

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, May 28th, 2023
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Holy Spirit of God
Day of Pentecost
Ezekiel 37:1-14 & Acts 2:1-21

Welcome

Bible Trivia

Which prophet was instructed to build a model city of Jerusalem, set siege to it, and lie on his left side for 390 days and his right side for 40 days while being tied up in ropes?

Select one:

- a. Ezekiel
- b. Jeremiah
- c. Isaiah
- d. Baruch

Announcements

Bible Trivia

Which prophet was instructed to build a model city of Jerusalem, set siege to it, and lie on his left side for 390 days and his right side for 40 days while being tied up in ropes?

Select one:

- a. Ezekiel
- b. Jeremiah
- c. Isaiah
- d. Baruch

Next week's Question:

God's instruction to "be strong and courageous" is repeated 6 times in this book:

Select one:

- a. Deuteronomy
- b. Joshua
- c. Judges
- d. Ruth

Call to Worship

The love of God has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us;
we dwell in him and he in us.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples.

Sing to him, sing praises to him,
and speak of all his marvelous works.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

O God whom we long to know,
burning fire within our souls,
grant to us the tongues like fire,
the sound of rushing wind, your descending Holy Spirit,
that in knowing your Word we might know your presence,
that in following your ways we might live in your light.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Opening Hymn #411: "Stand Up and Bless the Lord"

Stand up and bless the Lord;
God's people now rejoice;
stand up and bless the Lord your God
with heart and soul and voice.

Though high above all praise,
above all blessing high,
who would not fear God's holy name,
and praise and magnify?

God is our strength and song;
now is salvation ours.
God's love in Christ we now proclaim
with all our ransomed powers.

Call to Confession

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

Prayer of Confession

**Almighty God,
 you poured your Spirit upon gathered disciples
 creating bold tongues, open ears,
 and a new community of faith.
 We confess that we hold back the force of your Spirit among us.
 We do not listen for your word of grace,
 speak the good news of your love,
 or live as a people made one in Christ.
 Have mercy on us, O God.
 Transform our timid lives by the power of your Spirit,
 and fill us with a flaming desire to be your faithful people,
 doing your will for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Assurance of Pardon

In Christ you were marked with the Holy Spirit,
 a seal of our redemption in Christ.
 By the power of the Holy Spirit
 we become dead in sin and alive anew in Christ.
 May you be filled with the Holy Spirit
 so that you may have hope of new life,
 may grow in your knowledge of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 and may experience the incomparable power of God
 that raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

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: "Faith to Carry On"

Responsive Reading

Numbers 11:24-30

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent.

²⁵ **Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.**

²⁶ Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp.

²⁷ **And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”**

²⁸ And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.”

²⁹ **But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”** ³⁰ **And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.**

Children’s Hymn: “O Be Careful Little Eyes What You See”

O be careful little eyes what you see
 O be careful little eyes what you see
 For the Father up above, is looking down in love
 O be careful little eyes what you see

O be careful little ears what you hear
 O be careful little ears what you hear
 For the Father up above is looking down in love
 O be careful little ears what you hear

O be careful little mouth what you say
 O be careful little mouth what you say
 For the Father up above is looking down in love
 O be careful little mouth what you say

O be careful little hands what you do
 O be careful little hands what you do
 For the Father up above is looking down in love
 O be careful little hands what you do

O be careful little feet where you go
 O be careful little feet where you go
 For the Father up above is looking down in love
 O be careful little feet where you go

Children’s Lesson

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

Ezekiel 37:1-14

37 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ² And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³ And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army.

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.' ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD."

Acts 2:1-21

2 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." ¹² And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one

another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter’s Sermon at Pentecost

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “ ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;

¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;

²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Sermon

In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, he is taken in a vision by the Spirit of the Lord into a valley that is filled with dry bones. Picture a huge dry, barren, wasteland, covered in the skeletons of human beings that had all been piled together in this place for some reason. As Ezekiel is led by the Spirit across this Valley all he sees is human skeletons and a dead, dry land. It is truly a disturbing and strange vision. We can only begin to imagine some of the thoughts that must have been going through the prophet’s mind as he looked over the bones and the valley, but one thing it likely did is made him very aware of the frailty and shortness of human life.

