

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth  
Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Do you Believe?  
Fifth Sunday in Lent  
John 11:1-44

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

God says to us: I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers flow in the desert.  
**The LORD does great things for us, and we rejoice.**

God says to us: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.  
**The LORD does great things for us, and we rejoice.**

God says to us: I am about to do a new thing.  
**The LORD does great things for us,  
and so we worship God with songs of joy and prayers of thanksgiving.**

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God,  
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all life,  
we come to you today with grateful hearts,  
cheered by the return of spring,  
days lengthening, the sun's warmth growing stronger.  
We praise you for your creation and its reliable rhythms.  
We praise you, too,  
for Christ and his ministry that we seek to continue;  
we seek the light of the hope he offers.  
Break into these days of turmoil and uncertainty  
with the mercy and grace we meet in Jesus.  
By the power of your Spirit, lighten our hearts in this time of worship,  
and help us brighten the lives we touch this week in Jesus' name.  
And so we praise you, O God,  
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of all life,  
and offer you all glory and honour,  
this day and every day, now and evermore.  
In the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
We pray. Amen.

**Opening Hymn #231: “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross” (V 1,2,4)**

When I survey the wondrous cross  
on which the Prince of glory died,  
my richest gain I count but loss,  
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,  
save in the death of Christ my God;  
all the vain things that charm me most,  
I sacrifice them to his blood.

Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

**Call to Confession**

Prepare the way of the Lord!  
Let us make our confession to God.

**Prayer of Confession**

**There are many times we think we love you well, O God.  
But upon hearing your call to love you with all our heart,  
and all our mind, and all our strength,  
we confess that our love for you is a diluted love,  
made insipid and flat by lesser loyalties and a divided heart.  
Our love seems pure only for brief moments;  
soon our affections are drawn away.  
How easily our devotion dies.  
Forgive us;  
in deep mercy spare us,  
despite our lost first love for you;  
in grace rekindle our love for you  
in seeing anew Jesus’ love for us.  
Amen.**

**Assurance of Pardon**

Hear the good news:  
This saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance,  
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.  
He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,  
that we might be dead to sin, and alive to all that is good.  
I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ,

you are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God.

### **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.**

### **Music Ministry: "I Feel the Spirit" by Choir**

### **Responsive Reading**

**Question 140. What is meant by the closing doxology, "for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever?"**

This clause is a later addition; a response of the early church in praise of God to whom we ascribe the kingdom, power, and glory.

1 Chr 29:11,13, Ps 145:13, Rev 5:12

**Question 141. What is the meaning of the little word "Amen"?**

To cite the Heidelberg Catechism, "Amen" means that "this shall truly and certainly be. My prayer is much more certainly heard by God than I am persuaded in my heart that I desire such things from him" (Answer 129).

1 Chr 16:36, Isa 65:16, 2 Cor 1:20, 1 Jn 5:14-15

### **Children's Hymn #375: "Fairest Lord Jesus" (V 1,2,4)**

Fairest Lord Jesus,  
Lord of all creation,  
Jesus of God and Mary the Son,  
Thee will I cherish,  
Thee will I honor,  
O thou, my soul's delight and crown.

Fair are the meadows,  
fairer still the woodlands,  
robed in the verdure and blooming of spring:  
Jesus is fairer,  
Jesus is purer  
he makes the saddest heart to sing.

All fairest beauty,  
 Heavenly and earthly,  
 Wondrously, Jesus, is found in Thee;  
 None can be nearer,  
 Fairer, or dearer,  
 Than Thou my Savior art to me.

### Children's Lesson

#### Prayer for illumination (Congregant Prepared)

#### Scripture

##### John 11:1-44

**11** Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. **2** It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. **3** So the sisters sent to him, saying, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." **4** But when Jesus heard it he said, "This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

**5** Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. **6** So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. **7** Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." **8** The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" **9** Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. **10** But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." **11** After saying these things, he said to them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him." **12** The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover." **13** Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. **14** Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus has died, **15** and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." **16** So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

**17** Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, **19** and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. **20** So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." **23** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." **24** Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, **26** and everyone who lives and

believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

<sup>28</sup> When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." <sup>29</sup> And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. <sup>31</sup> When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. <sup>32</sup> Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." <sup>33</sup> When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. <sup>34</sup> And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept. <sup>36</sup> So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" <sup>37</sup> But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." <sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup> The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

## Sermon

The book of John records seven signs, seven miracles that took place during Jesus's public ministry. In today's scripture we are looking at the seventh sign, and this is the greatest of all of the miracles that he performs in the Gospel of John. When Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead it clearly shows his divine nature, and this is a miracle that many of us can relate to in a sense. For many of us we have shared the feelings that Martha or Mary have felt at the loss of a loved one in our lives.

