

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

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

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Worship This Week Aug. 10, 2025

Piano – Marilyn Wranich

Sound/powerpoint/livestream –

WELCOME & PRAYER – Andy

SING –

RECEIVE OFFERING –

SING – 687 Blessed assurance, 674 In the bulb there is a flower

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

GOOD NEWS MOMENTS – play video of Camp U-Turn.

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER –

SCRIPTURE INTRO – Much of the Book of Exodus is about God transforming the 12 tribes of Jacob into a great nation. The exodus from Egypt was the first step, followed by a winding road through the wilderness in which they learned an important lesson in trusting God for everything. Manna, quail and water. They were now ready to receive the law. And God led them to the base of Mt. Sinai, the Mountain of God. As with everything else – the exodus and the journey so far – God was not going to make it easy. The Promised Land was not going to be handed to them on a silver platter. They would have to learn HOW to receive God's word and HOW to worship: prepare, honour boundaries and follow God's commands. These are indications of our faith. When we do those things, God responds. It's simple cause and effect. The greater our faith and submission, the more room we make in our lives for God's hands to work. Now that the ground rules were set and the people had prepared, it's time for the show to begin. And it truly was a show.

SCRIPTURE – Exodus 19:16-25

On the morning of the third day, thunder roared and lightning flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain. There was a long, loud blast from a ram's horn, and all the people trembled. 17 Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the Lord had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently. 19 As the blast of the ram's horn grew louder and

louder, Moses spoke, and God thundered his reply. 20 The Lord came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses climbed the mountain. 21 Then the Lord told Moses, “Go back down and warn the people not to break through the boundaries to see the Lord, or they will die. 22 Even the priests who regularly come near to the Lord must purify themselves so that the Lord does not break out and destroy them.” 23 “But Lord,” Moses protested, “the people cannot come up to Mount Sinai. You already warned us. You told me, ‘Mark off a boundary all around the mountain to set it apart as holy.’” 24 But the Lord said, “Go down and bring Aaron back up with you. In the meantime, do not let the priests or the people break through to approach the Lord, or he will break out and destroy them.” 25 So Moses went down to the people and told them what the Lord had said.

PRAYER OVER SCRIPTURE –

MESSAGE – I used the word “show” to describe the manner in which God appeared. God can speak in a gentle whisper, which He did with Elijah. God sent an earthquake, a windstorm and fire – but He was not in those things. He can also speak with great power. In the words of scripture, God is “glorious power” (Exodus 15:6), “awesome power” (Exodus 34:10, Zechariah 10:12), the Spirit of the Lord fills people with power (Micah 3:8), Jesus brought healing power (Luke 8:46) and believers receive power when the Holy Spirit falls upon them (Acts 1:8). God’s power can also be seen in nature, which can be peaceful and powerful. Either way, it’s beautiful.

Let's note a few details. This passage reminds us that we are to wait for God’s commands before acting. Moses only climbed the mountain after receiving the call. “The Lord came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain” (19:20).

Next, God reissued His warning about boundaries. “Then the Lord told Moses, “Go back down and warn the people not to break through the boundaries to see the Lord, or they will die. (19:21). God establishes boundaries because we need them. Without them, there’d be chaos.

God reminded Moses about preparation, specifically the priests. “Even the priests who regularly come near to the Lord must purify themselves so that the Lord does not break out and destroy them” (19:22). We are invited to approach God in a careful way, not as an afterthought. We need to put him first and prepare in the

same way we gather our ingredients before cooking, we obtain the materials before building, we prepare our homes before we receive company.

And then Moses calls for timeout. Hold on, Moses said. I thought no one except me was supposed to cross the boundary and ascend the mountain. (No such thing as a stupid question. Too often, mistakes happen and messes are created when we have an incorrect understanding.) God replied with a clarification. Keep the priests on the other side of the boundary. But it's OK to bring Aaron. We're still in the setup stage for something larger, the presentation of the 10 Commandments.

The truth we learn at this point from the show on the mountain – the thunder, lightning, dense cloud and long, loud blast from the horn – is that God is powerful, majestic and mysterious. And we are not. That's not a popular idea. We worship celebrities. When a well known person dies, what often follows is a time of retrospection, in which an endless line of ordinary fans and famous friends provide glowing witnesses. Even if you've never heard his music, the entire world heard all about Ozzy Osborne when he died a few weeks ago. Ozzy was a legend, first as a member of Black Sabbath and later as a solo artist and star of a reality TV show. I found out about his passing when I tuned into CBC Radio. Typically, when a celebrity dies, it's the final item in the newscast. Only rarely do they lead the news. Exceptions are Elvis, John Lennon and Lady Diana (all died young and suddenly and their achievements changed the world.) I was amazed that The World at Six, the CBC's flagship radio newscast, Ozzy's death was the top story. I brushed it off, thinking it was a rogue decision by someone junior when the executive producer was on vacation. (It is summer after all.) Turns out, this was not a one off. For days, the coverage was extensive. The funeral was tearful and every rock radio station provided updates. Even Buckingham Palace got into it. On the day of the funeral, during the Changing of the Guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace, the band performed a rendition of one of Black Sabbath's best-known songs.