Then as he is looking over this valley of death, a voice ring’s out, **“Son of man, can these bones live?”**.

There is only one possible answer to this, dead is dead. These bones of the dead have been collected here in this dry barren wasteland for some time, so there is no way for them to come back to life.

Dead is dead, unless something supernatural, unless something extraordinary happens what is dead will always stay dead. Only a miracle could bring the dead bones of this wasteland back to life and Ezekiel knew this! Ezekiel knew that God alone could actually bring the bones back to life, so he does not say, 'dead is dead' instead he says, **"O Lord God, you know."**

This is the truth that every Christian struggles with constantly in our lives. We look at all of the things happening around us and we know what the worldly outcome is, when know that 'dead is dead' yet even when we are confronted by circumstances and situations which seem almost guaranteed we can still have hope because we know that God alone has the knowledge and power to determine the outcome to be anything that he desires. In every situation of our life that we go through we need to accept that God alone knows.

What makes this experience of Ezekiel in this valley of death important for all Christians is what takes place. Take note that God does not say 'watch this' and snap his fingers and bring all of the bones to life, even though that is something he could do, instead he does something else, he has Ezekiel take part in the miracle of the valley.

It is Ezekiel who speaks to the bones, God gives him the words and he speaks to them, he delivers the message of God to the dead. And it is that message of God, that word of God, spoken through the mouth of the living prophet that brings the dead back to life.

This is an essential concept of Christianity, God gives the world to his people, and they speak the Word to the spiritually dead, and that Word of God bring the dead back to spiritual life and into relationship with God.

Ezekiel does not add his interpretation of the words that are given to him, he does not soften them, or try to make them more palatable for the bones, he does not have anything new to say to them. He simply takes the words that God has given him to speak and speaks them over the dead. It is the Word of God alone that brings the bones back to life, not anything that is done by Ezekiel.

Now before you get it in your heads that this is just the jobs of preachers and prophets let's take a look at what the word prophet means. The normal word in Hebrew that is used to mean prophet is 'nabi' and it is the form of a verb which means 'to bubble forth' like a fountain or a spring. So, prophet means someone who announces or pours out the Word of God to those around them.

The English word prophet comes from the Greek word 'profetes' which in classical Greek means 'one who speaks for another' and in Biblical Greek 'means one who speaks for God'. Simple meaning that anyone who speaks and acts according to the Word of God is a prophet. The problem was that beginning in the time of the Judges in the Old Testament, the leaders of the people and the Church had reached a point that they no

longer reflected the Word of God in their lives, so the 'Prophetic Order' was born, people who came along and lived and spoke according to the will of God as all of mankind was intended to do.

We are all called to be prophets, to live and speak according to the Word of God as we share the Gospel. Two times in the New Testament, The Gospel is referred to as 'Logos Akoees', 'The Word of Hearing'. The spreading of the gospel of God requires someone to share it and someone to hear it.

John 6 teaches us an important lesson about the Word of God and the sharing of the Gospel.

John 6:60-66

⁶⁰ When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?" ⁶¹ But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? ⁶² Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

⁶⁶ After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

People who had walked with Jesus, people who had heard him speak, heard him teach, seen his miracles, walked away from him, because they could not accept his teachings. The key to understanding this is verse 63, it is 'the spirit who gives life', In Hebrew it is 'ruach' which is wind or breath, in Greek it is 'pneu' which means wind or ghost and this spirit, wind, breath or Ghost is the same here in Ezekiel 37 and in Acts chapter two.

The power of the Holy Spirit is what is at work here in this valley filled with dried out dead bones and in the crowds gathered in the book of Acts. The power of the Holy Spirit is what Christians are sharing when they live their lives according to the Word of God and when they share the Word of God with other people like the prophets of the Old Testament.