I am sure that almost everyone here today has visited someone at the hospital or in a nursing home, almost everyone here has been to a funeral or grave side ceremony. Everyone here has experienced the death of someone they know in their lives. We all understand that death is the eventual end of this life on earth. We know that people will die of old age, disease, accidents, and crime. We know that we do not get to determine the time of our death, it can come when we are young or when we are old.

Because of this we can all relate to the emotions that are shared by the two sisters of Lazarus after his death. We can empathize with their sense of loss, with the deep sense of mourning that they express. We will all share in this experience many times in our lives as we experience

deaths, as we attend funerals and as we go through the grieving that takes place as we process the loss of friends, family and other loved ones in our lives.

Yet even in all of this familiarity there is something radically different in the experience of Martha and Mary. The death, funeral and burial of their brother Lazarus is not the end. Instead of ending in tears, grief, and mourning there is a twist, Jesus raises his friend from the dead and it is with this miracle that Jesus defeats the one enemy of all mankind fears.

This is an incredible message of hope for Christians. Even though we will face grief and loss in this life, even though we will face our own mortality and earthly end, Christ has promised a glorious resurrection for all of his people.

Jesus's resurrection of Lazarus is an interesting story because it teaches us a little more about Jesus's life while he walked on earth. We know that he was human like us, he had the same human needs for sustenance that we do, he had to eat, drink and sleep. However, he also had the social needs of mankind, he needed to pray, to have social interactions, to have friends. His disciples were his friends, these were men who spent three years living with him, learning from him, and sharing in all the different aspects of his life.

He also had a friend circle that was outside the disciples, people who were faithful to Jesus, people who were loyal and supportive even if they were not members of the chosen twelve. Martha and Mary were two of these people. These two sisters lived in Bethany, a small town that was just a short distance away from Jerusalem. Jesus had stopped at their home before to rest and to teach. Their brother Lazarus is called a friend of Jesus. An interesting side note, the name Lazarus means 'God helps' and this is something we see come true in this Scripture.

In the very beginning of the Scripture, we learn that Lazarus is sick, we do not know what kind of illness he has, only that he is sick enough that Martha and Mary feel that they need to send a message to Jesus that 'he whom you love is sick.' Notice that this is not some random stranger in a crowd, this is not like the times that Jesus heals a beggar or someone who has come to seek him out. Lazarus is someone close to him, someone that he has a connection with, and this is going to add to the depth of the message here.

Martha and Mary know of Jesus's powers and his grace, mercy, and compassion – so they send for him knowing that he will respond because of his relationship with them and with Lazarus. They send for him expecting him to arrive quickly and heal their brother. However, Jesus has another plan, Jesus says to his disciples, 'This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'

Remember we are fully aware of how this Scripture ends, we know that he is saying that the sickness that Lazarus has will not end in his permanent earthly death, but that God will raise him from the dead and by doing so reveal the glory of God to those who witness this sign. The disciples do not know this though, so when Jesus says this to them and then does not go to visit Lazarus and his sisters, they likely thought that Lazarus would just get better on his own.

So, it was probably a bit of the shock to the disciples when just two days later Jesus tells them it is time to go see Lazarus. His disciples remind him that it is not safe for him in Bethany, because Bethany is part of Judea, and the religious leaders of Judea are hostile to Jesus and his teachings. They remind him that the last time he was in Judea that they tried to have him stoned. Little do they know that this will be Jesus's last trip into Judea, because at the end of this trip he will be arrested and crucified.

He tells the disciples that his friend Lazarus is asleep, and that Jesus must go and wake him up. We know what being asleep means, this is not the first time in the Scriptures that 'falling asleep' is used to describe death. Paul often references those who are dead as sleeping and even the word cemetery alludes to this. Cemetery derives from the Ancient Greek term "koimeterion," which literally means "sleeping place." This is especially true for Christians, all who have the Lord as their Saviour, who are resting in cemeteries will one day awake into their new bodies and eternal life.

