**St. Andrews United**

**Church**



**60 West Avenue, St. Thomas 519-631-4558**

**E-mail:** [**standrewsucgra@rogers.com**](mailto:standrewsucgra@rogers.com)

**Web site:** [**www.standrewsunitedchurch.com**](http://www.standrewsunitedchurch.com/)

**Ministers: The people of St. Andrew’s**

**Pastor: Rev. Cheryl Bolton**

**Ministry of Music: Merna Edison**

**/Brian and Lynn Sloan**

**February 23rd 2025**

**WE GATHER**

**Welcome -** Love, forgiveness, and understanding are epiphanies to us. As we gather to worship, we seek the illumination of Christ, the redeeming power of God’s presence, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, calling us to wholeness and holiness. Let us Come together, to hear the Word of Hope and Healing. Soften our hearts that we might receive God’s word. Amen.

**Announcements**

**Acknowledging Our Kinship -** As we begin today, we acknowledge the history, spirituality, culture, and stewardship of the land of the Indigenous People of this region. We seek to live in respect, peace, and right relations as we live, work, and worship upon Traditional Territory. We are mindful of broken covenants and the need to strive to make right with all our relations.

**Candle Lighting -** We light this candle as a reminder that the presence of Jesus guides our lives.

**Call To Worship -**

Strength is commanding the wind and sea to obey,

**Strength is wielding a slingshot in the face of a raging giant.**

Strength is accepting vulnerability from inside the boat,

**Strength is standing in solidarity with the powerless.**

Strength is turning a cheek,

**Strength is loving an enemy.**

We come to worship

a God who redefines our vision of strength.

**Gathering Hymn - In the Bulb - 703 VU**

**Prayer of Confession**

God, we are so conditioned to respond in kind.

We are so worried that when the reckoning comes,

we will find ourselves left with the short end of the stick.

And not without reason.

The powerful take and take and lie and lie

and oppress and oppress

seemingly without consequence.

Teach us to love with skill.

Teach us to love with precision.

Teach us to love with abandon,

trusting that when we step into

the ocean of your abundant love

we will receive the blessings of your abundant life. Amen.

**Young at Heart - *Who are you?***

**Hymn - Draw the Circle Wide - 145 VU**

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD’S WORD**

**Scripture Reading - Genesis 45: 3-11,15, Luke 6: 27-38**

**Ministry of Music**

**Meditation - What if…?**

**Hymn - Make Me a Channel of Your Peace - 684 VU**

**RESPOND TO GOD’S WORD**

**Invitation to Offering**

The act of giving not only helps this community and its many ministries but is also an act of self-care—we connect to our sacred selves when we share with generous hearts. Our offerings will be received.

**Offertory Hymn - Praise God, From Whom All Blessings**

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;***

***praise God, all creatures high and low;***

***give thanks to God in love made known:***

***Creator, Word and Spirit, One.***

**Offering Prayer**

**Prayers of the People**

Lord, the hardest thing you asked

Was that we love our enemies. (Matthew 5:44)

We know how we'd like to love them:

We'd love our enemies to be far away.

We'd love them not to compromise our security.

We'd love them not to scare us or change the way we live.

We'd love them to be lovable.

You know, God,

We'd love it to be popular to love enemies.

We'd love our neighbours to respect us for this good deed.

We'd love the people on the news to provide examples of how to love.

But then, if loving enemies were easy,

Jesus wouldn't have told us about the tax collectors and gentiles,

Who love only their friends. (Matthew 5:46-47)

If loving enemies were easy, we know

We wouldn't need God's strong arms to bear us up in difficult times.

We wouldn't need the blood of Christ to save us from human sin.

We wouldn't need the Spirit flowing among us, wiping our tears.

We wouldn't need the Bible to tell us what the world does not.

God of all mercy,

Who loved us when we were your sinful enemies, (Romans 5:8)

Who saved us through your immeasurable grace,

Who gave us a gift we did not deserve,

Let us imitate you by loving those who are yet our enemies. (Ephesians 2:1-22)

Teach us to know how to love enemies,

To wish them the best of the life you intend each human to have,

And then pray and act so those wishes come true.

Teach us hope,

so we know that with your blessing, impossible dreams become reality.

Teach us faith,

so we know that only the strength to stop hating

will halt the cycles of violence and revenge.

Teach us forgiveness,

which we know is suffering love through piercing tears.

Teach us, O Lord, your ways.

When our community looks at our congregation,

Hears our words and sees our deeds,

Help them to know that you, the God of love, live among us

And that they can come to us to learn about Christian love of enemies.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Closing Hymn - What Does the Lord - 701 VU**

**Commissioning and Benediction**

Go now, turning grudges into grace.

Turn fractures into forgiveness.

Turn hardness into hearts broken open by love.

***Announcements***

**Upcoming**

* **Art Guild ~ Hall February 24 10:30am**
* **St.Thomas UC and area ministers meeting February 27th~ Hall**

***The Foodbank item for March 2 is pancake mix and/or Syrup***



**Souper Sunday: There will be a soup luncheon on the Annual Meeting Sunday which is March 2nd.**

Stay Tuned for more exciting details! Reserve June 8th on your calendar for the 100th Anniversary celebration of the United Church. A pavilion has been reserved at Pinafore and local UC churches will be working together for a special celebration.



Mark May 3rd on your calendar for the Annual Yard Sale. More info. To follow regarding donation, drop off dates etc.



**Pancake and Sausage Supper on Tuesday, March 4th from 4:30-6pm. Free will offering(suggesting $10) at New Vision Community Church.**



