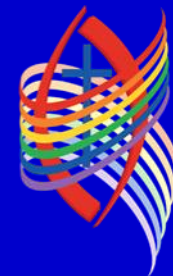




St. Andrew's United Church, North Bay

# Reaching Out



a weekly online newsletter for members and friends of the  
St. Andrews faith community, shared for the purpose of  
bringing peace, hope and comfort during these special times.

## July 19th - Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

### Today's Scriptures

#### Genesis 12: 1-9

##### Abram and Sarai

God told Abram: "Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you.

*I'll make you a great nation and bless you.  
I'll make you famous; you'll be a blessing.  
I'll bless those who bless you;  
Those who curse you I'll curse.  
All the families of the Earth  
will be blessed through you."*

So Abram left just as God said, and Lot left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot with him, along with all the possessions and people they had gotten in Haran, and set out for the land of Canaan and arrived safe and sound.

Abram passed through the country as far as Shechem and the Oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites occupied the land.

God appeared to Abram and said, "I will give this land to your children." Abram built an altar at the place God had appeared to him.

He moved on from there to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent between

Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. He built an altar there and prayed to God.

Abram kept moving, steadily making his way south, to the Negev.

#### ROMANS 5: 3-5

Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

**We rejoice in  
our sufferings,**  
knowing that suffering  
produces **endurance**,  
and endurance  
produces **character**,  
and character  
produces **hope**.

-Romans 5:3-4



## A Reflection Based on Genesis 12:1-9 & Romans 5:3-5



### Are you ready for a little “hope?”

The apostle Paul tells us that hope does not disappoint. In the midst of Covid-19, some will find this naive.

After all, Paul was beaten and stoned. Slandered, shipwrecked, snake-bit, and imprisoned. Eventually, the Romans beheaded him.

But if you dig a little deeper into his story, it actually gets harder to swallow Paul’s apparently sunny attitude.

Paul wasn’t just banking on a happy ending for his own personal story. The substance of Paul’s hope was the reconciliation of all people. All People. Everywhere.

We humans would no longer divide ourselves into competing tribes. Us and them. Jew and Greek. Slave and free.

Every step Paul took was animated by his commitment to a world where difference didn’t divide. Where diversity brought strength. Where cooperation displaced competition. Where compassion and justice gave birth to perpetual peace. You know, the Kingdom of God.

In God’s Kingdom, the dignity of each would be respected by all. The well-being of all would be the heart’s desire of each. We would never again hear, “My tribe before all others.”

That was a lot to hope for in the Roman Empire. Using their military superiority, the Romans subdued all other states and controlled their own citizens.

A privileged elite enjoyed immense wealth and exercised power with little accountability to the masses.

The vast majority of people lived in poverty and struggled to put Kraft Dinner on the supper table. The ruling class brutally suppressed attempts to change the social order in favour of what they saw as the nobodies. Think crucifixion, for instance.

Paul had another sort of peace in mind. Jesus’ sort of peace. And yet, in the face of what Rome tried to pass off as peace, Paul says that hope does not disappoint. And Paul has the same word for us today.

We have seen months of social-distancing, thousands dying, and weeks of fed-up, disgruntled citizens marching in the streets ... placards reading “Black Lives Matter” ... “No Justice, No Peace” ... calls for reparations for centuries of discrimination against First Peoples ... all in an attempt to get the attention of our elected officials ...

Given all of this, how can Paul say that hope does not disappoint?

I think it’s because Paul sees that hope is not a theme only of his individual story. Or mine or yours. Hope is a theme of our story. Paul – like Abram - understands his own life as part of a much larger story. The story of God embracing humans just as God finds us all throughout history.

Paul’s words about hope come after he has explained the significance of Abraham for the followers of Jesus. So let’s take a few minutes to reflect on the Abraham story.

God called Abraham and Sarah to leave their family and to start a new one. Actually, they were leaving their tribe.

