.

‘Young, old, Democrats, Republicans, Protestants, Catholics, Longhorns, Aggies, Jewish, Buddhists, all kinds of people here, this is what Heaven is going to be like...’

What a blatant lie, the Bible teaches that it will be only those who follow Christ who are in heaven. He preaches what people want to hear, so that the people can have what they want, and he can make money of those who want to believe what he preaches. Jesus does not hesitate in the scripture to say that he is the one way, the one truth, the one light that leads to eternal life. It is in the Lamb’s Book of Life alone in which those who have been given salvation by the grace of God have their names recorded, and all the false believers will instead find themselves on the path to the lake of fire for all of eternity.

In the world today there are people who scoff at this, who mock the Word of God and the teaching of Pastors. They change the scripture to teach what they want it to teach, to fill the pews, to increase the tithe, to make people feel good about the way they live in this world.

This too is warned of in the scripture.

2 Peter 3:1-6

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, ³knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

People will come to church and willfully ignore the word of God. Churches will willfully choose to preach something other than the word of God. People will be led astray, people will think that they have been faithful Christians, yet the whole time they have been following one of these false teachers, these false prophets. They have never picked up their Bible and read what it says to each and every Christian who takes the time to read the word of God.

I encourage you to pick up your Bible, to know what it says, to take part in fellowship and Bible studies so that you can increase your knowledge of God and His word every day. I do not want any of you to be like the ones who on the day of judgement stand before the Lord our God and hear the words 'I do not know you.'

I will stand before you here, or in Bible studies or in fellowship or even on the street and tell you the truth of the Bible, even when you do not want to hear it. Jesus is coming, he will return, and he will take those who have faith in him from this world to a place where they will never now pain, suffering or sorrow again. He will grant eternal life to those who have washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb. And for those who do not there is only an eternity outside of the loving care of the Father and the eternal joy and happiness that is found in the New Jerusalem, an eternity of weeping and gnashing of teeth in the lake of fire.

This is not what the world wants to hear, it will not bring everyone to church, it will not make me a mega church pastor or even a well-liked pastor. This is not the message that

will attract crowds of people to the church, but it is the message that might save the soul of someone who listens to God and turns to His word in obedience in their life.

Know this:

Jesus is coming. Jesus promises this to his disciples. Jesus promises it to us in the gospels and in the book of Revelation. There is no Christian alive that can deny the fact he will return, and he will defeat death, the devil and sin when he returns. Jesus is coming and no one but God knows when he will return, but when he returns it will be too late.

On that day there will be plenty of people who will be wondering, 'what happened? where did all of the other Christians go?' They will find themselves asking, 'What did I do wrong? What didn't I do? I went to church. I went to bible studies. I helped at the church. I believed in Jesus.' The truth is that the devil believes in Jesus, he believes in him more than you and I because he has met him, and belief in Jesus is not what saves us. Faith in Christ is what saves us, trying to live our lives in obedience to his word by studying it and applying it to our lives. We are not saved just by showing up at a building on Sunday and saying we believe in God.

Know that there are signs that will appear in the world before Jesus returns. Wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters, false teachers, debauchery, false religions, people who ignore the truth of Gods word, people who change the word to meet their worldly needs so that they can feel good about themselves. Aren't you glad we live in a world where none of this is happening? Or do you see some of it happening in the world around us today?

Finally, 'Be Ready!'

The day is coming. People walk around this planet thinking this is life, this is the land of the living. They think that it matters how much we get, how much fame, how much popularity, how much influence, how much wealth. They live this life collecting all the things that they can to make this life easier because all that matters to them is this life.

Yet this is not the land of the living, Christians know this is the land of the dead, we are all dead spiritually until we are reborn through the Holy Spirit into our faith. Heaven is the land of the living, it has eternal joy, eternal life, and an eternity away from wants and worries that we are presented with here daily on earth.

'Be Ready'

Know that the Lord will come according to his timeline,

2 Peter 3:8-10

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Know that God is patient, trying to give as many humans as possible to come to salvation, trying to give as many people as possible to discover the truth of his word and this is why the forces of evil are trying so hard to turn people away from the word, to present a false word that matches their wants in this world.

Live your life accordingly. Do not be drawn away by the things of the world. Do not be drawn in by the temptations that the devil lays out before you. Turn to Christ in all things, turn to his word for strength and perseverance in times of trouble. Turn to his Word in praise and thanks in good times. Turn to his word always and in all things.

Be about your father's business, be caught up in the word, caught up in the church, caught up in caring for the needy, caught up in forgiving those who have done wrong to you. Be caught up living a Christ like life in all things, in all places and in all things. Loving people with the grace, mercy and love with which God loved you when he saved you.