In that valley God is showing us all through his experience with Ezekiel that it is his Word alone spoken through the lips of his messengers that bring the dead back to life. Ezekiel is told,

Ezekiel 37:4-6

⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ And I will lay

sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

The bones hear what the prophet Ezekiel spoke, and they come back together. They are fleshly beings; they look like people, but they have no life in them. So, Ezekiel is instructed to.

Ezekiel 37:9

⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath, Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.”

The breath is called upon these fleshly beings and when it enters them, they are brought back to life.

This image in the valley of dry bones reflects what occurs in the very beginning.

Genesis 2:7

⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Adam is formed of the world, the dust, and there is no life in him, no spirit in him until God breathes into him that ‘breath of life’.

This is why those dry bones had been calling out, **‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’** Apart from God they have no life. Apart from God people are just fleshly things, falling into the lusts and desires of the flesh, they are dead, it is only with God that they come to life. This is why in the final part of this vision the last prophecy of Ezekiel in the valley is given.

Ezekiel 37:12-14

¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.”

Those who have been raised to life, belong to God. They are people who acknowledge where their salvation comes from, and they seek to praise and worship God as their Lord.

That lesson given to Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones is just as true today as it was in the Old Testament. There is no life apart from the Spirit of God. The eternal life of mankind began in the garden of Eden with that first breath of life, breathed into Adam. Yet, when mankind turns away from God that life departs. Sure physical, mental, emotional life continues on this planet for some time, but the spiritual life, the life in relationship with God, the only life that matters is missing. Without the breath of life given by God we are like those fleshly creatures that were first put together in the valley of bones. Looking and acting as if we were alive but in fact still dead, flesh and bone, but no spirit.

The valley of dry bones was a reminder for all the Israelites that without God there is no life and that is the same message that is being shared in the book of Acts on the day of Pentecost, the church itself has no life without the power of God, without his breath.

The Holy Spirit is God's breath in the church, without it the church is no different than the raised-up bodies in the valley of dry bones. **'Can these bones live?'** is a very relevant question in the modern world the same way it was a very relevant question to the early Church.

The early Church faced persecution. They would gather behind closed and locked doors, often secretly because they were being forcibly hunted. They were a ragtag group on the run from both the roman authorities and the Sanhedrin. They were not rich and powerful; they had no real connections with anyone of power or authority or influence. They were not made up of great scholars, or religiously powerful people. They had no wealth to speak of, in fact Jesus himself had said that he did not have a place to lay down his head. When Jesus had been crucified the whole movement had been shattered, they all went into hiding and started to scatter so that they would not be caught and punished by the authorities.

The early church was in that valley of dry bones, a place in which it was only the power of God that could bring them to life. So, whether it was ancient Israel, or the early church, or the church today we need to acknowledge that it is only through the Spirit of God that we are brought to life, Jesus Christ needs to be our cornerstone.

Without the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit, there is no life in the church, it simple becomes an organization of the world, focused on worldly things. Let's look at the story of Pentecost and how it was the coming alive of the early church and what that means for the church today.

Firstly, there were no denominations, there were no worldly levels of organization or politics involved, only the Holy Spirit, this is what we mean when we say the Universal Catholic Church in the Apostle's Creed. Christians are believers and followers of Christ first, denominations are worldly creations. Christians are people who follow Christ, who repent and who try to live their lives according to his Word. People who live, act, and speak the Word of God in this world. People who have the breath of life in them.

Today's Christian is surrounded by a valley of dry bones, people who have fleshly life, but no spiritual life and God's question to us is the same as it was to Ezekiel, '**Can these bones live?**'.

It just comes in a more complex form:

"Can we carry out the task Jesus Christ has given to us to spread the Gospel?"

"Can we become the kind of people and community he has called us to be, the salt and light?"

"Can we honor and love each other, and our enemies, to such an extent that the world will know we belong to Christ?"

"Can we reach out to others regardless of who they are, what they look like, what life has done to them or what station in life they occupy and share the truth of who God is in our lives and could be in theirs?"

'Can these bones live?'

And the answer is the same as it was in the days of Ezekiel. There is no spiritual life, no spiritual work that can be accomplished, without the presence of the breath of God, the Holy Spirit.