In Abraham's day, everybody was part of a tribe composed basically of their extended family. Nobody left their tribe. So this already makes Abraham's story pretty unusual.

All other tribes were competitors if not enemies. Even allies were just potential adversaries. Violent clashes between tribes for land and resources was the norm.

Each tribe would do whatever it took to protect its way of life and to enhance its position among the tribes. Their conflicts could reach a nauseating level of savagery.

A conquering force would sometimes slaughter every man, woman, and child of their enemy. Or, the winners might put all the men to death and take the women for themselves. They didn't want any males or male heirs left to plot future retaliation. And get this. The winners all said that God told them to do it.

If this is news to you, you've skipped significant parts of the Hebrew Scriptures. I understand. It's disturbing reading.

Anyway, God sends Abraham and Sarah to a distant land to start a new tribe. Tribes come to be by having children, and that's why God promises Abraham and Sarah that they will have a virtual "Milky Way" of kids.

Hold that for now and we'll come back to it. Right now, I want to circle back to this new tribe idea. God didn't intend for Abraham to start a tribe that was just like other tribes only stronger. God wasn't going to equip Abraham with a bigger military force and more advanced weapons.

All the other tribes were dedicated to taking what they could get and defending what they had accumulated. Every existing tribe was entirely self-interested.

Abraham's new tribe was to grow from a radically new idea. Here's how God explains it to Abraham. "You will be a blessing.... In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:2b, 3b)

Abraham was not starting up just one more tribe. He was going to be the father of an entirely new kind of tribe. That tribe's purpose is to bless all comers. To restore God's peace to creation. To end us-them consciousness once and for all.

Abraham and Sarah waited decades for Isaac. But by the time he came along, I suspect that they both realized that their cosmos of descendants would be decades, centuries, millennia in the making.

Their personal stories - though important - were part of a vast web of stories. With God right at the center all along.

So, Abraham's story continues in Christ. In Christ, all the tribes of the world will be blessed. As Christ's Body, his followers are that new kind of tribe that exists to bring God's healing to the Creation.

In his day, the same old self-centered tribes still surrounded his fledgling little tribe. Violence and oppression, exploitation and poverty still mar human life in our own day. In some seasons, like our own, these dehumanizing forces seem to be gaining the upper hand. But Paul would remind us not to despair.

Hope does not disappoint so long as we feed the hungry and shelter the homeless. So long as we refuse to greet the stranger as an enemy. So long as we insist that our own welfare depends upon our neighbour's well-being. So long as we not only respect but guard the dignity of every human being. So when Paul said that hope doesn't disappoint, I think he was getting at something like this. Don't just cling to hope. Be it. **Amen.**



## Prayer for This Day

God our holy Friend, you allow us to share some of your love for the world. While we are here praying for the world's healing, others are busy implementing that healing. Later, when we are out there trying to give of our best, may others remember to pray for us.

*Give your grace to all peacemakers; those who endeavour to resolve with justice all conflicts between nations, and within communities, commerce and industry, parliaments, families, marriage partners, colleagues, and friends.*

Let your grace support those who fight with and for neglected people; those small ethnic groups with no political clout, those who are being taken advantage of by the rich and unscrupulous, those who fight for truth and reconciliation, those who cannot find their voices.

*Endow the merciful folk with your sustaining grace; those who treat diseases, bind up wounds, feed the hungry, re-settle the homeless, care for the orphan, visit the prisoner, encourage the handicapped, watch with the dying and grieve with the sorrowful.*

Endorse the work of this church with your enabling grace. Keep it close to the agenda of Christ. Let us be joyful in worship, warm in fellowship, inclusive in outreach, open in decision making, and gracious in our ecumenical endeavours.

