



## St. Andrew's United Church of Christ

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### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

June 28, 2020

10:00 A.M.



Dear Friends in Christ,

It's been 13 Sundays since we last worshipped together in the sanctuary at St. Andrew's! God moved us from his house, to our houses and now we are back to God's house again! I'm looking past today and forward to that Lord's Day!

Consistory moved to begin corporate worship in the Sanctuary next Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, at 10am. The consistory realizes that St. Andrew's is an older population and therefore at a higher risk for the virus; so, it is taking every precaution to keep the congregation healthy and safe. The July Chronicle outlines the steps for returning to worship.

Worship is going to be different with some unforeseen bumps in the road, but God will guide us, and all will be well. As the Chronicle relates, this will be a Communion Service with pre-packaged elements for your use.

The Sanctuary is also open for Prayer and Reflection on Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup> from 1 to 3 pm, but not on Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup>.

I'll look forward to seeing you soon!

Peace and Prayers

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow

**Silent Prayer for the Beginning of Worship** — Holy and gracious God, at times we feel frail and fragile, tossed around by the latest news cycle or by our own failings; and so, we flounder. In this time of worship, help us to relocate you at the center of life and regain our footing, so that we may be more Christlike, bearing love and truth to the world. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## **WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE TRIUNE GOD**

### **CALL TO WORSHIP**

May our lives profess and proclaim that “our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 124:8)

**Amen!**

Let us worship the eternal God, the source of love and life who creates us.

**Let us worship the Jesus Christ, the risen one, who lives among us.**

Let us worship the Spirit, the holy fire, who renews us.

**To the one true God be praise in all times and places through the grace of Jesus Christ.**

### **SALUTATION**

Grace, mercy and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son in truth and love. (2 John 3)

**Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN**    [\*How Great is Our God & How Great Thou Art\*](#)

### **OPENING PRAYER**

Fill our worship with grace, Lord Jesus Christ, that every thought, word and deed may be more acceptable to you, our Rock and our Redeemer. In your holy name we pray, Amen.

## **WE ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT**

### **CALL TO CONFESSION**

When we gather to praise God, we remember that we are a people who have preferred our wills to his. Accepting his power to become new persons in Jesus Christ, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

Lord, you are a God who keeps promises. In our prayers and songs, we say that we want to be Christians, but then forget our promises. Our actions do not match up with our words. We say mean things to other people, we hurt their feelings, we think of ourselves first, and worst of all, ignore you.

(silent reflection)

Lord forgive us and hear our prayer for Jesus' sake. Amen.

### **WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND FORGIVENESS**

Hear these comforting words: If you repent and believe in God's redeeming mercy, your sins are forgiven. Trust in God's promises and begin anew your life with God and all people in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **GOD'S DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES**

Please read: Colossians 3:1-4, 12-17

## WE HEAR AND LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD

### SCRIPTURE LESSON

Old Testament— Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

New Testament — Matthew 10:40-42

SERMON – *Jesus...in Us* (found on pages 6)

HYMN OF RESPONSE [\*Lord, Speak to Me, That I May Speak\*](#)

### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father almighty,  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **WE GO FORTH TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORLD**

### **PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION**

Lord of life and love, no matter where we are, where we are going, or what we are doing, we know that we find our help in you. We thank you that you watch over us with diligence and guide us that we don't become lost. Whether we are awake or asleep, we know that you are near.

We thank you that we are able to look forward to gathering in worship in the sanctuary next Sunday. As we prepare to move from worship in our houses to worship in the sanctuary once again, give us patience to negotiate the changes that make gathering possible and enable us to make the necessary adjustments so that once again we gather as your people to give you praise and glory.

As we continue to live in this season of the coronavirus, we pray for all those people who have lost loved ones and whose lives have been diminished by other losses. Help them to find Christ, faith to trust your care, that even in pain, they may not walk alone. Continue to guide doctors, nurses and all others giving care, use their skills to restore health. We pray for those who are anxious, assure them that you are near, fill them with your Spirit and cast out all fear and help them to rely on your strength.

We also live in a season of unrest and pain. Help us to open our eyes that we may see the needs of others; open our ears, that we might hear their cries; open our hearts, that we may not be without help. Show us where love and hope are needed and use us to bring them in those places. Open our eyes and ears, that this day we may do some work of peace for you.