Do not think I can do what I want today, or its not that important today, because there is no guarantee that tomorrow will be here for any of us. Hold one another accountable to the word of God in loving Christian Fellowship.

The love of Christ is more than words. Every time he ate with a sinner, spent time with a tax collector, spoke with an adultery he told them he loved them, and he told them to repent and come to Him.

We are called to do the same in this world. To love people as Christ did, to eat with them, speak with them, be with them and support them in their time on this world, but to show true Christian love is to do more than just be concerned with their life in this world, it means we will tell them the truth of the gospel, because we are concerned for their eternal life.

This means we cannot fall away from Christian teaching; we cannot give up the difficult parts of our faith just because they make our lives easier. It means we need to stand with God in a world who is turning away from Him more and more each day.

It means building a Christian community where Christ is placed first, the true head of the church and to gather in praise, worship, and fellowship around him as we are reminded to do in the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴ And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, ²⁵ not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

I pray that we will continue to hold fast to God's word, that we will continue to stir up a love for God and obedience to His word for one another. That we would continuously gather and encourage all who seek Christ to gather in praise, worship, and study because the day is coming when Jesus will fulfil his final words.

Revelation 22:20-21

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

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

Jesus is coming and we all need to be ready.

Let us pray,

Grant Us Courage and Comfort to Continue Steadfastly in Your Testimony

Lord God, heavenly Father,
 we give thanks that through your Holy Spirit
 you have appointed us to bear witness
 of your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
 Just as the world cannot endure such testimony
 and persecutes us in every way,
 grant us courage and comfort
 that we may not be offended because of the cross,
 but continue steadfastly in your testimony
 and be found always
 among those who know you and your Son,
 until we obtain eternal salvation;
 through your 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, Sunday after Ascension

Music Ministry: "You Say" by Ayden Banfield

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. standrewspertthoffering@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

Giving God, just as we love because you first loved us,
 we give because you first gave to us.
 Out of gratitude we bring gifts of money to be used for your kingdom work.
 With these gifts we also pledge to you our whole selves.
 We give you our bodies as living temples; may we be your hands and feet.
 We give you our minds; may our thoughts support others and glorify you.
 We give you our time; may our presence encourage others.
 We give you our relationships; may our interactions be a light to the world.
 We give you our work; may we always strive to do our best and help others do theirs.
 We give you our play; may our leisure bring joy to many.
 We give you our hopes and our dreams; may our goals reflect your mission.
 Use these gifts, great God, through the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Closing Hymn # 592: "I The Lord Of Sea And Sky" (V 1, 2)

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
 I have heard My people cry;
 All who dwell in dark and sin
 My hand will save.
 I, who made the stars of night,
 I will make their darkness bright.
 Who will bear my light to them?
 Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord.
 Is it I, Lord?
 I have heard You calling in the night.
 I will go, Lord,
 If You lead me;
 I will hold Your people in my hear

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
 I have borne my people's pain;
 I have wept for love of them –
 They turn away.
 I will break their hearts of stone,
 Give them hearts for love alone;
 I will speak My word to them.
 Whom shall I send? (Refrain)

Pastoral Prayer

Faithful God,
 We give you thanks for your steadfast love
 that provides courage and comfort for your people in every challenging time.
 Continue to surprise us with your grace, O God,
 and breathe your Spirit upon your church once more,
 to draw us together in worship and witness.
 Renew our faith so that we may serve you with courage and creativity,
 offering the hope we know in Christ Jesus
 to this struggling world.

God of peace,
 thank you for sending Jesus into the world,
 to reconcile the world to you through the forgiveness of our sins.
 May the fruits of the reconciliation and peace he offers
 continue to work in places of hatred and hostility.
 O God, do not let us be resigned to injustice or indifference.
 Inspire us to build renewed Christian relationships in these troublesome days

God of fellowship,
 we pray for our church and our community.
 Renew our life together as we gather again socially as the pandemic shifts around us.
 Inspire our congregation with a fresh vision for our ministry.
 Comfort those who mourn the loss of dear ones,
 and support those who are sick,
 and those recovering from setbacks or failure.

Give strength to people who are worn out or discouraged,
and calm the anxiety or anger that can keep us apart.
Bless and encourage any who are struggling in their faith,
and guide those with questions to your truth.

God who calls us into our future,
we pray for students who will be graduating this year,
filled with anticipation and uncertainty about the future.
Guide their choices.

We remember the graduates from our theological colleges.
May they always remember that you called them into ministry,
and that you will provide them with the wisdom, strength and grace needed
to live out their calling in ever-changing contexts and through them to stay true to your
Word.

Faithful God,
By your Spirit, fill us with the faith and courage to do the work
Jesus commissioned his followers to undertake wherever he leads us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God,
who lives and rules with you and the Holy Spirit as our one true God,
now and forever more we pray. Amen.

Benediction

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