On the day of Pentecost describe in Acts chapter two, a group of people who were diverse in character, in ethnicity, in social, economic, and political standing, people who had different levels of knowledge about Scripture and different levels of faith were all brought together. The fishermen, the tax collector and their friends, all normal everyday people, began to tell the world that Jesus Christ was the Lord of all, they became prophets. When Peter stood and raised his voice to the crowd he had a new power with him, this was not the same Peter we saw stumble in his faith, this was not the same Peter who denied Christ. This was a newly reborn Peter, one who faithfully and truthfully pours forth the truth of Who God is on a crowd that had no reason to accept what he was saying. A Peter who would conclude his teaching with a simple declaration:

Acts 2:21

²¹ And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

When the day of Pentecost began the whole world was a valley of dried bones, yet after the Word of God was shared from the mouth of a believer the explosion of Christianity across the world was started. With Peter's sermon that day, what is impossible for man

started through the work of the Holy Spirit, the great commission began, the journey of the Gospel to every corner of the earth.

It is easy for us to look back on the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts as a one-time event, a strange day that took place long, long ago, an event that has absolutely no relevance to the world we live in and the modern church. Yet, this is the event that the modern church should be constantly looking back to when they face a world that is hostile to God. When Christians feel powerless, when they feel like they are being turned away at every instance, when people refuse the reconciling love of Christ, when denominations wander away into the ways of the world, when we look around us, at family, at friends, at strangers, at organizations and governments and an entire world of dead dry bones, we should understand that question, '**Can these bones live?**'.

And we should recall that vision of Ezekiel in the valley of dried bones where the nation of Israel, God's people, were lying dead, cut off from the hope of God, until the Word of God was shared with them truthfully, without any of Ezekiel's thoughts or ideas and the people were brought back to life. This is what Christians have discovered over and over throughout Church history, when things seem their darkest it is only the power of the Holy Spirit, the power of God that can bring God into the lives of His people.

Every Christian goes through these times, the same way that the Church has. There will be times in your life when you feel as if God is far away, times when you might feel cut off from the Holy Spirit. There may be times when you sense that you are lost in the midst of a dry desert where there is no hope and no meaning. There will be times in your own life when you might ask yourself, 'is this all there is in life?'

It is in these times we should be asking, '**Can these bones live?**', and opening ourselves up to the Holy Spirit. It is at these times that we should remember that the day of Pentecost, the day that the Holy Spirit rushed over those people gathered at Peter's sermon was never intended to be a one-day event, it was meant to be a lifelong beginning, an eternal and dominating force in the lives of the church and in the lives of the faithful. When we have moments of doubt and weakness, when we have times of trials and tribulations we need to go back to the cornerstone, back to Jesus Christ and back to the Holy Spirit, to give us guidance.

The power of the Holy Spirit in someone's life is different for every believer. Every faithful Christian undergoes their own personal Pentecost, times where they experience the power and presence of God in their lives. It might not be the sudden ability to speak a foreign language, but it is something that gives them the strength to share their faith, their testimony, to act as a prophet in a place that they may have never thought that they would.

Perhaps the most well know prophet of the modern world is a young woman who was born in Yugoslavia. Her parents were Albanian, and she had a dream as a young woman

of living and serving God in India. She felt the pull of the Holy Spirit on her to go out and share the Word of God in her life, so she sought permission of the covenant she was living in to go out and live among the people in the slums of Calcutta, a place that had nothing.

With absolutely nothing of value and no formal education or training this young woman eventually became the founder of 81 schools in India, 35 medical dispensaries, 28 family planning centers, 67 leprosy clinics, 28 homes for abandoned children and 432 hospices for the dying.

Have you ever thought, 'What can I do? I am only one person.' I have no great power, no great wealth, no great teachings, I am not a great speaker or a great teacher. Remember that if you share the Word of God in your life you are a prophet. Sister Theresa was asked, 'What can one person do?' She replied, 'If you cannot feed a million people... feed one!'

If you cannot share the Word of God with a million people, or a thousand people, or a hundred people or even ten people, share it with one. Remember the valley of dry bones and know that with the power of God one person is capable of changing the whole world. In the hands of God one Church can change an entire generation.