Ozzy was a pioneer and one of the founders of heavy metal – a genre of rock that's loved by many. He's known as the "godfather of heavy metal" to the extent that many hard rock and metal groups say without him, they would not exist. Even

Contemporary Christian Music magazine wrote a glowing tribute. He was outrageous and larger than life and had an enormous following. He changed the world – which is significant. He also had a passion for life and performance. His final concert took place two-and-a-half weeks prior to his death. I appreciate the contributions of gifted people. But we neglect the obvious fact that every gift and talent we have comes from God.

We are reminded of Christ's lesson that in the Kingdom, "those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last" (Matthew 10:16). "God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth" (Matthew 5:5). "So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:14). "But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant" (Luke 22:26). All of this is the opposite of what the world teaches and prizes.

This is not to suggest that God's people are to be weak. It's the opposite. "This is my command—be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

This concept of being strong and courageous while also humble and servantlike is impossible for the world to understand. It's difficult even for believers for the simple fact that too many of us are more like the world than we are like Christ.

This is what God was trying to drum into the heads of the people of Israel as they were being prepared to be God's chosen people, those who were anointed with the awesome duty to witness God's love, peace and justice to the world and be the antidote or cure for our sinful condition.

In the end, we are invited to choose between ourselves and God. Do we worship the human condition or do we worship God? People can be beautiful and talented – but every one of us is tainted by sin. As powerful as some people are, they are nothing compared to the Creator. Don't put our trust in princes and powerful people, as the author of Psalm 146 witnesses so powerfully.

Praise the Lord! Let all that I am praise the Lord. 2 I will praise the Lord as long as I live. I will sing praises to my God with my dying breath. 3 Don't put your

confidence in powerful people; there is no help for you there. 4 When they breathe their last, they return to the earth, and all their plans die with them. 5 But joyful are those who have the God of Israel as their helper, whose hope is in the Lord their God. 6 He made heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them. He keeps every promise forever. 7 He gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry. The Lord frees the prisoners. 8 The Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are weighed down. The Lord loves the godly. 9 The Lord protects the foreigners among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked. 10 The Lord will reign forever. He will be your God, O Jerusalem, throughout the generations. Praise the Lord!

SING – 324 Great is Thy faithfulness

BENEDICTION

NEW PRAYER

- Aubrey Butler, who is in the Chatham Hospice.
- Gaza. A few weeks ago, the Moderator of The Presbyterian Church in Canada joined other faith leaders in an [ecumenical letter to the Prime Minister](#). It's attached.
- Condolences to the family of Rev. Barry Kentner, who passed away early Sunday evening. Celebration of Life planned for Aug. 23. Obit to come at [Life Transitions](#).

CONTINUE TO PRAY

- Healing and strength – Becca Braithwaite, Pam Cornell, Susan Doom's father, Jen Langstaff Mason, Bonnie Lozon, Kris Richards, Jennifer Sayers, Bruce Stephens, Julie & Dan Shaw
- Shut ins – Dianne Richards at Wallaceburg Retirement Residence; Bonnie Lozon, Jim Lusk and Sandra Pegg at Oaks Wallaceburg; Ross Fuchs and Shirley Houston at Fairfield Park in Wallaceburg; Aubrey Butler and Margaret Follows at home.

WHAT'S UP

- **Aug. 10 – Dresden Christian Concerts** with music from Evangel Chatham worship team and message from Pastor Shane Fitch at Rotary Park at 6:30 p.m. Rain location St. Andrew's.

- **Aug 11-15 – Vacation Bible School** at Dawn Valley Bible Methodist Church, 961 Dawn Valley Road. Mon-Fri 0930-1130. Ages 1-14. Theme: “LEGO – building your life on Jesus.” To register, call 619-683-2093.
- **Aug 18-22 – Soccer Camp 2025** for ages 6-12, presented by the Dresden and District Christian Ministerial Association, held at Dresden Community church. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. daily. \$100 (assistance available if needed.) Presented by athletesinaction.ca. Register at aia.sh/dresden. dcc@kent.net or 519-6836541 for more info.