

ST. BARNABAS ANGLICAN CHURCH  
BULLETIN & SERMON  
JANUARY 3, 2021



OPENING HYMN ~ I AM SENDING YOU LIGHT

I am sending you light, to heal you, to hold you.  
I am sending you light to hold you in love.

No matter where you go, no matter where you've been  
You'll never walk alone, I feel you deep within.

No matter what you feel, or what you choose to show  
I'm always there for you, so I want you to know that...

I walk the path with you, so go slow, dear one, don't hurry,  
I'll just go like you need to go, there is no need to worry.

GREETING

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

**Come let us worship.**

From the rising of the sun to its setting

**the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.**

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

**O praise the name of the Lord!**

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

**God of power and life,**

**the glory of all who believe in you,**

**fill the world with your splendour**

**and show the nations the light of your truth;**

**through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,**

**who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, Amen.**

## PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

PSALM, 147:13-21

REFRAIN **Praise God, O Zion.**

Worship the Lord, O Jerusalem; **praise your God, O Zion;**

For he has strengthened the bars of your gates; **he has blessed your children within you. R**

He has established peace on your borders; **he satisfies you with the finest wheat.**

He sends out his command to the earth, **and his word runs very swiftly. R**

He gives snow like wool; **he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.**

He scatters his hail like bread crumbs; **who can stand against his cold? R**

He sends forth his word and melts them; **he blows with his wind, and the waters flow.**

He declares his word to Jacob, **his statutes and his judgements to Israel.**

He has not done so to any other nation; **to them he has not revealed his judgements.**

**Hallelujah! R**

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS, 1:3-14 (King James Version)

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

<sup>4</sup> According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

<sup>5</sup> Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

<sup>6</sup> To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

<sup>7</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

<sup>8</sup> Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

<sup>9</sup> Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

<sup>10</sup> That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

<sup>11</sup> In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

<sup>12</sup> That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

<sup>13</sup> In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

<sup>14</sup> Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS, 1:3-14 (New Revised Standard Version)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his

children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Lord be with you, **and also with you.**

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John, **Glorify to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

JOHN 1:(1-9) 10-18

[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of Christ, **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

## SERMON

How is your ancient Greek? Our reading today from Ephesians is moment when an ability to read ancient Greek would be desirable, because the English translation does it no justice. The Beginning of Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, 1:3-14, was originally written in one long sentence. It is unincumbered by grammar, and reads much more like a poem. And like all poetry, the message is embedded in the form; the poetic style itself is part of the message. It is a message overflowing in praises and thanksgiving for God. We are reminded that we are the blessed ones, chosen even before the foundation of the world to receive God's blessings through Jesus Christ. We are adopted and redeemed, forgiven by God's grace. Through Christ we can glimpse the mystery of God and accept our inheritance of hope. As God's own people, we praise God's glory.

Poetry is of course art, and art has a way of communicating quite differently than written words. On the back of your bulletin today there are two versions of Ephesians 1:3-14 printed, a New Standard Revised Version (NSRV), which we commonly use in our services these days, and a King James Version (KJV), which many of us read while growing up. In fact I read the King James Version today because here the English translation is a little more poem-like and I think captures the message a little better; it gives us the news both through its content and its style.

My favourite books are ones where the style of the book plays a role in the story. Think of books that are written for example as diary entries; they leave us with a very intimate understanding of the character and their point of view. Or there is something called an epistolary novel, which is a story written as a series of documents. *Dracula* is one famous example.

Here, in in the opening lines of Ephesians, we have overflowing abundance. Paul's style is nothing less than extravagant, with a bewildering array of adjectives, pronouns and possessive nouns stacked together in one impressive sentence. Yet importantly, just as the style is extraordinary, so too is the claim, as God's actions here are indeed astonishing. Here we are emboldened to heap praises on God for his choosing and adoption of us, the people of God, the church. We have obtained an inheritance. It was always God's purpose to choose all people. We have been fore-ordained, fore-planned, fore-chosen as God's own from the very foundations of creation. This is universal and timeless. We have, not just two thousand years ago, but here and now, a flood of redemption and grace. This purpose, this wisdom and understanding, Paul claims, clarifies for us the mystery of God. Through the Holy Spirit, we are evermore inexorably connected, indeed participants in, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This scripture is in fact all about our relationship with God's purpose and God's mystery, urged and animated by the Holy Spirit. God's ultimate plan has always been to gather up all things in

Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. For Paul, this meant Gentiles and Jews. Diversity, which can sometimes cause problems, was planned diversity. No one is excluded from God's plan. This mystery of God's will had been revealed in Jesus Christ. Here, mystery is not like a crime novel, or a riddle to be solved, but rather something that goes beyond our human ability to discover or understand. It is not solved but revealed, revealed through Jesus Christ. The ultimate mystery of God's will is that God will gather all things, all people, together in Jesus Christ. "He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ." And we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.

