***New Vision***

***Community Church***

***and***

***St. Andrews United Church***



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Ministers: The people of St. Andrew’s

Pastor: Rev. Cheryl Bolton

Ministry of Music: Merna Edison

***August 3rd, 2025***

***Summer Vacation***

**WE GATHER**

**Welcome & Announcements**

Good morning and welcome! This summer, we have the joy and blessing of worshiping together as two congregations—united by faith, friendship, and a shared call to follow Christ. Whether you are a member of this church, a visitor from St. Andrew's, or someone seeking a place to pause and reflect, know that you are welcome here.

This season offers us a special gift: Not just a chance to rest or reconnect, but a moment to look ahead together. As we gather, we ask not only where \*we\* are going in our own lives—but where \*God is leading us as a Church\*.

In a time of change and challenge, of new ideas and fresh energy, we turn to Scripture, to prayer, and to one another for guidance.

It’s a call not just for individuals, but for communities—faith communities like ours—to listen, to prepare, and to journey together on the road God is laying before us.

So let us open our hearts, our minds, and our imaginations

as we worship the One who goes before us, walks beside us, and calls us forward in love.

Let us worship God—together.

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Acknowledging Our Kinship -**

Long before those of us who are settlers and those who are descendants of settlers came to this land to live, there were people here. We acknowledge that many Nations of Indigenous people have lived on the land. We give thanks to this land, the territory of the Chonnoton, Haudenosonee, Ashinabwe and Lenee-Lenape. Today, we know our indigenous neighbours as the Munsee-Delaware Nation, Oneida of the Thames and Chippewa of the Thames First Nationsand we commit to the shared stewardship of this land.

**Call to Worship**

The road stretches before us—full of unknown turns, and God-given possibility.  
**We gather to seek direction, to listen, to walk in faith.**

John cried out: “Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.”  
**We are the Church—called to clear the way, to follow the Spirit, to journey together.**

Come, people of God. Come with questions, with hope, with open hearts.  
**We come to worship the One who goes before us and walks beside us.**

**Gathering Hymn - We Are Pilgrims - 595 VU**

**Prayer of Confession**

God of the road ahead, we confess that we have often wandered without seeking your direction. We have followed comfort instead of your call, familiar paths instead of faithful ones.  
**Forgive us, O God. Clear a path through our resistance.  
Make our way straight again.**

You call us to prepare the way, but we cling to what we’ve always done.You stir new insights but we close our eyes in fear or fatigue.

**Forgive us, O God. Open our hearts to your Spirit.  
Renew our courage for the journey.**

Where we have failed to listen—to you, to one another, to those we are called to serve—Speak again with mercy.

**Forgive us, O God. Lead us forward in grace, together, as your Church.**

**Words of Assurance**

Hear the Good News: God does not abandon us to wander aimlessly.  
Even when we’ve taken wrong turns, God meets us on the road,  
Reorients us with love, and calls us forward again in grace.

**Thanks be to God—we are forgiven.  
Thanks be to God—we are not alone.  
Thanks be to God—we walk the path of Christ together. Amen.**

**All God**’**s Children - Road Signs**

**Hymn - Let Us Build a House - 1 MV**

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD**

**Centering Prayer**

**Scripture Reading - Isaiah 40: 3-5, Matthew 3: 1-6**

**Meditation - *Summer Vacation: Where Are We Going?***

**Hymn - Will You Come and Follow Me? 567 VU**

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**Invitation to Offering**

As we prepare the way for the future, we offer what we have:

Time, talent, treasure—

Not just for today’s needs,

But for the road ahead, the roads God is calling us to build.

**Offering Hymn - Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands - 537 VU**

**Dedication**

**A Moment for Concerns and Celebrations**

**Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern**

God of the Way,  
You have been our guide through generations—  
in wilderness and in wonder,  
in exile and in rebuilding,  
in faithfulness and in failure.  
As we look toward what lies ahead,  
we pause to listen for your voice,  
to seek your wisdom,  
to rest in your presence.

We pray for your Church—  
not only this gathering of two congregations,  
but the wider body of Christ throughout the world.  
Where there is joy, may it deepen.  
Where there is struggle, may your Spirit renew.  
Where we are afraid of change, give us courage to trust.  
Help us to ask, honestly and humbly:  
Where are you leading us next, O God?

God of all nations,  
We pray for a world in motion.  
For those fleeing war, poverty, disaster—  
Grant safe passage, welcome, and peace.  
For leaders who shape policies and hold power—  
Grant wisdom rooted in justice, not self-interest.  
We lift up regions in conflict,  
including Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Haiti, and all places known only to you  
where the cries of your people rise.

We pray for a renewed sense of global responsibility:  
to care for creation,  
to protect the vulnerable,  
to seek peace and pursue it.

God of our communities**,**  
As summer brings rest to some and hardship to others,  
we pray for those in our local neighbourhoods:  
For those who are lonely or grieving...  
For those without stable housing, work, or support…  
For children who go hungry when school meals are gone…  
For those dealing with mental health challenges,  
and those carrying invisible burdens.

God of healing and hope**,**  
We pray for those in hospital, those undergoing treatment,  
those recovering or awaiting test results.  
Surround them with comfort, strength, and care.

We give thanks for the beauty of this summer season—  
For gardens blooming, time spent with family,  
moments of rest, and glimpses of your grace in creation.  
May this be a time not only of recreation—but of *re-creation*:  
a time to rediscover what matters most,  
to return to your path,  
and to move forward with love.

Guide us, your people,  
as we seek to walk the road together.  
Make us bold in faith, tender in compassion,  
and generous in spirit.

We ask all this in the name of Jesus, the One who walks beside us,  
and who taught us to pray, saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven…**

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Hymn - Go Make a Difference - 209 MV**

**Blessing and Commissioning -**

The road before us is not yet paved.  
But we are not alone on the journey.  
Go, Church of Christ,  
With eyes open to vision, With hearts open to change,With feet ready to follow.

**We go to prepare the way.  
We go with courage. We go with Christ.**

**Choral Amen**

***Announcements***

**Fresh Start Support Services as we prepare to host our Vacation Bible School from Monday, August 11th through Friday, August 15th at our program space located at 797 Talbot Street in St. Thomas.**

**VBS will run each day from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, and we are in need of some more volunteers to serve as storytellers, craft helpers and snack time helpers.**

**If anyone from your congregation is interested in sharing their time and gifts with us during this meaningful week, we’d love to connect.**

**Those interested in volunteering with us can fill out our volunteer application on our website at**[**www.fsms.ca/volunteer**](https://fsms.us12.list-manage.com/track/click?u=85eed1e4702e0822d658ecf50&id=3071437590&e=7fdd613490)**.**

**Cheryl and her family would love for you to join them at their farm for worship and a barbecue.  Please bring your lawn chairs and sunscreen.  New Vision folks please bring sides and St. Andrew’s folks please bring a dessert.  We will provide the rest.  Rain or shine!  Please remember this is a working farm, wear comfortable clothes and practical shoes.  You may wish to carpool.  
Date: August 31, 2025  
Time: 11:00 a.m  
Address: 1574 Katesville Drive, Kerwood**

