

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe.

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Worship This Week Feb. 19, 2023

WELCOME & Prayer –

PRAISE SONGS – 648 I'm gonna live so God can use me, 496 Thy Word

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART –

SONG – If you believe and I believe

RECEIVE OFFERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS – 11 people at New Bible study

GOD IS MY WITNESS – Revival at Asbury.

PRAYER –

Continued recovery: Bill Eves is home from hospital and he thanks everyone for the cards and prayers – they were much appreciated.

Healing after surgery: Mary Whitson had successful surgery this week on her broken arm.

Thanks: Cherie Pegg had some great news – her cancer is not progressing.

Sandra Pegg: Recovering from pneumonia.

Condolences: Mark Labadie and family after the passing of his brother Larry

Renewed healing: Becky Desjardine

SCRIPTURE – Colossians 3:16-17

Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB)

MESSAGE –

The “**word of Christ**” is just that – His teachings and presence. His being. If someone was to ask you, what is this “word of Christ” anyway? What’s this “Good News” the church talks about? What would you say. It’s a valid question and one all believers need to be prepared to answer. The time may come when you will be asked to give a reason for the hope that you have in Christ. If I was to be put on the spot, this is what I would say:

“It’s OK. God knows the troubles we face in this life. That’s why He came to live among us, to show us how to **connect** to God and rely on His Holy **power** for **strength, peace and wisdom**. And to know how to live with each other. Jesus taught us that unless we are connected to God the Father in prayer, whatever limited strength we have is no match for the enemy. Yes, Satan is **real** and this planet is his playground. God gives him the kingdoms of this world and the enemy can give wealth and power to whoever he wants. But it’s all very superficial and it’s a limited-time offer. Jesus’ **kingdom** is from heaven and it will never expire. Life, therefore is a series of **choices**. The first is to give your life over to the one who created you and **knows** you and this world. **Believe** in Christ, whose death at the hands of the ones He created was payment for the sins of humankind. His **restoration** to life is proof that He was who He claimed to be. And when he returned to heaven He **empowered** the Holy Spirit to convict us of our sins, to show us the way, to **protect** us against the enemy. He is **life and hope** that simply cannot come from anything I or anyone can do. And He is preparing a place in the heavenly Kingdom for all who **believe**.”

That’s my witness. Amen. But it’s not enough for me to stand here and say that. Otherwise it’s just reading words from a page. In fact, those words actually came from my heart. When I was preparing for this message, they just poured out effortlessly over the time it took to write as fast as I can type.

The key is to know the Lord. To allow him, as Paul say, to “dwell within” us. It’s not enough to be familiar with the teachings and life of Christ, to understand it or to even act it out. What we are invited to do is plant it within us. Embed it.

“Dwell.” It’s a wonderful word, which has many aspects to its meaning. Several words come to mind.

Home. Dwell is the root of the word dwelling. It’s where we live. Home is where the heart is, we’re told. Search it in scripture but you won’t find it. At least not in that form. But there’s still some truth to it. It means “a place you feel connected to emotionally, a place you are happy to arrive back at, somewhere you have fond memories of, being near your family and loved ones.” (Source: theidioms.com)

Settled. Like people travelling to a distant land and setting up. Pioneers searching for the place where God called them to go. On that note, I am mindful that we of European descent are not the original occupants of this land. It's not a politically correct or woke thing. It's truth. It's why our letterhead acknowledges that this is the traditional land of the Three Fires Confederacy: the Odawa, Potawatami and Ojibwe nations. The purchase of these lands might have been "negotiated" by treaties in the 18th and 19th centuries, but they weren't fair deals. And the peoples were not treated well. That's an understatement. I'm not going to dwell too much on that but it just needs to be declared.

There are two current TV programs that come to mind. And both of them have central characters who treat First Nations with respect. There's Yellowstone and its prequels 1883 and 1923. Here's a photo of the home used in the show, set in Montana. **And then** there's Outlander, where the Scottish immigrants landed in North Carolina. The thing about being settled is that the journey is over. In today's world, we have no concept. We hire professional movers and the worst that happens is when something is damaged in the move. In both series, which are based on reality, the journey was unbelievably difficult. People died. **And it took years.** Finally, they are in their new land. And even then it takes years to build. But when they are finally established, they are truly settled. They are settled – they are home. The journey to receive and dwell in Christ can also be difficult.

The third word that's associated with dwell is **stationary**. Not moving. Imagine a stationary bicycle, used for fitness. It's designed to stay in one place no matter how hard you push or how fast you pedal. These babies are heavy. Think of the stationary bike as the presence of Christ in your heart. It's not going to move. And we are invited to use it. It won't wear out. Jesus can take it. We are invited to work out our salvation. (See Philippians 2:12). There's nothing too difficult for Him.

