

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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

Box 93, Dresden, Ontario NOP 1M0

519-683-2442 standrewspcdresden@gmail.com Rev. Andy Cornell

Worship This Week Dec. 10, 2023

Advent 2 – Peace

Piano – Dorothy O'Neill.

Sound/powerpoint/livestream –

WELCOME – Introduce Sarah Sonneveld

PRAYER

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – Isaiah 11:1- (Good News Translation)

Minister – The royal line of David is like a tree that has been cut down; but just as new branches sprout from a stump, so a new king will arise from among David's descendants.

All – The spirit of the LORD will give him wisdom and the knowledge and skill to rule his people.

Minister – He will know the LORD's will and honour him, and find pleasure in obeying him.

He will not judge by appearance or hearsay; he will judge the poor fairly and defend the rights of the helpless. . . .

All – He will rule his people with justice and integrity.

SONGS – 114 Emmanuel, 122 O Come Emmanuel

YOUNG & YOUNG AT HEART – Rita

Kid's PRAYER –

SONG – He came down – Image on the slides is from the African country of Cameroon, where this song comes from.

RECEIVE OFFERING –

ANNOUNCEMENTS – Read edict of ordination.

Bob Vriesema, a member of this congregation, has been nominated and duly elected to the eldership by this congregation, and has been approved by the session. Unless some valid objection has been given to the moderator, we will be ordaining him as ruling elder during our regular time of worship on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS – The day I didn't change the Mt. Z session meeting date in my calendar and I found an empty church but used the opportunity to write something that the Lord gave me on the drive down. Time for prayer on the return trip. Time was not only not wasted but it was more productive.

PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE – Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; 3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' " 4 John the Baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. 8 I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

MESSAGE – Peace

As we approach the end of another year, news magazines publish their annual predictions of what's in store in the year to come. It's an educated guess, based on what's going on now and looking for trends. Will the current challenges get worse? Or are better days in store. It's usually a mixture of both. On the downside, Macleans magazine predicts that drug-resistant superbugs will become a deadly threat, political extremism will grow and wildfires will be more intense and less predictable. On the positive side, schools will finally recognize that many social media apps are bad for mental health so they'll be serious about banning personal phones and devices from the classroom. And for those who are fans of electric vehicles, Canada may emerge to be a world leader in their production. (That may also be a not-so-good thing if you aren't sold on the technology, but it's expected to create more jobs.)

We love to predict the future. It's nothing new. As I've mentioned the past two Sundays, it's good to dream. It's healthy. During the four Sundays in Advent, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Saviour, we take the essential being of Christ and divide him into four main elements: hope, peace, joy and love. We are reminded that He brought those four things into the world. When we have the hope, peace, joy and love and Christ in our hearts and minds and in our lives, then we can put all the negatives to one side and we can dream.

But we live in an increasingly dark world. There is a real lack of hope, peace, joy and love. And it's especially true in younger generations. It used to be the other way around. Older adults would look at what's going on and shake their heads, turn off the noise and retreat into their homes, read the newspaper and play cards. Now, it's the younger gen that's cocooning, instead of cards and newspapers, it's devices and online gaming and the vast world of virtual entertainment. They're understandably frustrated by the cost of real estate, the cost of everything. One of the most common statements I hear from people in their teens and 20s is,

“Why would anyone want to bring children into a world like this?” The pandemic didn’t help. And new wars break out every few years.

So how do we understand the ancient words of scripture when the Gospel writer talks about the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God? John the Baptist pointed to his cousin Jesus and said “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (John 1:29).

The authors of the Bible and preachers for centuries have said that if we want hope, peace, joy and love, all we have to do is believe. If that’s true – and for the record, it is – then why don’t people choose that way. The answer, as we all know, is that this world has been given over to the enemy, who has great power in this world. It was Satan who tempted Jesus by taking him to a great height and showing him all the kingdoms of the world and telling him all of this earthly power and wealth can be yours if you bow down and worship me. There was zero chance of that happening, of course. The story is there for our benefit.

The key word is choice. The good news is that some younger people are exploring their faith for the simple reason that they don’t see the keys to hope, peace, joy and love in this world. It’s why churches which boldly proclaim the truth in scripture – which is often at odds with the truth of our culture – those churches are more likely to be spiritually healthy and growing.

Believing is not an intellectual thing. It’s about submission. It’s about realizing that we do not have the solutions. We cannot find hope, peace, joy and love through public education, government programs, laws and regulations. We can’t even find those things by donating to the food bank, giving to charity, using paper straw, banning plastic bags and only purchasing eggs from free-range hens – these are good, but they’re only band-aids. The solution is so much larger. It’s so huge that it’s impossible for the human race to solve. We can only have hope, peace, joy and love when we choose to submit to the One who makes them possible.

John the Baptist told his followers that they were baptized by him with water; but the Lamb of God “will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Water baptism just brings you into the church. It’s a sign that you are willing to repent and live a new life. And that’s good. But it can only take you so far. Baptism with the Holy Spirit unlocks the vast spiritual realm. When we allow God to baptize us in the Holy Spirit, we allow his hands to work.

When a person becomes a believer, they are grafted into the Family of God. The Holy Spirit of Christ begins to work within them. Their eyes are opened to a new way of being. First is the knowledge that my sins will not prevent me from entering the Kingdom. Second is the freedom from guilt; I no longer need to be tormented by the memories of who I was or what I have done.

Third is the assurance that my soul no longer needs to search for peace because the Holy Spirit has touched my spirit and everything I need in life can be found when I submit my life to God.

