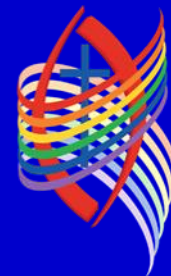




St. Andrew's United Church, North Bay

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 5th - Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Today's Scripture Genesis 1: 1-5

Heaven and Earth

First this: God created the Heavens and Earth - all you see, all you don't see. Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness. God's Spirit brooded like a bird above the watery abyss.

God spoke: "Light!"

And light appeared.

God saw that light was good and separated light from dark.

God named the light Day,

He named the dark Night.

It was evening, it was morning—

Day One.



Prayer for the Day

Almighty God,
Your Spirit swept over the waters of creation;
You are sweeping over us now,
creating something new.

Call us away from the distractions of the world
to experience what You are doing now,
in us,
and through us,
and in our world.

Open us to a new awakening, a new beginning,
where we look through the lens
of the goodness of Your creation,
experiencing all possibilities
in You.

Turn us away from the negative lens,
and lead us to the light.
In the name of Jesus, who leads us into life,
we pray.
Amen



A Sermon Based on Genesis 1:1-3



TRACY DAVIS, D.L.M.

In this world torn by pandemic, tragedy, and violence, we turn back to the beginning, to what God created us to be. Order out of disorder, light out of darkness, all of us

made in God's image.

Looking back over the last months, perhaps the best word we can use is "chaos."

We have seen chaos as a pandemic-struck our nation.

We have seen chaos as hospitals and long term care homes in some parts of our province have been overwhelmed and more than 8,000 Ontarians have died.

We have seen chaos as businesses closed and people lost their jobs.

We have seen chaos as our church doors closed and we had to find our way without rules or guidelines.

We have seen chaos as we figured out how to reopen doors, and businesses, and food banks and churches and keep people safe.

And in the midst of chaos we have seen peaceful protests taken over by rioting and looting.

To be honest, this chaos is causing anger and anxiety in us.

We only want our lives back We only want normal back.

We only want things to be how they used to be. We are tired of Chaos.

And so today we go back to the beginning, Genesis, chapter one. God creates the universe. It begins with the universe in chaos.

Even though Science was far from my favourite subject, I remember learning something about everything moves from controlled to uncontrolled, from order to chaos. I remember the example involving adding a cup of hot water to a cup of cold water. They move from ordered and different and spread out until the water wasn't a combination of hot and cold but of warm.

But here in Genesis, we see the very opposite. We see chaos turned into order. We see that which wasn't become. God is not a God of chaos, but a God of order. If you read through the entire first chapter (and I wish we had time to do so today) you hear this again and again.

This first chapter of Genesis is all about order. God separates light from dark, sky from earth, waters from land. God is repeatedly taking disorder and bringing order. God is taking what isn't and making what is. God is creating the rules by which our world operates.

So, the very first thing we learn today, is that in the midst of the chaos in which we live, God is a God of Order.

Now, I COULD put a lighthearted joke here about Christians, since so many people define us as a people who believe all things

should be done “decently and in order.” Just so you know, I am a big fan of “decently” and in order, both in worship and in the world around me.

I believe God calls all of us to create order out of chaos in how we live in the world.

The second thing I want to talk about is the first action that God took in bringing order. God separated darkness and light. These words are often used in Scripture in speaking of the difference between good and evil. They are used to speak of those who follow God and those who do not. At Christmas, we often quote the words of Isaiah 9:2 when we hear, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.”

Just as God brought light into the darkness at the beginning, God brought light into darkness when Jesus came into the world.

God is a God of light. And God shines light on our lives revealing them to be worthy or unworthy. Perhaps the best standard for living our lives within God’s light is found in the New Testament under the fruit of the Spirit:

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.” (Ephesians 5:22-23)

There were early Christians who thought that the fact that they were forgiven meant that they could do anything they wanted. Paul says no. Paul reminds us that God is a God of light, and that we are to live as people of the light and of the day. We are to be above reproach.

Just as God’s voice in the beginning created order out of chaos in the universe, when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, God creates order out of chaos in our lives. We are no longer a people walking in darkness, we are a people walking in light. Jesus said that we are to be a light and a lamp to the world. One of my favorite expressions is that there is not enough darkness in all of the world to put out the light of one small candle.



