

Communion of Saints / Anniversary Sunday

November 2, 2025

Armour Heights – 74 years; Melrose Park – 87 years
Amalgamation of Congregations – 27 years

Organ Prelude: Prelude in C

J.S. Bach

***Hymn: We are one in the Spirit**

No. 471

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
and, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
and together we will spread the news that God is in our land,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
and, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
We will work with each other, we will work side by side,
and we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
and, they'll know we are Christians by our love.
4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and praise to Christ Jesus, who is God's only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one,
and they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,
and, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

Welcome, Announcements & Worship Theme

CALL TO WORSHIP:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” (*Hebrews 11:1*)

We come to worship in search of faith to stand on and hope to build on.

We come with our worries and doubts, our frustrations and fears.

We come with our challenges and uncertainties, our struggles with situations and discouragement in the face of difficult circumstances.

Meet us in this time of worship, O God. Feed us with faith and raise up in us new hope.

Let us worship God, together!

***Hymn: Armour Heights**

by Jim Nasmith

1. We gather together united in worship,
Raising our voices to sing and to pray.
We share in the journey, we care for each other,
Loving and growing, we reach out in faith,

REFRAIN:

**Give us strength Lord, give us courage,
Help us see your vision flourish,
fill our hearts with inspiration,
Hear us as we humbly pray.**

2. The children are laughing, the Reverend is guiding,
Turning our thoughts to God's wonderful way.
The organ is playing, the choir is singing,
Lifting our hearts to a much better place **[REFRAIN]**

3. We gather together to honour our Saviour,
Celebrate triumphs, acknowledge our sin.
United in purpose we build for the future,
Guided by love let the service begin **[REFRAIN]**

Prayer of Approach, Confession & The Lord's Prayer

**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, forever. Amen.**

The Peace of Christ be with you all;
And also with you

Children's Time

(Children are invited to join in programming following Children's Time)

Choir: O Sing Joyfully

Adrian Batten

*O sing joyfully unto God our strength :
make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Take the song, bring hither the tabret :
the merry harp with the lute.
Blow up the trumpet in the new-moon :
even in the time appointed, and upon our solemn feast-day.
For this was made a statute for Israel :
and a law of the God of Jacob.*

INTRO: Our scripture reading this morning comes from the New Testament book of Hebrews, 11: 1-13, 12: 1-3. What is faith and how is it built up? Our reading evokes the memory of ancestors of the faith. Listen:

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. ³ By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain’s. Through this he received approval as righteous, God himself giving approval to his gifts; he died, but through his faith he still speaks. ⁵ By faith Enoch was taken so that he did not experience death, and “he was not found, because God had taken him.” For it was attested before he was taken away that “he had pleased God.”

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach God must believe in one’s heart that God exists and that God rewards those who seek God with the gift of faith. ⁷ By faith Noah, warned by God about events as yet unseen, respected the warning and built an ark to save his household; by this he condemned the world fallen into corruption and became an heir to the righteousness that is in accordance with faith.

⁸ By faith Abraham and Sarah obeyed when they were called to set out for a place that they were to receive as an inheritance, and they set out, not knowing where they were going. ⁹ By faith they stayed for a time in the land they had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did those who came after them, who were heirs with them of the same promise. ¹⁰ For they looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ By faith, with Sarah’s involvement, they received power of procreation, even though they were too old, because they considered The One faithful who had promised. ¹² Therefore from one couple, old enough to die, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.”

¹³ All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them, anticipating their fulfillment in time and eternity.

12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,^[a] and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

³Consider him who endured such hostility against himself... so that you may not grow weary in your souls or lose heart. Amen.”

We are listening, O God
Speak to us!