This new state of being does not mean that our carnal desires will be eradicated. We remain human and subject to temptation. It does not mean that our impure hearts will be immaculately cleansed. What it does mean is that we now have the ability to receive God's power, to use the gifts to do the work of the Church.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit refers to the receiving of spiritual gifts when we become believers. In this sense, it is a one-time experience. It's the first time we experience the Holy Spirit, so it's an initiation. But the gifts continue to flow in two ways – dwelling within us and falling upon us. Spirit within and Spirit upon.

Within us, The Holy Spirit provides power to engage in a lifelong war with temptation and sin. It's an ongoing process of finding faith, learning to trust Jesus and grow more obedient to Him. We learn to walk in the Spirit. The proof is the ability to display the fruits of the Spirit. See Galatians 5:15-16.

Upon us, The Holy Spirit provides gifts and power to practice the great commission and be the Church in a broken world. This is empowerment and it is provided as the need arises. The proof is the ability to use those gifts in concert with Christ to build His Church.

If hope gives us a reason to dream, peace gives us the power to dream. Power comes from the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit touches us with gifts. This is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's an ongoing empowerment as God works within us as we go deeper in our faith and upon us as we use our faith to do the work of the church. This is the Peace of Christ at work.

We are invited to seek Christ and place Him at the centre of our individual lives and in the work of the Church. The conscious decision to do that with sincerity and with zeal begins a process of transformation. It's not a one-time thing. We are required to continue to renew and refresh. We know we are making progress when we experience the Peace of Christ.

My hope in unpacking these four parts of Christ is that it will get us all thinking more deeply. The goal is to wonder – and dream – like I talked about the last two Sundays. It's good to dream. It's good to imagine what amazing things God can do through the church, through people who believe in Him.

HYMN – 148 It came upon a midnight clear

BENEDICTION – May the Peace of Christ, which surpasses all human understanding, fill and empower you today and always.

NEW PRAYER

1. Pray for a clear chest CT Scan on Friday Dec. 8 for Bruce Stephens, which would allow radiation then surgery to remove cancerous growth.
2. Grateful for Ellen Robinson's recovery from a triple bypass and that she is back at home.

CONTINUE TO PRAY

For the ability to deal with unexpected challenges.

Health and healing –

1. For this year's flu, cold and COVID season to be mild.
2. Park Street Place: residents, staff and owner
3. For all those recovering from surgical procedures.
4. Pat McKinnon's friend Linda, Becky Desjardine, Margaret Follows, Ron Mason, Bette Northcott, Karen Northcott, Tom O'Neill, Cherie Pegg, Sandra Pegg, Julie Shaw, Sandra Whitson
5. Anyone seeking or undergoing treatment for addictions
6. Anyone wrestling with anxiety and depression

Seniors and shut ins – Betty Bradley at Albany Retirement Home Petrolia, Dianne Richards at Park Street Place, Jim Lusk at Oaks Wallaceburg, Lane Douglas and Ross Fuchs at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg, Aubrey Butler at home.

Elders on session – Mark Labadie 519-359-4842, Cindy Brewer 519-683-4113, Sheila Eves 519-683-4148, Andrew Neely 519-359-8903, Mark Richards 519-809-9175 and Julie Shaw 226-627-1953.

Board of managers – Wendy Weston (chair), Will Brewer, Linda Malott, Jenn Mason, Von Parking, Mark Richards, Jodie Rich, Bob Vriesema and Mike Wicks.

WE'RE HIRING:

A new administrative assistant.

<https://standrewsdresden.ca/employment/administrative-assistant/>

To start anytime.

WHAT'S UP:

Chair Funding – Have you ever considered giving a Christmas gift to the church? This is the year. Session and the Board of Managers have purchased 40 chairs for Rutherford Hall. You are invited to contribute any amount of money towards the Chair Fund.

Weekly email – Send announcements and new info to standrewspcdresden@gmail.com

Presbytery consultant– Grant Fairley met with session and the board on Nov. 25 and will prepare a report prior to a followup meeting early in the new year.

Alzheimer's Info – The Dresden and District Christian Ministerial Association invites you to hear Tara Seney, Public Education Manager for the Alzheimer's Society in C-K. Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at 9 a.m. at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Tara's informative presentation about Alzheimer's and related Dementias will be 1/2 hour in length. She has brochures of the many services offered in Chatham-Kent for families who need it. The Alzheimer's Society is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to helping people with dementia and their families and caregivers.

DATES

Dec. 10 – Advent 2

Dec. 11 – Gift card order deadline (early this month)

Dec. 12 – 7:30 p.m. Heather Club

Dec. 24 – 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Carols & Message

Jan. 3 – St. Andrew's hosts the Dresden Ministerial at 9 a.m. in Rutherford Hall. Help preparing coffee/snacks is invited. See Pastor Andy

MINISTRY LINKS

Renewal Fellowship – Pastor Andy is employed at 40% time as RF's Executive Director. St. Andrew's is the other 60%.

Dunamis Fellowship Canada – Pastor Andy serves on the Board of Directors.

Community Counselling Centre of London – Pastor Andy is a Therapist Intern as he works towards a degree in Psycho-Spiritual Counselling and registration as a psychotherapist.

WAYS OF GIVING:

E-transfer st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. If required by your bank, our treasurer's name is Linda Moore. Her number is 226-627-2727. If you are asked for a security question, please contact your local bank branch.

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. N0P 1M0.

Gift Cards – You pay face value for the gift cards and the church buys them at a discount through Chatham Christian Schools. Next deadline Dec. 11. Cards will be available for pickup at the church on the 15th or will be distributed in church on the 17th. Gift card orders are on the website. <https://standrewsdresden.ca/> under the "giving" tab

Send e-transfer AND order forms to st.andrewspcdresdenon@gmail.com. Normal deadline (the last Monday of the month) returns in January.