At no point is this passage intended to talk about how we should ask others to live. It is intended to talk about how WE should live. In the midst of chaos, but living and acting in the Spirit, our lives will be filled with these gifts of the Spirit.

IF the world had been living under God’s Kingdom authority, the ills of systemic racism that is being protested would not exist. It was not and is not. But, in the midst of the chaos of today, God continues to ask us to live and walk in the light. In the midst of the chaos of today, God calls us to be the light to those around us.

Finally, at the end of God’s creative process, God chooses to do something different. All along, God has been simply creating. Light and dark, land and water, heavens and earth, vegetables, animals, and all is ready. Now God creates humankind in God’s own image.

What does that even mean?

First of all, it doesn't mean we all look alike. We are male and females of different sizes, shapes, and ages. In the world we are people of different skin colors and hair colors. We speak different languages and live in different countries. But we are all created "in God's image."

It means that there is something God placed in each of us that is a reflection of Godself. Just as we received our genetic makeup from our parents, we received something from God that makes us unique and makes us, each of us, belong to God.

When Jesus spoke about us loving our neighbors as ourselves in the context of the greatest commandment, this is the "why" of it all. We are to love others as ourselves because all of us are made in the image of God and belong to God.

And we live our lives honouring that fact. The colour of a person's hair or skin, the language they speak, the fact that they aren't a part of our family is irrelevant. Because all of us are made in the image of the immortal God. All of us belong to the family of God.

In this world filled with Chaos, there is much that we cannot control. But as children of the Living God there is much we can do to bring God's presence to the world where we live.

God is and always has been a God who creates order out of chaos. Let us live our lives as children of God bringing order and being orderly.

God is and always has been a God who separates light from darkness and calls us to live in the light. Let us live our lives as children of God living in the darkness and bringing light to the world.

God is and always has been a God who made us in God's own image, male and female, God created us and breathed spirit into us. Let us, as children of God, live our lives honoring the uniqueness of each person we meet, loving our neighbors because they too are made in God's own image.

Let us live as Children of God. **Amen.**



ONLINE WORSHIP - THIS SUNDAY - A Couple of Options

This Sunday's service (**Sunday - July 5, 2020**) will be found on the **Emmanuel United Church YouTube Channel**. This *YouTube* video is recorded and can be watched at any time. To visit the channel, click on this link: [Emmanuel; United Church YouTube Channel](#) . 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.



Click ****HERE**** for a list of links to over 390 United Churches across Canada that are offering online worship services ... either streamed or recorded.



ST. ANDREW'S UNITED CHURCH

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July 3, 2020

Members and Friends of St. Andrews,

On June 30th we had our first *Zoom* congregational meeting to share information about the problems with our belfry and to look at some of the options that we have before us. Rev. Rob Smith, the Staff Resource Person to the Canadian Shield Regional Council's Property Resource Team, and Rev. Melody Duncanson-Hales, the Regional Council Minister for Congregational Support facilitated the meeting.

At the meeting we were presented with two options as we move forward. The first option is that we repair the building which means we need a financial plan to raise the approximately \$750,000 which would be needed to do such a repair. The second option is that we sell the building and find a new location to continue the mission of St. Andrew's. We took time to answer questions and break into small groups to discuss options. Notes from this meeting will be available elsewhere in this newsletter.

On July 30th we will be holding a second congregational meeting. Due to the Covid-19 crisis this second meeting will again have to take place via *Zoom*. We hope to find ways to have more of our members involved in this meeting. We have some profoundly serious decisions to make, and these decisions must be made soon. Over the next four weeks we hope to bring people together in small groups to discuss the possibilities. All the current documents pertaining to the belfry situation are posted on the [church website](#).

We need to hear from all our members as we discern how we can move forward as the faith community of St. Andrew's. Members can call the church if they have concerns you wish to express, or you can call me at 705-493-4035. Alternately, you can reach me through reachingout@standrews-northbay.ca, or by regular mail to the Church Office.

This is indeed a time for prayerful contemplation.

Yours in Christ,

Patricia Kirton-Bailey
Council Chair
St. Andrew's United Church

St. Andrew's Opening Committee



The first meeting of the "Opening Committee" met on Thursday, July 2nd. The mandate of the committee is to explore the ways that we can provide a safe and meaningful worship experience following the COVID - 19 guidelines of the provincial and municipal public health agencies. Our first task is to determine our church seating capacity with "social distancing" in mind. From then we will draw up a plan that will hopefully lead to resuming safe but modified worship services sometime in September.

