

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

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

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Worship This Week June 11, 2023

Piano – Dorothy O’Neill

Sound/powerpoint/livestream –

WELCOME & Prayer –

SONGS – Come now is the time to worship, Ancient words

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART – Andy – what is baptism?

PRAYER – Andy – rain – Dresden murals – healing from loss

SONG – Jesus loves me

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS –

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Genesis 4:2-14

When they grew up, Abel became a shepherd, while Cain cultivated the ground. 3 When it was time for the harvest, Cain presented some of his crops as a gift to the Lord. 4 Abel also brought a gift—the best portions of the firstborn lambs from his flock. The Lord accepted Abel and his gift, 5 but he did not accept Cain and his gift. This made Cain very angry, and he looked dejected. 6 “Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.” 8 One day Cain suggested to his brother, “Let’s go out into the fields.” And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother, Abel, and killed him. 9 Afterward the Lord asked Cain, “Where is your brother? Where is Abel?” “I don’t know,” Cain responded. “Am I my brother’s guardian?” 10 But the Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 Now you are cursed and banished from the ground, which has swallowed your brother’s blood. 12 No longer will the ground yield good crops for you, no matter how hard you work! From now on you will be a homeless wanderer on the earth.” 13 Cain replied to the Lord, “My punishment is too great

for me to bear! 14 You have banished me from the land and from your presence; you have made me a homeless wanderer.

MESSAGE – I’m not in the habit of giving titles to talks and messages, but if I had to do that for this one it would “Welcome to The Human Race.” That might sound a little negative, because there is amazing beauty in the human condition. People can be amazing and loving and caring and all that. After all, we are all created in God’s image. That’s one of the main teachings of the first few chapters of Genesis.

And so the same God who created us and provides us with a beautiful planet and the intellect to figure out how to use it to survive and to advance and grow ALSO allows evil to exist. The purpose is to allow us to choose. On the surface, it’s a pretty clear and easy. Light or dark. God (who we access through His Son) or the enemy.

But here’s the challenge. We like the darkness. None of us in these human bodies is an angel of light and we never will be. We give in to temptation all the time. The invitation from God is to be “woke” to that – if I can steal a term and use it for this illustration – and make choices. The easy way is to go with the flow, and do what everyone else is doing, which feels great but won’t last and will probably kill you. The hard choice takes discipline. But it pays off.

In the gym where I used to be member, there was a quote from Muhammad Ali on the wall: “I hated every minute of training, but I said, ‘Don’t quit. Suffer now and live the rest of your life as a champion.’” That’s stuck with me and I remember that when I know I need to be in the gym or get some cardio and fat burn but end up doing something else. We will learn more on the road less traveled than the wide avenue everyone else takes. It’s kind of like nutrition and exercise. Kids would rather eat sugary cereal for breakfast, lunch and dinner but eggs and healthy carbs are better. Physical training takes effort. No pain, no gain is an oversimplification but it’s true.

Back to Genesis. We learned about the nature of God through the Creation stories in Genesis 1-2. We learned about the origin of sin Genesis 3. Now, we see how sin has invaded the human condition.

Don’t get bogged down in the details here. As we have seen, a close reading of Genesis results in many questions. Did Creation take place over six 24-hour days

or six periods of time? I believe that because nothing is impossible for God. The point that we need to agree on is the fact that God created it and it didn't happen by chance. Along with that: God created humans in His image, which sets us apart from animals. And when sin entered the world through our disobedience, we fell from grace and need to be made right with God.

And now, we deal with the story of these first two brothers. Sin had entered the world. The enemy took advantage. God allowed the serpent to tempt Eve. God allowed the enemy to inhabit Cain's thinking. And we see the tragic results. The rest is history.

The key verse this week is Genesis 4:7. "You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

At first glance, it seems a little unfair. Cain and Abel presented offerings, each from his own work. But there's a big difference. Cain "presented **some of his crops** as a gift to the Lord. Abel, however, brought the **best portions of the firstborn lambs** from his flock." The difference is clear. "Some" versus the "best."

In simplest terms, we are invited to present our Best to God, not just a portion. When we put money on the plate, we are to give the first percentage – before we spend anything else – and then live on the rest. It's where we get the concept of tithing: 10 per cent of our income. I truly believe this is a principle that continues long past the Old Testament practice. If we willingly and joyfully give God the first fruits, then that offering will be blessed. God is not going to be impressed if we just give what's left over after our living expenses are covered.

For the record, my family does that: 10 per cent of our household income as husband and wife. I lead by example. It wasn't easy, I will admit. It took time to get to that place. But when we did, it's amazing how God will provide what you need. Discipline is far more than behaviour and physical training. Financial discipline is huge. And we don't have to look too far to see the need.

That principle of giving first fruits extends to the church. Church buildings everywhere are filled with cast off furniture. When we get a new fridge or couch or phone, rather than donate it to the Thrift Store, we might offer it to the church. By saying that, I am aware of the old saying, "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth." Which is to say, "finding fault with something that has been received as a gift or favour." But that's not Biblical.

You can also extend that principle to our time. Do we open the Bible and pray when we are at our best? Or do we just give God whatever time we have left over? Without a doubt, we will grow deeper in our faith if we approach God when we are most alert, not when we are tired.

Back to Cain and Abel. We see the results. Cain was angry that God did not accept his gift. It resulted in God's warning. "You will be accepted if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master."

Do what is right. That's the key. What's right. And when we don't, then we are wide open for Satan to lead us astray. We may not kill our family members or neighbours. But we will automatically be outside God's will.

