

Sunday 07 May 2023 - Easter 5



The Stoning of Saint Stephen painted by Rembrandt © 1625, www.wikipedia.org

Opening Hymn - VU356 - Seek Ye First

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness;
And all these things shall be added unto you. Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you; Seek, and you shall find.
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you. Hallelu, Hallelujah!

We do not live by bread alone, but by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God. Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Land Acknowledgement

We gather here mindful of the many who, for millennia, have called this valley home or depended on its trails for safe passage.

We know this community as Fernie; it is also the unceded territory of the Ktunaxa people and Métis Nation.

We strive for reconciliation with our Indigenous siblings, and pray that the Creator will guide our way.

Lighting our Candles

We light this single candle to celebrate
**that we have found new ways to be together
new ways to be family, in person and online,
united as the body of Christ. Amen**

Call to Worship

You come with questions and doubts;

we are welcome here.

You come with concerns and anxieties;

we are welcome here.

You come as part of a searching faith community;

we are welcome here.

You come believing that God's peace will be your peace;

We are welcome here. Let us worship!

David Sparks, Summerland, BC

Opening Prayer

Come and gather round in this holy time of song and prayer, word and silence.

Come and gather round as we celebrate the spirit that is within and through us.

Come, Great Creator, and be with us in this time of community. **Amen**

Jim McKean, Severn, ON

The Proclamation of the Word

Reader: Marion Weipert

Reading: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16, Acts 6.8-15, 7.1, 51-60

1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;

let me never be put to shame; *

deliver me in your righteousness.

2 Incline your ear to me; *

make haste to deliver me.

3 Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe, *

for you are my crag and my stronghold;

for the sake of your name, *

lead me and guide me.

4 Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *

for you are my tower of strength.

5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, *

for you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

15 My times are in your hand; *

rescue me from the hand of my enemies,

and from those who persecute me.

16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *

and in your loving-kindness save me."

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Thanks be to God.

Acts 6.8-15, 7.1, 51-60

The Arrest of Stephen

Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and others of those from Cilicia and Asia, stood up and argued with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated some men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.' They stirred up the people as well as the elders and the scribes; then they suddenly confronted him, seized him, and brought him before the council. They set up false witnesses who said, 'This man never stops saying things against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and will change the customs that Moses handed on to us.' And all who sat in the council looked intently at him, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech to the Council

Then the high priest asked him, 'Are these things so?' And Stephen replied: 'You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are forever opposing the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors used to do. Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, and now you have become his betrayers and murderers. You are the ones that received the law as ordained by angels, and yet you have not kept it.'

The Stoning of Stephen

When they heard these things, they became enraged and ground their teeth at Stephen. But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

Hear What the Spirit is Saying to the Church

Thanks be to God.

Hymn of Praise – VU670 - Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me stand,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;

Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the light

Take my hand, precious Lord, Lead me home.

When my way grows drear, Precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call, Hold my hand lest I fall:
Take my hand, precious Lord, Lead me home.

When the darkness appears And the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand, Guide my feet, hold my hand:
Take my hand, precious Lord, Lead me home.

Sermon: The Reverend Andrea L. Brennan
"Love Your Enemies"

Prayers of the People
Led by: Norma Bayer

We thank you, O God, for the day you have given to us,
as we learn from Stephen the necessity of speaking the truth.

Lord God, hear our prayer. Alleluia!

We praise you, O God, for those who lead us in small and large ways;
for our Fernie Knox United Church Board, our Christ Church Anglican Church
Committee and our Joint Church Committee who seek to hear you and lead us in
our Shared Ministry;

For Deborah, our President; Treena, our Executive Minister, Kathy our Regional
Minister, for Lynne, our Archbishop; for Andrea, our Regional Dean
for Carmen, our Moderator, the United Church of Canada, Pacific Mountain Region
for Linda, our Primate; the Anglican Church of Canada, the Diocese of Kootenay.

Lord God, hear our prayer. Alleluia!

We ask you, O God, to bless all who work in service
for the frontline workers, in medical care, and education
for the frontline workers, in hospitality, grocery and food services
for all who are tired, weary and exhausted,

Lord God, hear our prayer. Alleluia!

We ask you, O God, to be with those who are on our hearts this day,
give peace to those who struggle,
give relief to all who are starving,
give hope to those who are despairing;

silence is kept for additional petitions

Lord God, hear our prayer. Alleluia!

*We ask you, O God, to be with all who will die today,
that they may be welcomed home into your arms,
that their families and friends may find the deep peace which passeth all
understanding may they always remember the one
whom they loved and who loved them,*

Lord God, hear our prayer. Alleluia!

*We ask you, O God, to be with us –
in sharing our grief
in celebrating our joy
in leading us along the paths you would have us follow,*

Lord God, hear our prayer. Alleluia!

[We Responding in Giving and Gratitude](#)

Our Church Tithes and Offerings

[Invitation to Offering](#)

As our loving Shepherd, Jesus reaches out to help us through all the troubles of life, in loving ways. Let us reach out to each other and to others in our community and in the world beyond as we present our offering this morning.

