

## November 1, 2020 – At Home Worship

On October 25, we had a slightly smaller sized gathering for in-person worship than on our re-opening Sunday. With rising infection rates, many discerned their best option was to worship at home. We will continue to provide an at-home worship offering that is suited for mail, online and email delivery. This gives you the full freedom to assess your own context and determine how you would like to worship ☺ Today, your at home service includes a pre-recorded link to the sermon, as well as a number of hymns prepared by Brad. On Sunday afternoon, following the in-person service, we hope to email to you a recording of the sermon as it was preached.

October 25<sup>th</sup> was Reformation Sunday this year, and today is All Saints Sunday. In some ways these two celebrations snuck up on me, as the preoccupation with adjusting to a dual worship format (on-line / mail out and in-person) has distracted from normalcy. In a regular year, we would have written to those who have had a loved one die in the course of the previous year, and we would also have called out names and lit candles at our in-person gathering on All Saints Sunday. This year, we will celebrate All Saints on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, November 22, 2020. If you have had a loved one die in the course of this year, please do provide their name to myself or the church office by November 15 2020 to allow for preparation of worship material.

As our in-person gathering is a fraction of our membership and regular attendance, we will prepare a “remembering the saints” service by taking all the names we gather and including them in Sunday worship during the Hymn of the Day on November 22, 2020. We will also prepare an online accessible Youtube file which will include (such as you request and provide permission for), names and (where provided) photographs set to music played by Brad. This way we will be able to remember those who have died in worship, either at home or in our sanctuary, before this most unusual church year is out. We have also ordered sterile, stay in your spot, communion servings and if they arrive in time, we will celebrate our first communion service since COVID on November 22nd. As many ELCIC churches have been doing, whether online or by telecast, we invite those at home to join in communion on that November 22nd with their choice of communion elements – audio will be provided to guide you at home if you have internet access.

My final note on today’s worship service has to do with the readings selected for today. The selected readings for All Saints Sunday include the beatitudes from the Gospel of Matthew, and Revelations 7: 9-17. This Revelations reading covers the appearance of the multitudes from all nations. I will save those readings for November 22<sup>nd</sup>, and this week we will focus on Revelations 21, the reading that speaks of a new heaven and a new earth. May it fill your cup of logos blessing ☺

If you need to know what is what for in-person worship, please read the post-amble which follows this pre-amble!

As always, if you need a phone call or distanced visit, please do reach out by email or phone: [pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org](mailto:pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org) or 519-653-4721 ... It is not my intention to neglect pastoral visitation ministry during this time, sometimes my shins just need a swift kick ☺

Have a blessing filled week, and please do be in touch if you have any queries around in-person worship or any other stuff!

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

### **Note on in-person worship requirements:**

If you are thinking of attending worship in the weeks to come, please read through this page of notes carefully so you know what to expect when you come to church. Our approach at St Peter's is based on protocols taking every possible precaution which include these ... You will need to arrive early for the entry protocol, and come to the Church street accessible entrance, at which you will be asked four assessment questions by an outside Greeter. A face covering is required. These are the assessment questions, and a self-assessment is advisable at home:

1. Have you travelled outside of the province or country within the last 14 days?
2. Have you tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
3. Have you been in contact with anyone that has exhibited symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 virus in the past 14 days?
4. Do you have any of the following symptoms that are unusual for you: fever, new cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, chills, headache, new loss of taste or smell?

If you answer 'yes' to any of these questions, then you will be asked to return home. Otherwise, you will be allowed into the building, and an inside Greeter will check your temperature (if above 100°F or 37.8°C, you will be asked to return home) and ask you to sanitize your hands. You will be seated by an usher to ensure social distancing in the pew. Families will be seated together. Seating will be assigned from front to back in the sanctuary. All volunteer disciples also want to worship, so please arrive early to ensure seating can be completed in time for 10 am start of worship.

Please take a few moments of silence, prepare your heart,  
centre yourself for worship.

Prelude: Land acknowledgement with Brad's creative composition ☺

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Zar8-GeUs>

### **Greeting**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

**Prayer of the Day:** Holy God, you have given us stewardship over your creation, and also granted us authority over all the power of the enemy. Sometimes, we are our own worst enemy. Please exercise your power within us, so that your new creation of heaven and earth might be brought forward: in, with and through each one of us. Make us agents of your Kingdom Come. Make us obedient disciples of your Son, our Saviour and Exemplar: Jesus. Amen.

### **The Lesson: Genesis 1:26-28.**

Then God said, "Let Us (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) make man in Our image, according to Our likeness [not physical, but a spiritual personality and moral likeness]; and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, and over the entire earth, and over everything that creeps *and* crawls on the earth."