Sermon: A FAITH TO STAND ON AND A HOPE TO BUILD ON

Dr. Harris

Duet: Time to say goodbye Sartori, Quarantotto, Peterson
Soloists *Shaun Alphonso and Bryan Igrega*

When I am alone I sit and dream
And when I dream the words are missing
Yes, I know that in a room so full of light
That all the light is missing
But I don't see you with me, with me
Close up the windows, bring the sun to my room
Through the door you've opened
Close inside of me the light you see
That you met in the darkness

Time to say goodbye
Horizons are never far
Would I have to find them alone?
Without true light of my own with you

*I will go on ships overseas
That I now know
No, they don't exist anymore
It's time to say goodbye*

*When you were so far away
I sit alone and dreamt of the horizon
Then I know that you are here with me
Building bridges over land and sea
Shine a blinding light for you and me
To see, for us to be*

*Time to say goodbye
Horizons are never far
Would I have to find them alone?
Without true light of my own with you
I will go on ships overseas
That I now know
No, they don't exist anymore
Without true light of my own with you
I will go, horizons are never far
Would I have to find them alone?
Without true light of my own with you
I will go on ships overseas
That I now know
No, they don't exist anymore*

Prayer of Thanksgiving & Pastoral Concern

***Hymn: God of grace and God of glory**

No. 490

1. God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power;
crown the ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour, for the facing of this hour.

2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us, scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to love and
praise.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the living of these days, for the living of these days.

3. Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal, lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

4. Set our feet on lofty places; gird our lives that they may be
armoured with all Christlike graces, pledged to set all captives free.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
that we fail not them nor thee, that we fail not them nor thee!

5. Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the search for thy salvation be our glory evermore.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
serving thee whom we adore, serving thee whom we adore.

Benediction

***Threefold Amen**

Postlude: Toccata in C

Bruce Nasmith

**Remain seated if you are more comfortable*

~

***We invite you to join us for lunch in our adjacent hall after the
service.***

All are welcome!

~

OUR PURPOSE AS A CHURCH:
**To become the hands, feet, voice and heart of Christ for each
other and in the world.**



Thank you for all the ways you contribute to our Armour
Heights Community.

Scan here to make a donation through CanadaHelps:



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Coming Events

Sunday, November 2

Communion of Saints /
Anniversary Sunday
Estate planning seminar with
lunch, 12pm

Monday, November 3

Dance Fitness, 10:00am

Wednesday, November 5

Mosaic Event: Drumming Circle
with Terri Segal, 11am
Fall Study: Writings of the New
Testament, 7:30pm

Sunday, November 9

Remembrance Sunday
Joyful Noises band rehearsal, 12
noon

Monday, November 10

Dance Fitness, 10:00am

Wednesday, November 12

Fall Study: Writings of the New
Testament, 7:30pm

Friday, November 14

PA Day Camp, 9am to 3pm

Sunday, November 16

Membership Sunday /
Anniversary Sunday
Band Rehearsal, 12 noon

Monday, November 17

Dance Fitness, 10:00am

Wednesday, November 19

Fall Study: Writings of the New
Testament, 7:30pm

Friday, November 21

Youth Group, 7-9pm

Sunday, November 23

Intergenerational Worship
Sunday
Documentary Screening with
Lunch, 12noon

Monday, November 24

Dance Fitness, 10:00am



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"Discover the vitality of faith"

A FAITH TO STAND ON AND A HOPE TO BUILD ON

Hebrews 11: 1-13, 12: 1-3

Anniversaries... How important are anniversaries to you?... What anniversaries are special for you?... Is it when that someone special was born?... Is it an important milestone that was reached - a graduation, a retirement, being clear of a disease, coming out of a surgery successfully, a special birthday, a marriage or hitting those milestone decades together through thick and thin?... Anniversaries are all this and more...

But anniversaries are also about significant losses in our lives too, no?... It's about the passing of those who are no longer with us in the flesh... And sometimes, it's about those terrible accidents, moments or news we receive that totally alter our lives in ways not good... We remember those moments, those days... and we remember seasons where the heaviness of loss and the grief that follows such loss are with us... How do we live through Christmas, Thanksgiving, special places traveled to and enjoyed, the same?... How do we mark such times in ways we can find some gratitude and peace for the beauty of who and what was that no longer is?...