Phew! I need a break. One urgent, compelling, long sentence, where Paul, as he gives emphasis to these blessings, cannot seem to stop himself. One writer puts it beautifully, "Here all creation is declared to be loved and redeemed by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus the rambling form of the sentence, which seems to have trouble finding a place to stop, reinforces the claim that there is no end to God's grace. This is the grammar of worship more than it is the grammar of logical argument, and it is no surprise if we are left struggling to keep up." The grammar of worship indeed. This is mind-blowing!

Our words, our grammar, our adjectives fails us, but maybe art doesn't. Maybe as a poem, this scripture nudges our understanding just a little more. Art is many things including something that expresses an idea, an emotion or a world view. We of course have a long, rich tradition of divine imagery, which has been accumulating now for almost 2000 years. This alone says something of the complexity of knowing God. On the cover of your bulletin is a painting you will likely know, Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night*, painted by the post-impressionist painter in 1889-90. Van Gogh once contemplated becoming a priest. He was a deeply devout man, *believing that everything is more miraculous than one can comprehend*. This idea was central to all his art. One art historian writes, "Vincent through his art was able to reveal a God "so real, so direct, so visible in nature and in people, so intensely compassionate, so weak and vulnerable, and so radically loving, ...a God we all want to come close to." Interpreters suggest that the swirling brush strokes and rolling colour create an ethereal or dreamlike effect. The sky is divine, beyond human comprehension, dreamlike and just out of reach. Lower down, the trees and hills bend and swirl. Finally the village stands in contrast. Rigid, sharp angles separate it from the rest of the painting as humans are separated from the heavens. But with a church spire reaching to the sky, van Gogh brings God to the village. He reveals God to humans as the Church, the body of Jesus Christ.

There are so many ways to express our understanding of the mystery of God. There are so many ways to praise these gifts, planned for us and for all human-kind. Words, paintings, music, prayer and more. Be aware, be conscious and be full of grateful praise. Through Jesus

Christ we experience salvation and the Grace of God. We are God's chosen, adopted, redeemed people and for this we give endless praise. Amen.

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us affirm the faith of our baptism.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

### OFFERTORY HYMN ~ WHAT CHILD IS THIS (CP#137)

1 What Child is this, who, laid to rest,  
On Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,  
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Chorus:

This, this is Christ, the King,  
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing:

Haste, haste to bring Him laud,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

2 Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.[Chorus]

3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,  
Come, peasant, king to own Him.  
The King of kings salvation brings;  
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.[Chorus]

#### PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Source of love and life,  
receive all we offer you this day,  
and through the coming of your Son,  
help us to see in others  
him who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

#### EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

##### SANCTUS

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Power and Might  
Heaven and Earth are Full of Your Glory,  
Hosanna in the Highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord  
Hosanna in the Highest.**

#### LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, let us pray,  
**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.**



**Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

## BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
**We, being many, are one body, for we all share in the one bread.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God.**

## THE COMMUNION

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Light eternal,  
you have nourished us in the mystery  
of the body and blood of your Son.  
By your grace keep us ever faithful to your word,  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SENDING HYMN ~ THE VIRGIN MARY HAD A BABY BOY (CP#128)

1 The virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
the virgin Mary had a baby boy,  
and they say that his name was Jesus.

[Refrain:]

He come from the glory,  
he come from the glorious kingdom.  
He come from the glory,  
he come from the glorious kingdom.  
Oh, yes! believer!

Oh, yes! believer!  
He come from the glory,  
he come from the glorious kingdom.

2 The angels sang when the baby born,  
the angels sang when the baby born,  
the angels sang when the baby born,  
and they say that his name was Jesus. [Refrain]

3 The wise men saw where the baby born,  
the wise men saw where the baby born,  
the wise men went where the baby born,  
and they say that his name was Jesus. [Refrain]

PRIEST'S BLESSING

SENDING OUT

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
**in the name of Christ. Amen.**

TODAY'S WORSHIP TEAM

Presider ~ Emilie

Music and prayers ~ Patti

Sermon and reader ~ Martha