

ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH



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Ministers: The people of St. Andrew's

Pastor: Rev.Cheryl Bolton

Ministry of Music: Lynn Sloan

September 5, 2021

WE GATHER

Welcome - This week our children and teachers, helpers, support staff and bus drivers go back to in class learning. This year more than ever they need our prayers and our support. They need God's love and blessings so that learning and growing can conquer the fear that this year may bring. So today we gather to show our love and support and invite God into their lives and ours, let us gather in worship.

Announcements

Lighting the Christ Candle –

May Jesus Christ the Light of the World, light our path wherever we may go.

Acknowledging Our Kinship

One: For thousands of years, First Nations people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and spirituality. We are gathered on their traditional territory and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.

All: **Many of us have come from other places, arriving from distant shores, our families arriving years ago or some of us more recently. When settlers came, they were met by others who were already here, already knew these lands, already lived rich and full lives based on ancient and proud cultures.**

One: As we acknowledge the peoples who have lived on and stewarded these lands since time immemorial, and their continued claims to the land, help us to become neighbours that we might live together in better ways.

All: **For we are all kin in Christ, “All My Relations,” with each other and this earth, its waters, air, animals, and plants.**

Gathering Hymn - Come Children Join to Sing

Call To Worship

ONE: Calling all children of the Living God:
the gospel is good news for every age and every stage.

ALL: **Let us worship together, the young and the old.**

ONE: The good news is proclaimed in God's words,
and also with crayons, silly songs, snacks, and recess.

ALL: Let us worship together, every generation.

ONE: After months of learning behind screens
or separated by dividers and physical space,

ALL: Let us worship together, with our family of faith.

ONE: We may still feel uncertain, seeing so many faces again,
but we come together seeking God's peace in this beautiful community.

ALL: Let us worship together, united in Christ.

Young at Heart Children's Time

Hymn of Praise - Like a Rock - 92 VU

Opening Prayer

God our teacher, who helps us to understand the world around us,
Thank you for the privilege of education. In a year of turmoil, disruption, and loss, we
recognize the gift of learning and the gift of teaching in ways we may not have
appreciated before. You have blessed our communities with teachers who take new
skills and concepts and pass them along to each new class of young people.

God who came as a child to show us how to be fully human, to show us how to be
children of God,

You have given our children minds that grow and develop in unique ways, at unique
speeds, and we are astounded by that miracle.

You speak to us through the words, actions, play, and feelings of children. You call us
to listen to the Spirit speaking through our young siblings in Christ.

We celebrate the beginning of this school year and ask for your blessings upon the
children, the educators, and the families who support them.

But in this celebration of education and learning, we do not forget there are children
and families and teachers who do not have the resources they need. When systems
are unjust, the outcomes are unacceptable. Today, we remember those who are
beginning school this year: those who have what they need to learn and grow in
safety, and those who lack supplies, teachers, safe buildings, and accommodations for
all needs and abilities.

We come to worship together, to lift up our young people and all those who care for
them and teach them. Open our hearts to what you are saying to us today.

Amen.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

Scripture Reading - Matthew 19: 14-15 and various others

Meditation - *No Greater Joy*

Hymn - This Child of Ours - 455 VU

RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Concern

Steady and comforting God, with you, every transition and new start is a reminder of your goodness, for you are always creating fresh, amazing things in us and through us. Though we are sad about summer's ending, we are grateful for this school year. Especially this one. After all we've faced, overcome, and released with the past year of COVID-19, we come to this year changed, with new levels of gratitude, hope, and connection carved in us. We appreciate the opportunity to learn and grow, knowing it is one of the biggest privileges we have. And the gift of physically being with friends and teachers for school this year feels like a holy hug. With thanks and love, we now offer everything we are to you, asking for your blessing. We pray as and for students of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We pray for our hearts and all they hold—excitement and nervousness, disappointment and hope. We give you all our loves and fears. We pray for steady self-esteem and deepening resilience.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our minds, that they will expand in wonder and celebration, learning not just from the books studied but the people beside us. Open our minds with a willingness to be changed in unexpected ways, and settle our thought loops in peaceful places.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our hands, that they will reach out to help welcome and care. Bless our hands with patience and dedication as they grip pencils and type on keyboards, swish paint brushes and clap in song, grip monkey bars and lunch box handles, spin wheelchair tires and basketballs.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our mouths, that they will speak words bringing life and connection. Help us use our mouths to honor the dignity and belovedness of all. Remind us to open our mouths for deep belly breaths when we're feeling anxious or afraid.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our feet, that they will move toward those different from us and help others in safe ways. Plant our feet next to those who feel alone, and bless our steps down hallways and sidewalks. We know you are with us wherever our feet go or stay.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our eyes, that they may see ourselves and others with compassion. Point our eyes toward those who are forgotten or struggling. Grow us in flexibility to see from all kinds of angles. Bless what and how we see, whether we're looking at a screen, a whiteboard, or the beauty of a person's face. And help us see with the most important eyes—the eyes of the Spirit within us.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for our ears, that they will genuinely listen to all voices, especially those that haven't been listened to much. When things get noisy, help us listen extra carefully for your voice. Help us hear with the most important ears—the ears of the Spirit within us.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We say a special prayer for parents, as the start of a new school year is always another leap of faith. Wrap them with your reassuring love as they entrust their children and trust in you. When questions remain unanswered, and the realm of control is finite, bless them with peace and the promise you are right there with their child, whether heading to preschool or driving to college.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We also pray now for teachers, staff, and administrators. Bless these faithful servants with courage and confidence, knowing you are in their classroom with a steady hand on their shoulder. Give them peace, patience, and balance in the pressures they face, and bravery to build structures and systems which justly serve all your children. Give them delight in the young ones before them, and recognition of the sweet ways children are also teachers.

ALL: Loving God, hold us and our prayers.

We pray for health and wholeness, fun and growth, surprise and amazement, for this school year ahead, knowing you will hold us all the way through. ALL: We thank you, God, and love you. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Final Hymn - Jesus Loves Me - 365 VU

Commissioning and Benediction -

Children, families, and all who love them, go out into the beautiful world that God has made! Go and play! Go and learn! Go and love others! May you be filled with lovingkindness for yourself and everyone around you. May the prayers of your faith community keep you safe, healthy, and full of joy. Amen.

Announcements



**Board meeting on
September 9 at 10:30am in the
hall.**



Mark your Calendars! Tell your friends!
Welcome back Sunday is September 12, we hope to have the service in the Sanctuary. We also hope to have a bbq after the service with a time of fellowship, all safely outside. Please note this BBQ will depend on Covid protocols on that day. We look forward to welcoming one and all back!



The UCW will be meeting in the hall on September 14. If anyone is interested there are several positions open within the group. They need a chairperson(on a monthly basis) and a treasurer. All women are welcome.

 October 3rd 2021 will be the date of our annual meeting, following church that day! More information to follow.



St.Andrews United Church is looking for a new Treasurer! Do you know anybody who may be interested? Please give the office a call at 519-631-4558 and a full description of the job is available.