Anniversaries... they're special, they're wonderful and joyous, and they are sad and difficult too... They are important points in our lives shaping and altering how we live them, what is important to us, and the ways we live our lives going forward.

Anniversaries are also important events in the lives of communities and this community we call Armour Heights too... There are times of celebration and there are times of collective mourning and grief... When we ponder the 74 years of this community and 87 years of

Melrose Park church which joined Armour Heights in 1998, there are many members and friends who are no longer with us in the flesh. Many have died, some have moved away, but many special days and seasons were marked where together we have been the hands, feet, voice and heart of Christ for each other and in our world despite the loss, the struggle and sometimes the conflict too... It's all part of being a community with individual members deeply invested and engaged.

So how do we celebrate our anniversary today in a way where we build on faith that has been, is now, and looking forward in faith and hope of what can yet be?... How do we celebrate recognizing all those of our ancestors in the faith who continue to be among us in what we call the communion of saints?

Well, let's begin with the words themselves: faith and hope. One way to understand faith is as: trust. I trust you. I trust what you are telling me. I trust that I am in good hands. I trust that I am loved even and beyond my imperfections. I trust that all is well and I can go to sleep in God's care. Faith is trust in the present. But hope, is trust open to the future and what may come. I may worry about many things that may happen, but hope opens me up to trust that good possibilities can become real and new doors can open despite anything I may legitimately fear. Hope is trust open to the future.

But does hope have to block out the hard realities of life in order to remain hope? Does hope have to be optimistic in a way that we close our ears to anything negative and wrong around us and before us? Or is hope something different?

Andrea Curtis is a thinker and writer. Her latest book is entitled: *The Story and Science of Hope*. It's hard, Curtis writes, to feel hopeful these

days. She refers to the recent election of Donald Trump and the changes happening in our world destabilizing long held and trusted relationships. Such changes have fuelled conflicts around the world. People are angry and divided. They feel betrayed. And many are struggling with their finances and existential fear for the future.

And such feelings, she writes further, are only amplified by the media. "If it bleeds, it leads" as they say. Conflict and the problems of the world are the focus 24/7 because crisis, grief and rage sell. But how does all this affect our minds, hearts and souls? Here's what Curtis writes more personally: "Among my friends and family - people who care deeply about the earth and its inhabitants and worry about the future - it can sometimes feel as if looking away, even for a moment, is an abdication of responsibility. For isn't it our job as concerned citizens to bear witness to the atrocities of our fellow creatures, to staggering inequalities, to war and murder and mayhem of all sorts? Isn't that how we both acknowledge other people's suffering and also move to end it?" Yes, she says, yes. But, it doesn't really work. Constant vigilance and focus of this sort also gives way to despair and ultimately to withdrawal with maybe guilt or inadequacy or a helplessness which doesn't help anyone in the end.

OK, so how may we find our way to faith as trust in the present and hope as trust open to the future without it simply becoming escapism or superficial optimism?

Let's begin with the revelatory wisdom we may discover in our scripture reading this morning. The book of Hebrews is written to people struggling to find hope, just like us. It begins with a definition of faith: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." In other words, faith is trust even before and beyond

any tangible outcome of what it is that's trusted. We trust in a person even before they have acted. We trust in a situation even before the outcome has been decided. We trust in a promise even before it has been fulfilled. We trust because we know the person or we trust the process. How?

Are we simply going into it blind, crossing our fingers that things will work out well? No. After offering us a definition of faith, our reading goes on to offer numerous examples from the ancestors of faith who trusted in hope and acted on such hope. Their actions led to marvelous possibilities that became actualized. They believed in what could be despite fears and even odds stacked against them. They trusted in goodness and fulfillment of promises. They trusted and acted on such trust, and sometimes paid a heavy price for such trust. Nonetheless, good things emerged out of such trust. The author is telling these struggling Christians that they are the inheritors of such trust. Without the actions of their ancestors over many generations, they would not be here. They need to stand on their shoulders and find inspiration, courage and hope upon their achievements. This is how they move forward in hope despite the difficult realities around them and the problems among them.