So God created man in His own image, in the image *and* likeness of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them [granting them certain authority] and said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, and subjugate it [putting it under your power]; and rule over (dominate) the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves upon the earth." [The Amplified Translation]

Word of God, word of life. *C: Thanks be to God.* \*

### **The Holy Gospel according to Luke 10: 17-20.**

***C: Glory to you O Christ.***

The seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." He said to them, "I watched Satan fall from heaven like [a flash of] lightning. Listen carefully: I have given you authority [that you now possess] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and [the ability to exercise authority] over all the power of the enemy (Satan); and nothing will [in any way] harm you. Nevertheless do not rejoice at this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." [The Amplified Translation]

This is the Gospel of our Lord: **Thanks be to Christ.**

**Acclamation of the Word:** How Beautiful by G F Handel feat J. Bintaekies & B. Burden

Click Here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rm9bAUffHK4>

### **The Holy Scriptures according to Revelation 21:**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

"See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;  
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." Then he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, the murderers, the fornicators, the sorcerers, the idolaters, and all liars, their place will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." [NRSV]

This is the Word of God: Thanks be to God.

**Sermon (by Pastor Janaki):** Click Here: <https://youtu.be/hTX0RImQYHI>

During my summer leave this year, I spent some time on the Bruce Peninsula, hiking a number of segments of the Bruce trail and swimming in the beautiful Georgian Bay. It was a much needed Sabbath from the rigours of what had become normal life: pandemic life. I accessed as little news as possible, and listened closely to God.

Whilst on the trail, I also listened closely for rattling sounds! I have hiked the Bruce trail now for over 7 years, but this year, for the first time, I encountered the Mississauga Rattle Snake ... not only one snake, but on one particularly memorable hike with Brad & Marlen, we ran into three of these rattlers. Two were together, engaged in some snake porn! The other one was on his (or her) lonesome – and seemed all the "rattlier" for it! Along with the abundant show of rattle snakes this summer, I also had over 10 garter snake sightings on the trails, and a number of water snakes.

My Sri Lankan heritage brings me honestly to a very strong phobia of snakes. I cuddled up to the Gospel of Luke reading, a strong reminder that I am given authority by Jesus himself over snakes and scorpions, indeed, over danger! Mind you, this did not lead me to go stepping on the snakes! It just reminded me not to be ruled by my fear of them, but rather to trust in God who protects by granting us authority.

What a powerful knowledge to hold to: TRUST IN GOD WHO PROTECTS BY GRANTING US AUTHORITY.

The Lukan reading follows the sending of the seventy disciples out into the community, and it follows their return when they are full of excitement at the fact that even the demons submit to them. They return from their evangelical visits into new settings basically saying, “Way cool Jesus, we were able to do all kinds of cool things like get demons to submit and heal ills! This gospel business sure does provide some cool tricks!”

It is in the context of this excitement that Jesus reminds them of two things:

- The authority granted by God covers all manner of harmful things (snakes, scorpions, evil, and the power of the enemy).
- Our joy should be NOT in our authority, i.e. it is not something to be taken for granted or boasted about, but rather our joy should be that God has included us in this heavenly communion – our joy should be about our inclusion in heavenly writ.

Another way of putting this might be: remember that our authority is an earthly gift wrap for a much bigger gift: that of being included in the family of God through the love of God in, with, and through Jesus. You know how sometimes small babies and children are more preoccupied at the pretty gift wrap than the gift itself? I picture Jesus internally shaking his head going: kids, how ‘bout you notice the gift and not just the wrapper, how ‘bout?

I am thankful that ... whilst hiking those trails, I was able to focus more on the gift than the wrapper ... I found myself filled with a deep peace despite the encounters with snakes ... that peace came from witnessing in a very bodily and somatic way that the beauty of divine creation on the Bruce Peninsula, for those hours of hiking and swimming, incorporated me into the landscape. I was and am a part of this heavenly communion called creation – as are you. THIS is what it means, I thought, as I hiked and swam, THIS is what it means to be included in God’s Kingdom.

This drew me back to creation story in Genesis, in which God not only creates everything and declares: “it is good”, but then, God grants us authority, puts everything under our power, granting us dominion or the power to dominate all that surrounds us.

Dominion, authority and power have given us all the wonders of science: air travel, microbiology, labour saving mechanization, the freedom to retire from work and take vacations. These same tools of our own authority and dominion have facilitated a global pandemic. And, though I could ignore the news while on leave this summer, I could not ignore the anger I would feel when the ubiquitous disposable (and non-biodegradable) blue masks would show up on the trail and on the beach.

For we have been granted authority and protection; we have been granted dominion and power which gains us the means to enact protecting ourselves – but why does it so often feel like humanity must do so at the expense of the rest of the planet and the rest of creation??