*Bless any servant of yours who is keeping the faith against the odds: those without the encouragement of other Christians at hand, or without even a distant congregation that can pray their names with affection. Please let your grace renew them daily, and may they know your Spirit as Friend and Counselor.*

Visit each of us with your grace, loving Friend. Dismantle our fears, build up our faith, deepen our love, clarify our goals, sharpen our insight, widen our compassion, and open our minds to the new words you wish to speak to our situation.

In the name of the patient, insightful, and healing Christ we offer these prayers.

**Amen.**

**Reminder!**

There is an important **St. Andrew's Congregational Meeting** on **THURSDAY, JULY 30th** at 6:30 PM. More information will be in next week's *Reaching Out*. The purpose of the meeting is to review current information about our belfry situation and continue discussions about our options. The meeting will again be via ZOOM - please ask Council Secretary Karen Gooch if you need help with ZOOM. She will be glad to do a practice session with you. [councilsecretary\\_standrews@cogeco.net](mailto:councilsecretary_standrews@cogeco.net)

### **Informative Belfry Tower Resource Documents:** (click on item to view/ download)

1. [Letter From Chair of Council outlining the Belfry Tower situation, estimated remediation cost, and correspondence re building permit with City of North Bay](#)
2. [Engineer's Belfry Tower Assessment Report - with belfry photos \(Sept. 2019\)](#)
3. [Consulting Engineer's outlining of Belfry Repair Options \(Oct. 2019\)](#)
4. [SAUC Financial Viability Report - to April, 2019 and some to Dec, 2019](#)
5. [St. Andrew's Operating Statement to May 31, 2020](#)
6. [Church Demographics -from St. Andrew's survey conducted in Spring of 2019](#)
7. [Digest of Actions – Congregational Meeting June 30, 2020](#)
8. [Letter \(July 6\) re the Church's Financial Position as of May, 2020](#)

## Minister's Update

Hello everyone!! I hope and pray that you are all well and staying safe in these difficult times. I am really missing being together and am hopeful that someday soon we will gather again...socially distanced of course! I thought I would write a few lines to let you know what has been happening at St. Andrew's as well as what's coming up.

We have had some difficult times as a Church Council but we are working hard to rebuild our circle of wisdom. We have been meeting bi-weekly in order to attend to all of the emergent work ahead of us. I want to welcome several new people who have decided they would like an opportunity to serve as members. Beth Ward will be our new vice chair. Thanks Beth for saying yes! Kim Robinson and Cathy Coleman will be joining us as Members at Large. Both have a very long history with St Andrews and bring a wealth of knowledge. Gail Thomsen is now our Pastoral Care Chairperson. Thanks to Barb Van Herk and Margie Howard who will remain on the committee but have handed the reins over to Gail.

We are now back working in the office and we are appreciative of all of you who have called to check in and stay connected. Offerings can be dropped off to the church any morning between 830 and noon.

Our foodbank continues to feed hundreds of people each month. We have remained steady throughout the pandemic and I want to thank Brian Nelles, Jen Barnett and Star for their ongoing support of this valuable program. We are aware that it will be mandatory for people to wear masks shortly and so we are encouraging people to purchase masks and donate to our foodbank. The non-medical disposable masks

are available at many stores and we would so appreciate your help with this. Many of our marginalized folks don't have the resources to purchase and we will be insisting on them being worn. We are also in need on sunscreen to keep people from being sunburnt. Any of these items can be dropped to the church daily.

A reminder that our next congregational meeting is being held on July 30 at 630. This is our second meeting to look at options for our belfry project and to hear new information that may help us to make a decision. This meeting will be held on Zoom. If you find this intimidating or you feel unable to navigate this program, Karen Gooch will be offering tutorials to help folks feel more comfortable. Its so very important that everyone be part of this important decision making process.

St. Andrew's is an integral part of this community and we are continuing to make a difference. We recently partnered with *Outloud North Bay* and have sponsored a membership for a young person for a year. We are hoping to offer programming to this vital organization. We are looking at all the ways to open the doors to our faith community in September and the Re-opening Committee is meeting weekly to determine how we will follow all the protocols and keep everyone safe. Watch for new information in our *Reaching Out* newsletter. We are in contact with the groups that use our space and keeping them informed about our progress. Please be assured that your safety is of utmost importance to us.