So how may such spiritual perspective, this looking back and finding strength on the shoulders of those who have come before us help us find faith in the present and hope open to the future?

One of the things Curtis discovered is a source of news that focusses on all that is happening in our world that is positive. "Positive News" as it's called, first emerged in the U.K., but is now also coming out of other nations of the world including Canada. It is rigorous journalism that documents all the wonderfully positive ways people are

responding to the crises and troubles of our world by doing good things for others and the earth. There are creative practices, scientific innovations, conservation projects, and people coming together to do wonderful things with art, music and other creative projects and endeavours.

Here's what Curtis writes further: "Actively seeking out these hopeful stories and actions forced me to reconsider my responsibilities as a concerned citizen. Perhaps in addition to bearing witness to the horrors of our world, we can also pay attention and engage with the things that are going right. Perhaps we can also choose hopefulness..."

She also refers to scientists and other researchers "from behavioural psychologists to nurses to neurosurgeons, economists, educators and social workers who... through rigorous research and experimentation... have found that hope is not magical thinking but is, instead, real and measurable. It's different from optimism, which is a feeling that things are likely to work out. Hope is about leaning into and working toward something meaningful to you. It's an action. Hope is a verb..."

Researchers "have also found evidence that hopefulness guards against depression and helps kids do better in school. Hopeful people live longer, are healthier and have stronger friendships. One of the most exciting elements of the research is that hope isn't something you're simply lucky to be born with... it can be learned and nurtured. Even people who've experienced trauma, dislocation and loss feel hope, and they can be supported to experience greater hopefulness, with all its myriad benefits."

By "actively looking for hope - whether in news stories or nature, in innovative people and organizations, in individual acts or mass marches, in a child's face or a community garden" we are not abdicating responsibility or being naïve. No. Hope is "a radical act of resistance... Hope is a shoring up of resources for the struggle ahead..."

"Hope is not about avoiding the difficult realities of our world. It's not about individual comfort. In fact, it exists alongside deep discomfort," Curtis writes... "Hope grows in community and it demands much of us. It demands, first of all, that we shift the narrative away from the sense that we are helpless in the face of forces beyond our control - even though it sometimes feels that way. After all, nothing good ever happened in the world without hopeful people coming together to push for change."

Wow, I find such statements encouraging, don't you?... And I think especially of this community we call Armour Heights church, and our purpose to become the hands, feet, voice and heart of Christ for each other and in our world... How has faith as trust in the present and hope as trust open to the future lived out in us?... We've evolved and changed over the years as the world around us in this community and city has changed too. Building community partnerships in mission with organizations like ARISE and Evangel Hall Mission, or with Mosaic toward creating a community hub, and also beginning to live into our identity as an intercultural church, along with our focus on justice through inclusion, and truth and reconciliation... to me, this is all about faith and hope.

And this is also leaning on the strength of our ancestors here at Armour Heights, those who were seeking ways to build identity in the

community, city and cultural ethos of the time, a time when more people went to church on a Sunday and got involved because church was the main cultural community hub existing. Today we have to be intentional in carving our own space and identity as this is no longer a given, with so many other draws on our time and attention around us... How may we continue to grow in ways that really respond as Jesus in a world that is in crisis and yet also one where wonderful possibilities exist, ready to be noticed, supported and adopted into our own practice?

On this Anniversary Sunday, we say thank you to those who have gone before, our ancestors in the communion of Saints, and we honour them in our continuing commitment to do as they did and respond in faith, hope and love to a world that desperately needs what we, in Christ, have to offer... Amen.