Yet even in this, the disciples would not be sure about what Jesus means. They would simply assume that Lazarus's illness had gotten worse, and he had fallen into a deep sleep or maybe a coma from his illness and now Jesus has decided to heal him. Jesus decides it is time to speak plainly to his disciples and quite bluntly tells them that Lazarus is dead. This would have stunned them, they know how much Jesus cared for Lazarus and his sisters, and yet they had just witnessed Jesus delay his trip to go and heal Lazarus, to the point that he had died.

Jesus has a purpose in his delay in going to Lazarus though. He tells the disciples, 'And for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' The disciples would witness something in Bethany, at the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus that would bolster their faith.

When they arrive in Bethany, they do not find a very sick Lazarus, instead they discover that he had been laid in the tomb for four days. In the area at the time burial was done very quickly after death, in the heat the body would decompose quickly. Even if Jesus had left immediately upon receiving the message from Martha and Mary, he likely would not have made it to Bethany in time, but he had delayed for his own reasons.

By the time Jesus arrived Lazarus's body would have been well into the process of decomposition. There would have been no doubt about the fact that he was indeed dead and not just in a coma. Furthermore, the Jewish belief at the time was that the soul of the deceased would stay near the body for 3 days, it was at the fourth day that the soul would depart for good, because the body had decomposed. So, Jesus had arrived too late.

Truthfully this is often when we see God do his work, when the situation seems beyond help, when it is too late from our perspective, when all hope is gone, and we have exhausted all of our options. Just when we believe the situation is beyond salvation God steps in and does something to change the situation, through his grace, mercy, compassion and love we are given

hope. God brings us peace. This is what Jesus will do for Marta and Mary, however, first he will mourn.

When Jesus arrives it is Martha who goes out to meet him. This echoes the last time we saw Martha and Mary meet Jesus. Martha was busily at work while Mary waited at the feet of Jesus. Martha is a woman of action, practical minded. She approaches Jesus and without missing a beat simply states the truth as she sees it, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' This is not an accusation, just a statement of fact, filled with sadness and regret.

Martha has accepted that if Jesus would have been there, he could have healed Lazarus, but he was not there and what is done is done. Yet she has not given up all hope, she knows that Jesus has a special relationship with God the Father, she knows that he has performed many amazing miracles all around the region, she knows that he can do the unimaginable. We see her hope in her words, 'But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.'

There is a lesson for all of us in Jesus's response to Martha. He responds to her in the exact same way that she approached him, plainly and practically minded. He does not give her a proverb or a riddle to figure out. Jesus tells Martha, 'Your brother will rise again.'

Martha responds with a wonderful confession of faith, but also with words that show us her limited understanding of who Jesus is. She says, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Martha knows that God has the power to raise the dead, she knows the teachings of Daniel about the promise of resurrection.

**Daniel 12:2**

**<sup>2</sup> And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.**

She knows that the faithful of God will be raised from the dead on the day of judgement and join him in the eternal kingdom of heaven, but she believes that the day is still along ways away.

Marta knows of Jesus's special relationship with God, but she does not yet recognize that he is indeed God. Jesus chooses at this time to reveal to her who he is when he tells her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'

Ask yourselves the same question today, 'Do you believe this?' If you are a true follower of Jesus Christ, you will never die. Even when we suffer an earthly death and our body is decayed, we will never be dead, for we shall be in the presence of God awaiting the time for Jesus to awaken the dead from their slumber. In fact, what Jesus is about to do with Lazarus is the same event that we will all take part in at the sounding of the last trumpet in the book of Revelation. We will rise from the dead as Jesus promised in his words to Martha. He also makes it clear what the requirement is when he asks her 'Do you believe?'. The only way to salvation in Christ

is 'Faith Alone'. This is why Christians are called to live by faith, trusting in Him fully for everything in our lives. He knows we will be distracted by the things of the world, but he will remind us constantly when he brings up the question, 'Do you believe?' that it is our faith that matters, nothing else.

Martha believes! She affirms that she knows that he is the Christ, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world. In her confession she affirms that he is divinely sent, he is one with God the Father, and he is the one who was prophesized to come into the world since before the world was created. Martha at this moment sees Jesus for who he really is, he is no longer the prophet carpenter from Galilee, but the Messiah.

Next is Mary. Martha goes to get her and tell her that Jesus is seeking her. When everyone gathered in mourning saw Mary leave then followed her, assuming she was going to the tomb, but instead she went to Jesus and fell once again at his feet. To understand this fully you need to know that it was tradition to gather and mourn for many days when a loved one had died, so the crowd that had followed Mary and saw her fall at the feet of Jesus would have been a large crowd.