Be well my friends

Peace and Blessings

*Tracy*

## THE “LOAVES & FISHES” FOODBANK HAS A NEW CO-ORDINATOR



Early in July, **Peter Haddow** became the new Co-ordinator for the *Loaves & Fishes Food Bank*. He is taking over from **Star McGregor** who has been Coordinator since last fall. Star deserves a great big “Thank You!” for all her work over the past months in helping to make sure that the Food Bank continued to be a reliable support for those who needed it.

Recently retired from a career in long-term health care, Peter said that he is looking forward to being part of this important St. Andrew’s community outreach. When asked to say a few words about the importance of *Loaves & Fishes*, Peter offered the following:



Peter Haddow and Star McGregor

*“ Food plays a major role in our daily lives from weekly grocery shopping to sitting down to eat meals with loved ones. Meals embody friendship and welcome. Just think about how often food is mentioned in a Bible story or how much of church life involves meals. I don’t think this is incidental.*

*Food is a powerful way of doing mission and community. Loaves and fishes provide food to over a 100 people each Thursday morning. This important work would not be possible if it weren’t for the donations of food and money and the help of our dedicated volunteers. “*

***“We will continue to do our best to help who we can when we can”***

*Star McGregor*

### HOW YOU CAN HELP ST. ANDREW’S DURING THIS SPECIAL TIME

1. Become a monthly **PAR (Pre-Authorized Remittance) member** by downloading a form and mailing it to St. Andrew’s. Complete PAR details and forms can be found at: <https://www.united-church.ca/community-faith/get-involved/give-regularly> . Take or mail the form to the Church Office.
2. Drop off a **cheque** at the Church Monday to Friday (from 8:30 am til 11:30 am) until the end of July - or mail it to St. Andrew’s United Church, 399 Cassells Street, North Bay, ON P1B 3Z4
3. Give via the “**Donate Now**” button located to the right, or on our website ( <https://standrews-northbay.ca/donate/> ) Please note choosing this option allows you to use a credit card however the tax receipt will come from *Canada Helps* **directly to you by e-mail** but be reminded that they take a 3% admin fee.



## TENTATIVE RE-OPENING DATE BEING CONSIDERED

The members of the Re-opening Committee (Tracy Davis, Liz Brownlee, Peter Haddow, Pat Kirton Bailey, Kim Delarosbel and Derek Stott) have tentatively set the weekend after Labour Day as the time when “in person” worship might resume. There are currently plans to have two services offered - one on Saturday afternoon, and the other on Sunday morning.

The committee has been meeting to discuss all of the safety measures that must be put in place before we consider opening again for worship .

There is still much work to be done around the preparation of the church building and developing the protocols that must be observed in order to be regulation compliant.

Full details about the re-opening process, and what form the “new style of worship “



*photo above:* the Re-opening Committee examines possible “socially distanced” seating in preparation for a September resumption of in-church worship services.

will take on, will be circulated via this newsletter and other ways in late August. An informational video is also planned.

The COVID-19 situation remains somewhat fluid, but we are hopeful that we will soon again be back in church!

## ONLINE WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

This Sunday’s service (**Sunday - July 19, 2020**) will be found on either the:

[St. Andrew’s United Church YouTube Channel](#) or  
[Emmanuel United Church YouTube Channel](#)

This *YouTube* video is recorded and can be watched at any time.

To visit either channel, click on the links above.

The Sunday service (usually posted by Saturday evening) is a collaborative production produced by **St. Andrew’s**, with participation by **Emmanuel United**, and **Trinity United Churches**.



## PLEASE NOTE

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS** are now 8:30 am until 11:30 am  
**MONDAY to FRIDAY ... UNTIL THE END OF JULY**