We pray this in Jesus' name, who taught us to pray as we sing the [Lord's Prayer](#) and Parting Hymn:

***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. Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory forever. Amen.***

#### BENEDICTION

May the love of the Father enfold us,  
the wisdom of the Son enlighten us,  
the fire of the Spirit kindle us;  
and may the blessing of the Lord God come down upon us  
and remain with us always!

**Amen!**

## SERMON – *Jesus...in Us*

Old Testament — Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18

New Testament — Matthew 10:40-42

In our text this morning, Jesus makes a bold promise to his disciples. He tells them that when the world receives them, the world receives Jesus. In these last few chapters, Matthew is presenting instructions for disciples of all times and places. Ministry in Jesus' name, it would appear, is ministry that evokes hostility and suffering. But our passage also points to Jesus blessing those who are hospitable to Christ's persecuted disciples. Receiving Christ's disciples brings with it rewards.

We use the word discipleship often, but who is a disciple and what does being a disciple mean? Let's focus on that for a moment. How would you define a disciple of Jesus Christ? Do you consider yourself to be a disciple of Jesus Christ; and if so, what does it mean to you, to be Christ's disciple in 2020? I would love to have this conversation with you over a cup of coffee!

If one looks at the word, disciple, one can see quickly the word discipline. Of course, discipline has some negative connotations, as in being punished or corrected. That might be a starting point, but the word also connotes training some in a branch of knowledge or code of behavior. In college you may have studied the various disciplines of science or literature. An Olympic athlete becomes highly disciplined and trained in their conditioning for their event. A farmer not only learns the discipline of hard work, but also the science of sun, soil and seed. So back to the question, who is a disciple of Jesus Christ; and how does one live that out in our world today?

I have found a definition that helps me understand Christian discipleship. A Christian Disciple is called by the Holy Spirit through God's Word to:

*Follow Jesus Christ.*

*Live in the Community of Believers.*

*Grow in Faith.*

*Witness to the Kingdom of God in the World.*

This can help us individually, or as a church, to find specific guidelines for living out a Christlike life. A Christian disciple is called by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God to follow Jesus Christ. Where is God at work? Inviting us into discipleship? How is the Holy Spirit speaking to me?

Follow Jesus Christ. How do I do that today? How does living in a community of believers, growing in faith and witnessing to the Kingdom of God in the world, help me understand what it means to be a disciple today?

God is best understood in verbs, in his gracious acts. This definition also centers in verbs, too: called....follow....live....grow....witness. Verbs mean action. Action means feet, means doing. What am I doing that demonstrates my discipleship?

I have served in the church of Jesus Christ for over 40 years and know first hand, all of its virtues, it is a very human institution and that while we try to live up to Christ's expectations for us, we fall very far from meeting those expectations. But here Jesus says that when the world receives a follower of Jesus and is kind to that disciple, it is the same as receiving and showing kindness to Jesus. Jesus says to his disciples that receiving one of his followers is equivalent of receiving Jesus. He says to his disciples, in receiving you, the world receives me. It means that you and I ought to guard our speech, watch what we say, what we do, because some people may see Jesus only through our life or St. Andrew's life together, and just as frightening, some people may reject Jesus because of our lives or words. Disciples represent Jesus. Disciples are designated spokespeople for Jesus.

We are often urged to practice hospitality, but in these verses, believers are put in the position of receiving hospitality. Are we better givers or receivers? How does it feel to receive hospitality? Sometimes we are those who give to others and sometimes we are in the role of receiving the gifts of others. Often times in the church, it seems to be that we are more likely to be asked to give, rather than asked to receive. Sometimes we are those who give to others and sometimes we are in the role of receiving the gifts of others.

In Colossians, Paul urges us to "put on Christ." When we are baptized as a Christian, it's like we are clothed in a new garment. We become representatives of Christ, ambassadors. When the world welcomes you, dares to expose itself to your testimony and is willing to offer you hospitality, it is receiving none other than Jesus himself.

Amen and let us pray.

Lord Jesus, you have chosen us, even in our limitations and our inadequacies to be your disciples, representatives and ambassadors to your reign. We are astounded by your faith in us. You have entrusted so much to our care and invested so much in us, even your own life.

Strengthen us in our attempts to represent you to the world. Make us confident that through us, you accomplish your purposes, through out the world. In the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.