In front of this crowd Mary too acknowledges that Jesus has the power to heal when she says 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' Mary is pouring out her sorrow and pain as she weeps at the feet of Jesus.

In this display of sorrow and suffering by Martha, Mary and the gathered mourners, Jesus is moved, his spirit is troubled. As Jesus stands there in the presence of death, the loss of one of God's children, and experiences the loss that all of his family and friends are experiencing, he is greatly troubled. Life is broken, it is not as God intended in the garden of Eden. Things are not as they should be and the work of the devil and death is present, even in the ones that Jesus holds dear.

Jesus asks Mary, 'Where have you laid him?' Interestingly this is the same question we will see asked by Mary Magdalene when she finds the empty tomb after Jesus's resurrection. The crowds lead Jesus to the tomb where Lazarus was lain.

Seeing the tomb, 'Jesus Wept'. We all know this experience, standing at the gravestone or memorial of a lost loved one, overrun by grief and loss, when we recognize that the person is no longer among us here on Earth. 'Jesus Wept' is both the shortest and one of the most profound verses of Scripture found in the Bible. The Greek word here to describe his weeping is not the same word that was used for Martha or Mary or the crowd of mourners. The weeping here is best described as a true heartfelt sadness, a raw sorrow. Jesus is sharing in the emotion of Mary; he is feeling the genuine hurt in this moment and weight of sins curse on mankind. Even though he knows that he will raise Lazarus from the dead, he is heartbroken at this moment. In this moment Jesus is showing his compassion, his empathy, and his love.

Those who were gathered there said 'See how he loved him!' Jesus is an example to all of us of the type of compassion we can share when others grieve. Throughout our lives people we know will experience loss in many ways. Jesus here is an example to us in how we can comfort people who experience loss. We do not need to be there to 'fix' the situation, Jesus could have raised Lazarus from anywhere in the world, he is God. Yet he chose to go there to share in the pain and the loss. We need to be there to share in the pain and the loss even if we too know there will be a brighter future.

Jesus weeps with them, even though he knows there will be a brighter future. He is going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus's body is in the tomb, with the heavy stone laid across the front, the same way a stone will be lain across the opening to the tomb his body will be placed in. Jesus orders that the stone be moved.

Martha even full of faith has doubts, she comments on the rot and stench that will have taken over the body after being in the tomb for four days. In her mind and in the minds of everyone present Lazarus's body is beyond resurrection. His soul has moved on, his body is beyond repair.

Jesus rebukes her and reminds her that he is going to show her the glory of God. The stone is removed, and Jesus dopes like he does so often, He prays. In doing so Jesus shows us an example of how we are to live, in prayer. He also wants to point to God as the source of the miracle, he knew that His Father would answer his prayer and bring Lazarus back from the dead.

'Lazarus come forth!'. These words changed everything. Imagine that you had been one of the mourners, gathered for four days weeping and mourning the loss of your loved one and Jesus calls them from the grave. You have experienced all of this pain and loss and when Jesus calls out you see your loved one standing at the door of their now empty tomb, not dead, but alive!

Lazarus came out of the tomb still wrapped in the clothes of death; clothes that had been prepared with herbs to help quell the scent of decomposition. Jesus tells those gathered to go and remove the wraps and welcome him back into the land of the living, setting him free from his bounds of death.

This sign, the resurrection of Lazarus, points all of us to a deeper truth. It does not just point to Jesus raising the man Lazarus, it does not just point to the faith of Mary and Martha or the gathered crowd, it does not just point to the weight of sin and the death it brings to our lives. This sign points to the one who raised Lazarus from the dead, this all points to Jesus. This Scripture is about Christ and foreshadows many of the things we will see in his coming death. Jesus will die, he will be buried, and he too will leave his tomb alive. Although when Jesus rises up from the grave it will be for all of eternity, he will have defeated death, once and for all.

Scripture calls Jesus the, 'first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.' There were others who have been raised from the dead, but Jesus is the first to have an everlasting and unending life

after His resurrection. Jesus is the first of God's harvest. He is the key to the final stage of God's plan for redemption that is reviled in the book of Revelation.

Remember that Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in Christ, even though they die, they will live. In this life we grieve for the loved ones we lose; we feel that sharp sting of the sin of mankind and the curse of death. But when we remember this story of the resurrection of Lazarus we should be comforted.

