**St.Andrews United Church**



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# February 12th, 2023

**WE GATHER**

**Welcome**

Good morning and welcome!

The chickadee sings and the chickadee knows God, in whose glory life

is bestowed.

The gale wind unsettles and the gale wind knows God, in whose breath

life is bestowed.

The mustard seed sprouts and the mustard seed knows God, in whose

kingdom life is bestowed.

The oak tree rises, the oak tree knows God, in whose care life is

bestowed.

The children see and the children know God, in whose mystery life is

bestowed.

In the works of our hands, may we also show what is written on our

hearts, God’s name lives God’s name grows. Let us Sing and Breathe,

sprout and know that God is good. Let us worship. Amen.

**Announcements**

**Acknowledging Our Kinship -** As we begin today, we acknowledge the history, spirituality, culture, and stewardship of the land of the Indigenous People of this region. We seek to live in respect, peace, and right relations as we live, work, and worship upon Traditional Territory. We are mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

**Candle Lighting -** We light this candle, honouring the One who said “I am the Light.”

**Call To Worship -**

One: To God,

**All: I will sing.**

One: Passionately. Unapologetically. Free.

**All: I will sing.**

One: For You, Spirit, are here. All the time.

**All: I will sing.**

One: As time flows in the endless cycle of the cosmos,  
as this morning’s dawn rakes across the horizon of deep darkness,

**All: I will sing.**

One: As the green blade rises from the root of all life,

as life emerges from the dark mystery of Mother’s womb,

**All: I will sing.**

One: As I try to hold onto you, you dance well beyond my reach.  
As I call, your name answers from the foundation of my being.

**All: I will sing. From my whole heart I will sing your praise,**

One: for we are the work of your hands.

**All: Let us worship.**

**Gathering Hymn - Come and Find the Quiet Centre - 374 VU**

**Prayer of Confession -**

**Eternal and Ever Present One, you are beyond us and before us. You are as familiar as the palm of our hand and beyond our complete understanding. Forgive us when instead of leaning into your wild ways, we limit one another through tamer imitations of life. Forgive our need to confine and control our human siblings into prisons we have made for one another: worthy/worthless, insider/outsider, saved/damned. Liberating Spirit, unsettle us with your extreme grace, that we would venture into the wilds of your redeeming and reconciling love, trusting the mystery that will always be both within and beyond us. In Christ’s name, we ask it.**

(*silent reflection*)

### Assurance of Grace

We give thanks for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for in this, you will not waver. Today we call for forgiveness. May we hear your answer as you stretch out your hand toward all that we were, all that we are, and all we are becoming. May we rest in the truth that we are yours, and you, Holy One, are our God. Amen.

**Young at Heart - Exploring the Epiphany Box**

**Hymn - Jesus Hands Were Kind Hands - 570 VU**

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD**

**Scripture Reading - Psalm 138**

**Meditation -** *With My Whole Heart - Thank You!*

**Hymn - Come, O Fount of Every Blessing - 559 VU**

**WE RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**Invitation to Offering -**

**J**ust as the psalmist sang thanksgiving to God from their whole heart, we are also asked to offer all that we are for the work of Christ in our world. Whoever we are, we all have been blessed by God, and God calls upon each of us to share our blessings. In the sharing of our gifts, God rejoices as we fulfill our purpose in Christ―to love one another, as in turn we are loved with God’s whole heart. Let us give thanks to the One whose love endures forever.

**Offering Hymn - Praise God from Whom All Blessing Flow - 541 VU**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

praise God, all creatures high and low;

give thanks to God in love made known:

Creator, Word and Spirit, One.

**Offering Prayer -**

**You are the Source of everything we have, all that we are, and all that we will become. We offer everything we have received to you, in praise and thanksgiving. Giving for the sake of our human siblings, our planet, and our future, we make our offering. Now take all that we offer, God, and bless and yield these gifts a hundredfold, that when the voice of your people cries out, the call to be church would be our answer. In Jesus’ name, we ask it. Amen.**

**Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern**

God.  
It would be so much easier if you fit neatly into the boxes we make,  
where we could catch just a glimpse of you when it’s convenient,  
but always safely tuck you away for later,  
when we decide if we are ready to wrestle with what you put before us.  
It would be so much easier, if you were tame, well behaved, transactional.  
That we know. That we understand. That has a clear beginning, middle, and end.  
But you’re not like that. Thank you, God―that you’re not like that.  
Just when we think we can pin you down,  
you flip tables on us again, and again, and again.  
You arc across time and space,  
eternity unbound in galaxies that spur the seeds of stars that yield life on a scale the human mind cannot begin to fathom.  
We are just a speck of dust on this third rock from the sun.  
And yet. And yet into this speck of dust, you breathed yourself.  
Your Spirit.  
What are we to make of you, you who are beyond our imagination, and as close as our very next breath?  
What are we, to be loved by the likes of you?  
Even the hard-hearted and self-assured, you love.  
Even when I walk in the midst of trouble,  
even as my enemies of self-doubt, judgment, and despair haunt my trail,  
you preserve me. You stretch out your hand with grace and mercy,  
lifting me up, renewing my spirit, reminding me―that I was created with the purpose of your love and justice.  
When I was in the grind of the frontline day and night―I called, and you were with me.  
When I was in the midst of chemo and radiation―I called, and you were with me.  
When I was confronted with loss―I called, and you were with me.  
When I needed a community to belong to―I called, and you were with me.  
When I was lost and tossed upon the sea of no care―I called, and you were with me.  
When I was sure I had come to the end of my limit―I called, and you were with me,  
not always in how I imagine or would conceive,  
but always born in the still, small presence at the root of my being,  
who is louder than all the thunder under heaven.  
So I will give you thanks, God of Holy Mystery.  
I will praise you with my whole heart song,  
for you alone are worthy of this.  
All life is the work of your hands,  
and this, you will not forsake.  
(*add local thanksgivings*)

Now with these hands of mine,  
may I protest the proud patterns of empire that seek to dominate and destroy your image.  
May I reach out and embrace the stranger, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and restore the shamed, and in so doing, realize the wonder of who you made me to be.  
May I give thanks in the labour for which I have been called―  
that together, we would create a kingdom and a people  
who know the value of your wild, heedless love  
that will never submit to any limit anyone could ever place upon you.  
Thanks be to you, Divine Lover, for loving us, all of us, all the time.  
Amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Closing Hymn - May the God of Hope - 424 VU**

**Commissioning and Benediction**

May the Creator uphold you.  
May the Redeemer restore you.  
May the Sustainer release you.  
And through this blessed grace, may you share  
the Good News of life, poured out for everyone and everything,  
Everywhere.  
Amen.

## Announcements

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| **UPCOMING** |
| **February 15 - Knitting Group**  **February 14- Valentine luncheon UCW Noon at Sunset Cafe** |