George Allan, Chatham, ON

Please support our ministry with prayer and by cheque or e-transfer to:

[Knox United Church](#)

Box 1808, Fernie, BC VoB 1Mo
knoxferniefinance@gmail.com

[Christ Church Anglican](#)

Box 279, Fernie, BC VoB 1Mo
christchurchferniefinance@gmail.com

We sing the doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
praise God all creatures high and low;
praise God above ye heavenly host;
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

[Your Generosity Matters:](#)

[Moving Forward Together: United Against Hate](#)

[Presented by: Mary Elson](#)

[Communion Hymn – MV195 - Long Ago and Far Away](#)

Long ago and far away
Jesus lived and worked and prayed
healed the sick and the fearful and lonely
lived his life to show us God's way.

Stretched his arms out as he said
Fill the cup and share the bread
Remember me in love and joy and blessing.

Jesus gathered the children around him
spoke of Love and the joy to be found
told them stories of wisdom and wonder
God's creation in all that's around.

Stretched his arms out as he said
Fill the cup and share the bread
Remember me in love and joy and blessing.

Jesus called all his friends to be with him
share the bread and the cup once again
life to you I will offer it gladly
love will be with you right to the end.

Stretched his arms out as he said
Fill the cup and share the bread
Remember me in love and joy and blessing.

Communion Liturgy

May God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts!

We lift them up to God.

We must give thanks to God our Creator!

The Creator blesses us all!

All that is sacred, all that is holy, come from You, our living God.
When we cannot be physically together because of a pandemic, you are there.
When we lament our physical distance from each other, you comfort us.

You created order from chaos, your children from clay, and blessed us
with minds to think, hearts to love and mouths to speak.

Even when we fail you; even when we disappoint ourselves, you are there.
Loving us through the chaos, standing us up when we fall down.
Calming us as we live with a virus, we were certain would be over by now.

Staying with the remains of children discovered in multitudinous unmarked graves.
Giving protection to those who are traumatised from generations old hurts.
Reminding us that there are alternatives to war as the world struggles for peace.

Protecting us from the evil in the world; you are there.
And so, we join with the chorus of heavenly bodies as we say;

**Holy, holy, holy God, Holy and blessed are you.
Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Glory to you, O God most high.**

And so, as we gather from around this fragile earth
our island home to celebrate the night you made the ordinary, extraordinary.

That fateful night, at supper with his friends,
Jesus took ordinary bread, bread they had shared many times before.

He took it, blessed it, broke it and said; "This is my body, broken in love for you".

Jesus took the cup, what was left from the meal,
a meal shared many times before.

He raised it, blessed it and said; "Take this cup, the cup of salvation.

When you take this bread and this cup, remember that I am with you always.
A covenant and promise I make, to never forsake you".

And so, as we take this ordinary made extraordinary
this bread and cup, God's promise and love,
broken and poured, blessed and shared,
joining us together as a spiritual family.

**Christ has died,
Christ has risen,
Christ will come again.**

We take our bread, or that which represents Christ's body.
We take our cup, or that which represents Christ's blood.
When we consume these, we will never be the same.
We will become closer to you, dear God, and to each other.

We thank you God, for the many blessings of this Earth.
We ask you to pray for those we carry on our hearts this day.
We ask you to be with those who need your strength,
and to those you call home today,
may those they leave behind always know your love.

Joining our prayers and praises together,
Let us pray the prayer our Saviour taught us...

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. AMEN**

Distribution of Communion
Taking the Bread, Pouring the Cup

The bread of Christ - **Broken in love for us.**

The cup of salvation - **Our way to eternal life.**

The elements are consumed. A moment of silence follows.

Commissioning

May our loving God bless us so that,
like Stephen, we may sense the heavens opened to us;
like Thomas, we may find our way to Christ's side; and
like Philip, we may discover the Christ,
and in Christ, we may find our Lord and Redeemer. **Amen**

Wanda Winfield, Blenheim, ON

Extinguishing the Christ Candle

We depart from this Worship Service
**confident in the knowledge that, whether online or in person we will see each
again soon. Thanks be to God. Amen**

Closing Hymn – VU652 - Be Still, My Soul

Be still, my soul, for God is on your side;
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Trust in your God, your saviour and your guide,
who through all changes faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul, your best, your heavenly friend
through stormy ways leads to a peaceful end.

Be still, my soul, your God will undertake
to guide the future surely as the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still my soul, life's tempests still obey
the voice that once the waves wild fury stayed.

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever in God's peace;
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
love's joys restored, our strivings all shall cease.
Be still, my soul, when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

Upcoming this Week

Monday 08 May – Working from Home

8:15 pm – Pre-Marriage Preparation with Derek & Kali

Tuesday 09 May – Office Hours

Wednesday 10 May – Office Hours

10:00 am – Saints Day Eucharist

1:00 pm – Pastoral Call

Thursday 11 May – Working from Home

1:00 pm – Hymn Selection in the Parish Hall

Friday 12 May – Andrea's Sabbath

Saturday 13 May – Catch up and Sermon Writing

Sunday 014 May @ 10:00 am – Easter 6 – Holy Communion

If joining from home, please have your Communion elements ready.

Credits:

The liturgy today has been compiled with resources from Gathering: Lent/Easter 2023, Voices United, and More Voices United. Communion image: Bev Delyea, used with permission. Candle lighting and extinguishing prayers written by Reverend Canon Andrea L. Brennan ©2023. CCLI #3172609