

Sunday August 17, 2025

Church In the Park: Order of Service

Welcome/Call to Worship/Prayer: Pastor Rob Elka – Evangel Pentecostal

Worship Set #1: Patrick Sit, Pastor Gord Tetley, and Team

1. To God Be The Glory
2. 10,000 Reasons
3. Hosanna (Praise Is Rising)

Offering/Announcements/Greeting: Pastor Gord Tetley – North Dresden Baptist

Worship Set #2

4. In Christ Alone
5. Reckless Love
6. O Praise The Name

Message/Prayer: Pastor Andy Cornell – St. Andrew's Presbyterian

If I was asked to choose one word to describe the state of the world right now, it's "uncertainty." "Confusion" "division" and "anger" might be high on the list, but uncertainty seems to sum up our collective state of mind as a people.

There are many reasons to feel the way we do.

No one knows how things are going to turn out in **Gaza**, in the **Ukraine**. It's anyone's guess what the impacts of the U.S. **tariffs** will be. The ridiculous cost of **real estate**. No one has any clue what the **president** of the United States is going to do or say next. We don't know whether this summer's record-breaking hot **weather** is going to get worse and if so, how it's going to impact life. Closer to home, it's anyone's guess whether the **York 1** waste processing facility is going to happen and if it does, how much truck traffic are we going to get and what's it going to do to our roads?

You might say “hold on. What’s new? No one has ever known anything for sure. Ancestors survived 2 world wars Great depression. People have survived greater challenges than these.” That is true.

But I believe there are two things which make uncertainty in 2025 different.

First is the emergence of **artificial intelligence**. So much of our lives is now online – and yet we no longer have assurance that what we read or see on the Internet is real. AI is going to make many jobs obsolete in the next few years.

The second thing that’s different is the fact that **change** is happening too fast. Those who study psychology and leadership understand that change – any change – is stressful. For the vast amount of human history, in general, things happened very gradually, almost unnoticeably. The change meter has slowly been increasing in the last few hundred years to the point where change has become perpetual — occurring all the time in an ongoing way. And it became pervasive — unfolding in multiple areas of life at once, touching every aspect of life. We all know the frustration in discovering that a process or a piece of technology that we just got used to is suddenly outmoded and a new version awaits.

Human brains were **not designed for exponential change** or for the threat of being replaced by artificial intelligence. We are wired to be sensitive to risks. It’s why we pay more attention to negativity than what’s positive. It’s about survival. Any change is automatically received as a negative.

But you didn't come here to hear about doom and gloom.

Here's the hope. Before I read this I invite you to clench your fists close your eyes and embody all those sources of trauma. And then as I read Psalm 46 (printed in handouts) invite you to exhale. Release the tension, anxiety, uncertainty.

Psalm 46 – New Living Translation (printed your handouts).

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. 2 So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. 3 Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! 4 A river brings joy to the city of our God, the sacred home of the Most High. 5 God dwells in that city; it cannot be destroyed. From the very break of day, God will protect it. 6 The nations are in chaos, and their kingdoms crumble! God’s voice thunders, and

the earth melts! 7 The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress. 8 Come, see the glorious works of the Lord: See how he brings destruction upon the world. 9 He causes wars to end throughout the earth. He breaks the bow and snaps the spear; he burns the shields with fire. 10 "Be still, and know that I am God! I will be honoured by every nation. I will be honoured throughout the world." 11 The Lord of Heaven's Armies is here among us; the God of Israel is our fortress.

There is so much wisdom and truth and power packed into this short Psalm. I could probably preach from it for an entire year.

I can sum it up this way – No matter what happens in this broken, stressful, confused, mixed up, tragic, sad, dark, sinful, misguided, foolish, superficial world – and those are just a few of the many adjectives we can use – no matter what happens, God has our backs, his vast power is willing and able to intervene, and the Kingdom awaits.

Psalm 46 was likely written 2,700 years ago in response to the invasion of Israel from a foreign army. But given the wording and the examples it could have been written in 2025.

In times of crisis, Israel would sometimes turn to other nations for assistance, when they should have turned to the Lord. Verse 1 reminds us He is an ever-present help. And while God can and does act of His accord, His full power is not used for the simple reason that we do not seek it. We do not ask. Or if we do it's out of desperation, a last-minute hail Mary pass into the end zone when we have nothing left.

The psalmist is reminding Israel that they are God's chosen people. Chosen not because of what they did, or because of their faith. Chosen not to make them superior to other cultures. Rather, they were chosen to bring God's word into the world, to show the way and from their ranks the Son of God would appear in human form when the time was right.

When stuff happens, when we face uncertainty, the natural human reaction is to turn inward and fret, worry and get stressed. Or we turn to other things to take our

minds off the problem – we eat and drink and spend too much money on entertainment. It happened in ancient Israel and it continues today.

But here's the thing – all of this uncertainty is happening not just as the consequences of sin. Things happen because they provide an opportunity to grow, it tests our faith and when we finally submit and God provides strength and deliverance, we can give him thanks and glory.

Check out verse 4-5, where the psalmist refers to a city. In those days, it was Jerusalem, under attack, but fed water from a manmade river built by Hezekiah.

Today, we understand this city to be the church – not a building or an institution but the worldwide collection of believers, united by The Holy Spirit. This city is a spiritual place, which actually cannot be adequately described.

It's not far away. It's closer than we might think.

This city can be understood as The Lord is with his people. We are invited to reach out to Him in times of uncertainty and distress. Don't be like Israel, which turned to other nations and false gods.

To be sure, what is happening in the world right now is the result of the brokenness of the human condition, our sinful nature and the poor choices we collectively make. When we reach out in prayer and submission, we will receive strength to endure, and to live another day and be able to emerge stronger to face our foes when they inevitably return.

Those who believe are residents of this city (v4-5). They are full citizens. And as we live and breathe we are ambassadors, inviting others to come.

Most of Psalm 46 is a declaration of all these wonderful truths.

Is God big enough, powerful enough to deal with the problems? We know the answer. Will he actually bring peace, an end to suffering? Yes – one day. But not yet.

What God will bring is the strength to endure end times. He will provide refuge and shelter. His church on earth will be the Holy City.

His invitation to the 8.2 billion people who were created in God's image and currently reside on this broken planet is to "come and see."

Rabbi, where are you staying? Come and see.

Can anything good come from Nazareth? Come and see for yourself.

Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did! Could he possibly be the Messiah?

We are powerless to change human nature. We cannot slow down the pace of change – short of moving to the forest and living off the grid – how do we cope? In all challenges, we turn to Christ, who "is [eternally changeless, always] the same yesterday and today and forever" – Hebrews 13:8.

Eternally changeless. Be still and know. Let's pray.

Closing Song: Great Are You Lord

Benediction: Pastor Rob Elka