We know that the day will come when the dead hears the voice of the Lord and will live. The day will come when the graveyards and cemeteries will be emptied of the faithful. They will give up their dead who will once again walk in new life.

Those of you who have true faith will live forever with God in the kingdom of Heaven. Those who seek after Christ in Faith alone, will be saved and enjoy the everlasting gift of redemption. Through the Holy Spirit in His people God is at work, bringing them to new life, reborn from our spiritual death into spiritual life as we learn to walk in the light with Him. He works at restoring us, healing us, removing the curse of sin from our lives and in doing so brings peace and joy into our hearts. The resurrection of Lazarus was just the beginning of something much greater which is still to come.

Jesus said to Martha, 'everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?'

Do you Believe?

Let us pray,

**Give Us Comfort that We Will Never See Death**

Lord God, heavenly Father,  
 your dear Son, our Redeemer Christ Jesus said,  
 'Whoever remains in my word will never see death.'  
 Pour out your Holy Spirit into our hearts  
 that your Son's Word may come to us  
 and that we may hear it, hold it,  
 and commit ourselves to it with our whole heart,  
 and in the midst of death find comfort  
 that we will never see eternal death,  
 for the sake of your Son,  
 our Redeemer Christ Jesus.

***Source: Veit Dietrich, d. 1549, Lent 5***

**Hymn #201: “Grace Greater Than Our Sin” (V1,3,4)**

Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,  
 Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!  
 Yonder on Calvary's mount out-poured—  
 There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.

Refrain:

Grace, grace, God's grace,  
 Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;  
 Grace, grace, God's grace,  
 Grace that is greater than all our sin!

Dark is the stain that we cannot hide;  
 What can avail to wash it away?  
 Look! There is flowing a crimson tide,  
 Whiter than snow you may be today. [Refrain]

Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace,  
 Freely bestowed on all who believe!  
 All who are longing to see His face,  
 Will you this moment His grace receive? [Refrain]

**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](mailto: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****(Congregant Prepared)****Closing Hymn #313: “Oh Worship the King” (V1,2,5)**

Oh worship the King, all glorious above;  
 oh gratefully sing God's power and God's love,  
 our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of Days,

pavilioned in splendour and girded with praise.

Oh tell of God's might, oh sing of God's grace,  
 whose robe is the light, whose canopy space;  
 whose chariots of wrath the deep thunderclouds form,  
 and dark is God's path on the wings of the storm.

O measureless Might, unchangeable Love,  
 while angels delight to hymn thee above,  
 thy ransomed creation, in glory ablaze,  
 in true adoration shall sing to thy praise.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

O God in whom we live and move and have our being,  
 We come to you in prayer,  
 trusting that you are with us in the ups and downs,  
 the joys and sorrows of these challenging days.  
 We give you thanks for every sign of your presence with us,  
 for every unexpected kindness,  
 every word of comfort or encouragement,  
 every sign of courage in the face of injustice,  
 every hopeful step towards reconciliation amid conflict,  
 and healing in the face of disease or danger.  
 Thank you for your presence with us in all things.

Lord, in this unpredictable world,  
 we pray for those whose lives are caught up in reckless terror or planned oppression,  
 and for those living in places where they are afraid to walk freely;  
 we remember all who find the uncertainty of our times overwhelming and discouraging  
 May those living in fear courage to go on in your company.

As the stories of Jesus turn us toward the cross, O God,  
 we pray for those who also walk the road of suffering.  
 We remember before you  
 those whose lives have been plunged into sorrow or despair  
 through tragic death,  
 through critical illness or chronic pain.  
 and through complicated problems that seem to have no end  
 May all these know your comfort and compassion.

O God, the stories of Jesus show us  
 that he faced the clamour of many demands  
 and the pressure of many critics.

We pray for all those who are exhausted these days,  
juggling more demands and fewer resources in their work or at home,  
for those who cannot seem to get it right, whatever they do,  
and for all those facing unfair criticism and expectations  
in the responsibilities they bear on behalf of others.  
May all these be strengthened by your Spirit of justice and mercy.

O God, we need the embrace of your presence, each in our own way.  
Anoint us with your Spirit of healing and hope,  
and bring peace to our lives and this world you love  
In the name of he who died upon the cross for us, Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

**Benediction**

Sisters and brothers,  
let us claim the freedom Christ gives us  
by his self-giving on the cross.  
May he enable us to serve together  
in faith, hope, and love.  
Go in peace and serve the Lord