When you face times of doubt, times of trial, time of trouble, when family and friends and the whole world seem to deny the truth of God. Remember the question that was asked of Ezekiel.

'Can these bones live?'

And then remember the words of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 19:26

²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

As we leave here today ask yourselves are your bones living? Is the breath of life in you? Are you ready to walk in this world as a prophet, as someone who is willing to speak and act out the truth of the gospel in their lives? Are you willing to help bring this dead valley of dried bones to life through the power of the Holy Spirit as you walk as the salt and light of this community?

Let us Pray,

Lord God Almighty,
shaper and ruler of all creatures,
we pray for your great mercy,
that you guide us towards you,

for we cannot find our way.
 And guide us to your will,
 to the need of our soul,
 for we cannot do it ourselves.
 And make our mind steadfast in your will
 and aware of our soul's need.
 Strengthen us against the temptations of the devil,
 and remove from us all lust and every unrighteousness,
 and shield us against our foes, seen and unseen.
 Teach us to do your will,
 that we may inwardly love you before all things with a pure mind.
 For you are our maker and our redeemer,
 our help, our comfort,
 our trust, our hope;
 praise and glory be to you now and forever. Amen

Source: Alfred the Great, 9th century

Hymn: "His Mercy Is More"

What love could remember no wrongs we have done;
 Omniscient all knowing He counts not their sum
 Thrown into a sea without bottom or shore
 Our sins they are many, His mercy is more

CHORUS

Praise the Lord, His mercy is more. Stronger than darkness new ev'ry morn
 Our sins they are many, His mercy is more.

What patience would wait as we constantly roam
 What Father, so tender, is calling us home
 He welcomes the weakest, the vilest, the poor
 Our sins they are many His mercy is more

Chorus

What riches of kindness He lavished on us;
 His blood was the payment, His life was the cost.
 we stood "neath a debt we could never afford;
 Our sins they are many, His mercy is more

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
(Congregant Prepared)**Closing Hymn #425: "We Praise You, O God"**

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name; glad praises we sing.

We worship you; God ever faithful, we bless you;
through life's storm and tempest our guide you have been.
When perils o'ertake us, you will not forsake us,
and with your help, O Lord, life's battles we win.

With voices united our praises we offer,
and gladly our songs of true worship we raise.
Our sins now confessing, we pray for your blessing;
to you, our great Redeemer, forever be praise.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God,
because we are not strong enough
to pray as we should,
you provide Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit
to intercede for us in power.
In this confidence we ask you
to accept our prayers.

Faithful God,

you formed your church from the despised of the earth
and showed them mercy,
that they might proclaim your salvation to all.
Strengthen those whom you choose today,
that they may faithfully endure all trials
by which you conform your church to the cross of Christ.

Judge of the nations,
you created humanity for salvation,
not destruction,
and sent your Son to guide us
into the way of peace.
Enable people of every race and nation
to accept each other as sisters and brothers,
your children, on whom you lavish honor and favor.

Compassionate God,
your Son gives rest to those weary with heavy burdens.
Heal the sick in body, mind, and spirit.
Lift up the depressed.
Befriend those who grieve.
Comfort the anxious.
Awaken those who damage themselves and others
through the use of any drug.
Fill all people with your Holy Spirit
that they may bear each other's burdens
and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Eternal God,
your love is stronger than death,
and your passion more fierce than the grave.
We rejoice in the lives of those
whom you have drawn into your eternal embrace.
Keep us in joyful communion with them
until we join the saints of every people and nation,
gathered before your throne in ceaseless praise.

God of glory,
you see how all creation groans in labor
as it awaits redemption.
As we work for and await your new creation,
we trust that you will answer our prayers with grace,

through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who live and reigns with You, and the Holy Spirit
as the One true God,
now and forever. Amen.

Benediction

The God of peace,
who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,
make you complete in everything good
so that you may do God's will,
working among us that which is pleasing in God's sight,
through Jesus Christ,
to whom be the glory forever and ever!