This is where, this week, the wise voice of David Attenborough joined the resonating words of Revelations 21 ... this crazy year called 2020, Sir David Frederick Attenborough is in his mid 90’s and has published a witness statement, a vision of the future called “A Life on Our Planet”. This film, about an hour and 20 minutes long is available online and in it, Sir David chronicles his own experience with the natural world from the earliest years of his career to the present day. A dramatic decline in the health of the natural world is chronicled, and just when you think really, it is all going to hell in a handbasket, Sir David explains how it is possible, with intentional human efforts, to turn back the effects of human influence on our natural world.

I do not share this as a free ad for the film or any online video service. I share it because the film served as a potent reminder to me of HOPE.

In the midst of this week, this year, this era, when we are inundated with difficult and scary news from pandemic updates, to increased opioid and drug use, and declining mental health ... in the midst of this time when fear and death have become dark shadows under our eyes, and bereavement and grieving is convoluted by the incapacity to safely gather, hug, hold hands and even breathe freely what with masks and all ... in this time, the hunger I feel for HOPE is deep.

I mention the David Attenborough witness statement in part to remind us of HOPE, and also to remind us of the power of our own witness as people of faith. Our witness may be the best flag of hope available to the hope-hungry. As people of God, we KNOW that God is the beginning and the end, we KNOW that God is with us, dwelling in our midst, wiping the tears from our eyes, giving the breath to our lungs, and washing us in the waters of everlasting life.

On trails with poisonous rattlesnakes, littered with non-biodegradable masks, we walk secure in the knowledge of God's protection, knowing God has shared dominion and power with us: We are made in divine likeness after all. And we revel, not in the wrapping paper of the powers which the gospel grants onto us, but rather we revel in knowing WE, YOU, ME, each one of us is a child of God, the gift inside that wrapping paper.

These words are trustworthy and true ... To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

In Jesus, we are conquerors of fear, we have authority over evil and danger, and our witness statement is one of hope. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day: For the Fruit of All Creation ELW 679; Fred Pratt Green, Welsh Traditional, Bradley Moggach, Piano**

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCleDgaJ4Lg>

Text: Fred Pratt Green; Tune: Welsh traditional; arr Ralph Vaughan Williams; Words © 1970 Hope Publishing Company, CCLI License # 11098609

The main wording of the prayer below came from a Thanksgiving message sent out by the Interim Executive Director of the Cambridge Shelter Corporation, Anne Tinker, in an email to staff and volunteers. Anne's message was not worded as a prayer – but her words sounded prayerful and appropriate to me. It captured so well the many things we have to be thankful for, that, with some additional intercessions, edits and Anne's permission I share some of her words in our prayers today.

### **A Thanksgiving Prayer:**

All-powerful God: You bless us in countless ways,

Thereby showing your authority, your grace, your mercy and your boundless love.

We are thankful for the many blessings you give us:

We are thankful that we can turn on a tap and have clean water to drink, shower, or wash clothes, when so many in the world do not.

We are thankful for food in our cupboards and in our refrigerators when so many go hungry.

We are thankful that with a flick of a switch we have light or heat when so many have neither.

We are thankful for roofs over our heads, warm beds to sleep in, and a place to call home when numbers of those experiencing homelessness are climbing everywhere.

We are thankful to be part of an organization that works to serve others and to make our little corner of the world a better place.

Holy God:

Help us to remember to respond to your generosity mindful that we are created in your image and likeness.

Help us to make love our pandemic of choice: make us vectors of infectious love.

Where these times sow fear and insecurity, help us to sow faith, hope and joy.

Make us your instruments of justice, grace and mercy.

Rid us of judgmental attitudes and replenish our reservoirs of compassion.  
 Help us to live safely; reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity.  
 We pray that you would also keep us in good spirits, as we feel the colder weather coming,  
 And as we contend with the reality of rising infection rates ... please keep us in your care.  
 We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### **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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
 and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
 For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. AMEN.

**While you listen to the offertory hymn, continue your prayers and consider how you may be an offering in the coming week.**

**Offertory: ELW 885 Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow**

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTzPCCw2h6M&feature=youtu.be>

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### **Offering Prayer**

God of goodness and growth,  
 all creation is yours,  
 and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.  
 Water and word, social distancing and hand-washing:  
 these are signs of your abundant grace.  
 Nourish us through these gifts,  
 that we might proclaim your steadfast love  
 in our communities and in the world,  
 through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

**Sending Hymn: Wash, O God, Our Sons and Daughters ELW 445 Beach Spring**

**Click here:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VRxVTHUewU>

Author: Ruth C. Duck (1987); Copyright: Words © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House  
 Beach Spring, Music: The Sacred Harp, Philadelphia, 1844; arr Selected Hymns 1985  
 Tune: © 1978, Augsburg Fortress; Copyrights 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House  
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### **Blessing:**

May God bless us and keep us.  
 May the face of God shine upon us with grace and mercy.  
 May God look upon us with favor  
 and give us ☩ peace.  
 Amen.

**Dismissal: Go in Peace, Go in Hope. *Thanks be to God.***

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