The fourth word is **indwelling**, which means to exist within, inhabit, suffuse. McMillan dictionary defines it as "to exist within as an activating spirit, force, or principle." Collins: To inhabit or suffuse. "Suffuse" is an interesting word. Oxford dictionary says to "suffuse somebody/something (with something)" it's like a **colour, light or** feeling that spread all over or through somebody/something. "Her eyes were suffused with colour. The room was suffused with a soft golden light." Beautiful. Indwelling is a word we use in relation to the person and work of The

Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells within us to shape our character into the image of Jesus Christ. Character does not come from following the rules. Our true Christlike character does not even emerge from enduring suffering. Our true character, our true self, comes from following Jesus and inviting Him to dwell within us. It's a journey beyond self -- every day, laying down our lives, our plans, our complaints and grudges, our privileges and whatever history we have and picking up the cross Jesus hands you and following Him.

The fifth and final word is **abide**, which means stay or rest.

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. . . he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit. . .” (John 15:4-5)

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1, ESV)

Many of us who are of a certain age will remember the hymn Abide in me.

Paul invites us not just dwell but **richly dwell**. Not superficially, like it's just there for a coffee. Invite the Holy Spirit of Christ to reside permanently in our homes. If something, such as a feeling or thought, dwells within us, it means it's found a home in us. And it will be noticeable. It will show in our eyes, in our words, in our decisions and actions.

Of course, there is a negative side. We can also allow the enemy to dwell within.

“Flee away, turn back, dwell in the depths, You inhabitants of Dedan, For I will bring the disaster of Esau upon him at the time I punish him. (Jer 49:8)

‘I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is . . . (Rev 2:13)

These are the houses that are built by human hands. This is the world constructed by people for people, which does not acknowledge the Glory of God. The supremacy of God. “The Most High does not dwell in houses made by human hands,” Luke reminds us in Acts 7:48.

After encouraging them to allow the Word of Christ to dwell within, in the same sentence, Paul tells them to share it: “. . . with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another.” It’s too good just for ourselves. That’s the core reason for the church – to teach one another, to go deeper in our knowledge and in our walk.

And to do it with joy -- “. . . with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” This variety of music and expression suggests that God welcomes in creative and spontaneous worship.

Finally, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

Centre everything on Him, on Christ. That’s not overstating it. If any piece of truth is not from God, it’s from the enemy. Don’t allow the deceiver, the tempter, to get his foot in the door because he’s very powerful.

One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, (Psalm 28:4)

A good way to do this is to simply say I can’t do it alone. Boast in our spiritual poverty. By that I mean the fact that we innately do not possess wisdom. We may be created in the image of God, but that shell needs to be filled with the indwelling presence of Christ. Let him in.

Paul had this thorn in his side. We’re not sure exactly what it was, but Satan was giving him a hard time and Jesus refused to provide relief. God does allow pain if it’s good for the Kingdom. He pleaded to Christ and “He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

And the rest is history.

May the powerful Word of Christ, His living presence, indwell and make his home in you, rest in you, be stationary in you, abide and richly dwell in you – may it be abundant and without limits.

HYMN – 644 May the mind of Christ my Saviour

BENEDICTION – May you dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of this life and in the world to come

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Jennie Atherton, Bill Eves, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Tom O’Neill, Sandra Whitson
2. Waiting for surgery: Dan Shaw
3. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
4. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression
5. Karen Northcott – thanks for good biopsy results but continue to pray.

There are many whose names are not listed here – God know who they are and what they need.

Seniors and shut ins – Alan (Curly) Clark and Norma Latimer at Riverview Gardens, Jim Lusk and Ross Fuchs at Oaks Wallaceburg, Joyce MacTavish at Barrie Manor, Bill Lozon at Copper Terrace, Aubrey Butler at home.

Session – Mark Labadie (clerk and representative elder), Cindy Brewer, Sheila Eves, Andrew Neely, Mark Richards and Julie Shaw.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Paul Vandenbogaerde (treasurer), Will Brewer, Ross Fuchs, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Dan Shaw and Mike Wicks.

WHAT’S UP:

Pop can fundraiser – Bring your pop cans to church! Leave them in the bin behind Rutherford Hall. They’re worth money!

DATES

Feb. 22 – We provide childcare for Connect the Block at Dresden Area Central School. More volunteers welcome! 5-8 p.m. Dinner included.

Feb. 26 – 3 p.m. Ministerial Celebration of Praise at the Christian Reformed Church. Pastor Andy leads prayer.

Feb. 27 – Church board of managers to meet

March 19 – Annual Congregation Meeting in the Rutherford Hall following worship.

March 25 – Renewal Fellowship annual meeting in Welland or livestream.