There is restoration and renewal for all who recognize this hard reality and choose God. It means nothing short of submission. God is inviting us to go deeper.

Certainly, we are to take care of our bodies, minds, emotions, each other and this amazing planet. But what this world is increasingly leaving out is spiritual care.

Four dimensions of life – Physical (body), Mental (brain), Emotional (heart) and Spiritual (Soul). I would suggest that the spiritual – being right with God – needs to come first. It's like putting on your life jacket or the breathing mask in the plane before helping someone else. Spiritual strength and peace open doors to everything else. It the condition of the soul – which is eternal. Compared to eternity, our bodies are with us for just a short period of time. When the soul is in the right place and the spirit is healthy, we can find peace and joy in even the most challenging circumstances.

Colin and Nicole, you have taken a huge step in that direction with your decision to baptize your children, to dedicate them and your family to the pursuit of spiritual strength and to make that your foundation. So I invite you to come forward.

Baptism -- Baptism is a formal way of welcoming someone into the church. Age is not important – all are welcome. It is a sign to God that we are taking this young child and her parents and brother under our wings. It means we as a congregation are committed to being there for them, to help them grow in their faith.

The baptism of a young child is just the first step in the journey of faith. The desire is for Calie (Cally), with the help of her family and the church, to build a life of faith on this foundation so that when she is ready, at whatever age, she can make his own personal declaration of faith as a believer.

Jesus said: Unless you are born of water and the Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.'
(John 3:5-7)

Today's baptism is an outward declaration by the parents that they are raising this child with the opportunity to know God in Christ so that she may one day be reborn in the Holy Spirit.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, God claims us and calls each one of us by name. God united us to Christ by his death and resurrection and grafts us into the body of Christ as his church. God washes us clean by forgiving our sins; God commissions us to be a royal priesthood with Christ in his ministry to the world; God empowers us to live in newness of life as people of the Word; God invites us to be renewed at the Lord's table until we are with him in heaven.

By grace you have been saved by faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God. (Ephesians 2:8)

You have heard the phrase, "it takes a community to raise a child." The ultimate decision to baptize rests with the congregation, which is represented by the elders on session. On behalf of the elders, we welcome this child to receive the sacrament of baptism.

Minister to parents: Colin and Nicole, do you promise to raise Calie in the love and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ within your home and in the fellowship of Christ's church?

Parents: We do.

Minister asks congregation to stand: responsive reading on powerpoint

Minister: Do you, as people united in Christ, promise to guide Calie and help her grow, in love and with prayer, encouraging her to make her own declaration of faith in Christ when she is ready?

All: We do.

Minister: While remaining standing, let us now reaffirm our faith. Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty?

All: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

Minister: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

All: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, **was crucified**, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Minister: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

All: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Church found in all people in all time who affirm the Christian faith, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Congregation is seated. Calie steps up and stands next to the font.

Minister: Gracious God, by the gift of water and your Holy Spirit, you sustain all life. By the power of your Holy Spirit and the by the sign of water, you cleanse us from our sins through the death of Jesus Christ. Our prayer is this: that you pour out your Spirit upon this child and his family and that they may have the power to do your will and continue forever as servants of God in Christ.

Calie, I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. May the Spirit of God dwell in you and uphold you, now and forever, Amen. Calie, you are now received into the church, which is God's people united in Christ all over the world. This is the Good News.

Minister: Let us pray. Creator God, we thank you for these parents, who are presenting their child to you. Thank you for their families, friends and supporters. Embrace them with your Holy Spirit, guide them and give them wisdom, strength and patience as they raise this precious child. And we ask that you surround them as they go forth in your name. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

HYMN – 434 All creatures of our God and King

BENEDICTION –

NEW PRAYER

1. Continue to pray for family and friends of Jennie Atherton.

2. The end to all the wildfires – and protection for people who have respiratory issues.
3. Lord, please bring rain.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

Health and healing –

1. Cindy Brewer, Becky Desjardine, Bill Eves, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Tom O’Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Mary Whitson, Sandra Whitson
2. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
3. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression
4. 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 – Dianne Richards at Park Street Place, Jim Lusk, Ross Fuchs at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Joyce MacTavish at The Waterford Home in Barrie, 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 Vandenberg (treasurer), Will Brewer, Ross Fuchs, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Dan Shaw, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WHAT’S UP:

The New Testament Challenge continues every Wednesday at 7 p.m. until June 28. It’s a unique way of looking at the New Testament. Everyone gets a Bible and study guide. It’s at Evangel Pentecostal Tabernacle and is co-led by Pastor Andy and Pastor Rob Elka from Evangel.

Church Bake Sale during the town Wide Yard Sale Saturday is June 17. The church isn’t doing its own yard sale this year (just bake sale inside the hall) but if you want a great spot for your own table, the congregation will provide space on the lawn for \$20 per table. Talk to Wendy Weston, 519-683-6591.

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

DATES

June 12 – Session 7 p.m.

June 17 – Bake Sale with individual yard sale tables available.

June 25 – Dresden Christian Concerts summer season begins, 6:30 p.m. at Total Grain Systems property

GIVING:

E-transfer to pcvan1313@gmail.com. Bring envelope on Sunday or if you have a key, leave it in the treasurer's mailbox. Mail it to the church, PO Box 93 Dresden. NOP 1M0. Put it in the mailbox at the home of treasurer Paul Vandenbogaerde. 1313 North Street, Dresden. Telephone number 519-683-6194

GIFT CARDS – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. **Next deadline June 25.**