

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Mother's Day

Give us a wave

Zoom coffee hour next week

OPENING SENTENCES

Jesus says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled."

**WE LONG FOR ABIDING PEACE
AND FRIENDSHIP THAT RENEWS OUR SOULS.**

Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life."

**WE SEEK WISDOM THAT ENDURES
AND GUIDANCE FOR OUR JOURNEY.**

Jesus says, "Where I am, there you may be also."

**WE COME TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST.
LET US WORSHIP OUR GOD!**

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Eternal God,
Our Rock and our refuge,
You shelter us in times of fear
when the troubles of this world seem to overwhelm us.
In you alone we find abundant life.
In you alone we trust.
Receive our worship and our love
as the God who creates and gives life to the world,
as the Son who preached the truth of the good news,
and the Holy Spirit who guides us;
this day and always. Amen.

Hymn 414 God, reveal your presence

CONFESSION

Scripture promises that all those who believe in Christ
will not be put to shame.

Confident in these promises
let us come with boldness
confessing our sin before God
and one another

**STEADFAST AND LOVING GOD,
WHILE WE KNOW CHRIST IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE,
WE CONFESS THAT WE HAVE OFTEN FAILED TO FOLLOW.
WE SOMETIMES DOUBT HIS WISDOM AND TRUTH.
RATHER THAN LIVE THE LIFE HE OFFERS,
WE CARVE OUT OUR OWN PATHS AND PURSUE OUR OWN DESIRES.**

FORGIVE US

**FOR THE MANY WAYS WE HAVE FALLEN SHORT
OF YOUR PURPOSE FOR OUR LIVES.**

**GIVE US COURAGE TO FOLLOW JESUS,
WHO CONTINUES TO SHOW US THE WAY.**

AMEN

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Friends in Christ,
let not your hearts be troubled;
know that, in Christ, you are forgiven.
Accept God's grace and forgiveness this day,
and extend it to others for Jesus' sake. Amen.

TIME WITH THE YOUNG AND YOUNG AT HEART

SCRIPTURE

Acts 7:55–60

Psalm 31:1–5, 15–16

1 Peter 2:2–10

John 14:1–14

SERMON - A Place Called Home

In the house in which I grew up
when company was about to arrive
there was always a great deal of activity.
The house was cleaned,
beds were made,
food was prepared
and goodies baked.
The grass would be cut.
Everything would be in readiness
so that when visitors arrived
they would be welcomed;
so that there was nothing that would pull my mother or father away
from the time they spent with our guests.

What a wonderful thing it is
when we are welcomed as honoured guests
into someone's home.

As Jesus shared with his disciples
all that was about to happen to him
in John chapter 14;
as Jesus shared with his disciples
that he would be opposed,
arrested
and put to death;
Jesus speaks to them of the purpose behind his suffering:
welcoming and restoration.

All of those things that we acknowledge in our worship
as we move through Holy Week and Good Friday,
do not exist on their own;
they are necessary for Easter to come.

We acknowledge Jesus suffering
at the hands of the Roman authorities
and his cruel death,
not simply to acknowledge the inhumanity of humankind;
but because as Jesus suffers all these things
he becomes the remedy
for our cruelty
our selfishness
and our inhumanity.

And in his death
Jesus puts to death
all those things that would separate us from God.
Jesus opens for us the gates of righteousness
that we may be welcomed into the presence of God.
That we might have a place:
a place called home.

Jesus tells the disciples:
*'Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Believe* in God,
believe also in me.
²In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places.
If it were not so,
would I have told you that I go
to prepare a place for you?**
³*And if I go and prepare a place for you,
I will come again and will take you to myself,*

*so that where I am,
there you may be also.*

*⁴And you know the way to the place where I am going.**

Just as we prepare our homes
to welcome friends and guests
so too scripture promises that Jesus has prepared a place for us.
That we will be welcomed and received by God
and that we shall bask in his presence
-- or as the Aaronic blessing says:
God will look us full in the face.

How is it that we will be so welcomed?
-- because we have a relationship with our God.
As we have seen Jesus pour out his grace and compassion
on all those he encountered in his earthly ministry
we have seen the compassion of the Father,
in and through the son.

Just a couple of weeks ago,
one of my cousins posted a photo on social media
of a family photo:
it was a picture of my paternal grandmother,
my father,
myself,
and our two eldest children
as youngsters
--four generations.

When one of my father's cousins saw the photo
she asked if the person on the left was my father.
I responded, that no, that was me.
My father was on the other side.

And my father's cousin commented
that my image was how she had remembered my father
running around French River
some 70 years ago.

A strong family resemblance
-- we see the father in the Son.

In our Christian faith,
in our worship
and in our preaching,
there is a tendency to reduce everything to the practical.
Preachers preach sermon series
on 10 ways to a happier life,
or plumb every sermon for some moral truth;
if we were only more kind,
or more just,
we would be like God.

But reflecting on this text
Jean Vanier,
theologian and founder of the L'Arche movement,
suggests that we look toward the mystery of our faith
rather than the morality;
that in our attempts to reduce the Christian faith
to a set of precepts and principles
we flatten out the mystery of our faith;
that we are united with God,
through Jesus Christ,
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

That in Jesus Christ
we are given a glimpse of God the Father

as we gaze upon Jesus' love for the world.
And Jesus then promises that if we place our complete trust in him
the Holy Spirit will come and dwell in us,
and that through the Spirit's miraculous working
the Father will be seen in us.
Not because of any action that we can perform
but because it is a gift from God.

That God looks on us with love
enabling us to do far more than we could ever imagine;
because God moves in us.

Imagine that!
That we can see God
all around us
in faithful lives of service
by the Holy Spirit.
That others might even see God in us
through that same Spirit.

We never know when it might occur.
But we know that the potential is there
as surely as we are welcomed and received in God's presence;
not because of anything we do
but because as a gracious host
God has prepared a place for us.

And that place we can call home.

MINUTE FOR MISSION

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LORD'S PRAYER
God of power and might,

you raised your Son, Jesus from the dead,
freeing our hearts from trouble
and preparing a place of joy for all your children.
So we thank you for your promise and your peace
which we need so desperately in these days.

In Christ, we know you as the way.
You deliver all who turn to you
in moments of challenge or uncertainty.
We pray for those who feel lost or alone,
those who live with great anxiety and doubt
and any who are fearful of what tomorrow might bring.
May those who are struggling be renewed in their faith
that they might see a hope-filled future for them,
with the promise of rest and renewal.

In Christ, we know you as the truth.
You reveal the falsehood and lies
that ensnare us in these confusing times.
We pray for those who have put their faith in false hope and flimsy promises,
those who are deceived by the fabrications of the power hungry
and any who are misled
by distortions and twisted claims that circulate each day:
God of the Truth, reveal the shallowness of things that distract or mislead us
and empower us to see what is true.

In Christ, we know you as the life.
You promise to overcome all that is rooted in death and decay
by your resurrecting power.
We pray for people who struggle with illness or grief
and all who live with deep sadness,
depression or hopelessness.
We pray for those for whom each day seems like a chore,

and those for whom opportunities for abundant life
are cut down
by acts of discrimination
or the loss of what seemed like security
just weeks ago.
God of all Life and each life,
heal those who are suffering
and make your justice known in our land.

Help each of us
and your whole church to follow in the footsteps of Christ
so that in our living and loving,
your kingdom of justice and love is revealed.
This we pray in the name of Jesus,
who taught us to pray:
OUR FATHER ...

Hymn # 472 We are God's people

Charge and Benediction

Choral Amens

Postlude