From the Church Council Secretary Congregational Meeting - Digest of Actions

Here is a link to a Digest of Actions from the June 30th online Congregational meeting.

There will be another important congregational meeting on Thursday July 30th, 2020 (more details to come).

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW/ DOWNLOAD THE DIGEST OF ACTIONS](#)

The second and third pages of the Digest have a list of questions and comments that came out of the June 30th meeting. During the next month, the Council will endeavour to find answers to some of these questions. Some questions may not be easily answered right now but will be important as the congregation decides what our future will be.

Due to the pandemic, the July 30th meeting will also be a virtual meeting. If you have concerns about joining an online meeting, there is help available. You can also use the toll-free phone number that will be provided if computer/internet access is a problem.

For more information or if you have further questions about the belfry issue, please contact the church office at 705-472-7680 or Karen Gooch.

Karen Gooch

Secretary of St. Andrew's United Church Council

councilsecretary_standrews@cogeco.net Tel: 705-472-0605

399 Cassells Street

North Bay, Ontario P1B 3Z4

PLEASE NOTE

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

Recommended Reading from the North Bay & Area UC Mission Cluster

Activist Alphabet: a Primer on How, and Why, to Act on Our Love For This Planet

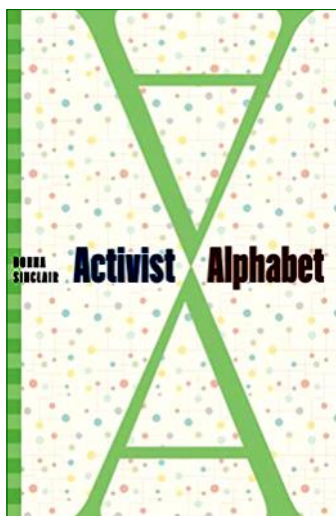
by Donna Sinclair (Gold Medal winner of the Living Now Book Awards)

"How does it happen that a rather shy and not-terribly-brave individual finds herself getting arrested on Parliament Hill? Why does a woman who prefers to commune with pole beans all summer end up laboriously writing speeches to present at City Hall? There is no need for this. I am 74 years old, elderly. It would be more suitable for me to spend my remaining days quietly reading novels than singing protest songs. What happened?"

These are the questions that sometimes plague Donna Sinclair. A widely-travelled, award-winning journalist for more than 27 years, now retired, Donna could easily sit back and simply enjoy her garden, her grandkids, and her remaining years with her husband.

Yet that is not what she has chosen to do. Like an ever increasing number of her peers, as well as younger people the world over, Donna has chosen the path of activism. But why?

"I am not alone with these questions. Most activists, I am convinced, do not wake up one morning and say to themselves, 'I think I will spend today,



and perhaps the rest of my life, antagonizing large corporate bodies – with untold amounts of money to spend – and even some of my neighbours, so that I don't get enough sleep and am constantly making anguished trade-offs about how I will spend my time.'

"This book is an effort to figure out why and how environmental activists fall passionately in love with a lake, a river, or a planet and its people. It's a primer, or an alphabet, on how to stay strong enough

to keep putting that love into action, over and over."

Reviewed by Marianna Couchie, former Chief, Nipissing First Nation

"I say Bravo to Donna Sinclair for taking the thoughtful approach to Activism.

The notes at the end of some chapters are excel-

lent tips. The tips on Reconciliation I found extremely helpful to get people involved in this most important step in our collective history."

Reviewed by Jennifer Henry, Executive Director of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives *"Touching on diverse issues from local to global, Sinclair befriends the reader with her wisdom and experience, inviting our own reflection, and our commitment to a faith consistently embodied in action."*

To obtain a copy:

[UCRD United Church Bookstore:](#)

[Wood Lake Books:](#) \$15.95 (hardcopy); \$9.98 (e-book or Kindle)

From Donna: phone first at 705-472-5849 or [email donnasinc@ontera.net](mailto:donnasinc@ontera.net). Donna is also available to speak at events post-pandemic.

The sponsoring group can function as a bookseller and use it as a fundraiser.

We highly recommend this book and trust you will find it an important and invigorating read.!

Kay Heuer,

Chair

North Bay and Area Mission Cluster

