



St. Andrew's United Church

Edmonton, Alberta

March 30th, 2025

A Celebration of Ministry

Of

The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard

Prelude

Words of Welcome

Call To Worship: *Psalm 91*

Cantor: You who dwell in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shelter of the Almighty, will say to the Holy One, “My refuge and fortress; my God, in whom I trust.”

Candle lighting: *Sing of Colours* De Colores

Gathering Prayer:

Holy one who’s name, and nature is love, we gather again to affirm that amid change, life goes on. Babies are born and we dedicate ourselves to them. Friends die and we memorialise their lives, laughing and crying as we grieve our loss. Marriages and partnerships are formed and blessed. Life goes on.

In this sacred place we weave together joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, fullness and the emptiness, welcome and departure, and covenants made in anticipation and brought to close in completion. May our coming together bear witness to the power of your love, holding us, releasing us, sustaining us, in the web of your beloved community.

A Time of Centering

Hymn: *Take This Moment*

Take This Moment

Learning Together

Thanks to all who participated in our service this morning:

Co-Presiders: The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Wilfong, The Rev. Audrey Mitchell

Northern Spirit Regional Representative:
Susan Silverthorne

Musicians: Vince Anderson, piano; Alain Leblanc, saxophone; Mark Miskiman, drums; Connor Miskiman, bass; Tony Robbins, trumpet; Rob Churchill, flute, tuba; Carol Pernarowski, djembe

Cantors: Bereket Habtom, Robert Woodbury

Liturgical Dance: Joy Mukarage

Reader: Alan Shugg

Communion Servers and Preparation:
Jean Waters, Peggy Dowell

PowerPoint: Brent Roy

Audio and Livestream: Peter Bieman, Caleb and Olivia Budgell.

Introit: *Who is Moving Through the Silence?*

Moving Through the Silence

First Reading: Jeremiah 29: 4-7

These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. Thus says the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have children and grandchildren; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Holy One on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Gospel: Mark 6: 7-13, 9: 38-40

Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome, you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” So, they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he was

not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him, for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us.

Response: *Njalo* Njalo

Proclamation: Exile and Homecoming

Hymn: *Go to The World* Sine Nomine

Recognition of the Ending of an Authorized Ministry

Presider: Our church community is constantly changing. People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, growing toward new places, new experiences, new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of endings and beginnings. Today we share a farewell with our minister, Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard.

Minister: I give thanks to God for the ways you have welcomed me, supported me, and shared our mutual journey as disciples of the Christ. I pray for God’s blessing upon you.

Regional Representative: On July 1, 1993, this congregation called Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard to serve as Minister at St. Andrew’s United Church.

Minister: I thank St. Andrew’s, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last 32 years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for

pray for those to be born, newborns and those whose birthdays are celebrated in decades. We pray for friends and strangers, and all those whom the world forgets but that God loves. We pray for covenants made, and covenants completed. We pray for those who will journey on from this place and those who will remain.

In the silence of our hearts, we offer you the prayers for those places and people that we have brought to this table.

(silent payer)

These things we ask in the name of the one who still teaches us to pray by singing:

**All: Giver of daily bread,
hallowed be your name
Your way is to forgive,
may our way be the same
Save us from times of trial
in all we say and do
Guide us in love this day,
we ask these things of you.**

Canadiana

Hymn: *I See a New Heaven*

New Heaven

Commissioning and Benediction

Congregational Response: *The Kingdom is Within You*

Face to the Wind

Postlude: *Heave Away!*

shatters the chains of our oppression. Your Hope from the foundation of creation, he travelled the regions of doubt and despair that we might enter the wonders of your beloved community. As we celebrate the covenant you made with us and all creation, as we remember your Christ, raised from the dead we sing that mystery we call faith:

All: Memorial Acclamation (sung) Kingsfold

On this glad morning, Loving God, pour out your Spirit on the gifts of this table, and on those who gather at your feast. As we are strengthened by the Bread of Life, send us forth to plant gardens, sharing the harvest with those who hunger. As we are nourished by the Cup of Hope, give us the tools to build homes so all may dwell in security. As we are filled with the Spirit of service, may we have the courage to use our hearts and voices to show solidarity with those who live in oppression's exile. And, when that glad morning of resurrection comes, when we gather with the exiles of every time and place, our sisters and brothers who were ever faithful, we will rejoice in you forever, God in Community, Holy in One.

All: Amen. (sung) Kingsfold

The Words of Invitation

Communion Music: *Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring*

J.S. Bach

Prayer after Communion

All: Holy One, we pray for the places where we live, the apartments and homes, the streets and playgrounds. We

the ways my leadership has been encouraged and accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.

Congregation: We receive your thankfulness, offer forgiveness, and accept that your time with us is ending. We express our gratitude for your ministry among us. We ask your forgiveness for our mistakes. Your influence on our faith and faithfulness will not leave us at your departure.

Minister: I forgive you and accept your gratitude, trusting that our time together and our parting are pleasing to God.

Vows of Release

Regional Representative: Do, you, the members and friends of St. Andrew's, release the Rev. Dr. Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard from the duties of Minister, St. Andrew's United Church?

Congregation: We do, through the grace of God.

Regional Representative.: Do you offer him your encouragement as his life and ministry unfolds in new ways?

Congregation: We do, through the grace of God.

Regional Representative: Do you, Geoffrey Wilfong-Pritchard, release St. Andrew's from turning to you and depending on you?

Minister: I do, through the grace of God.

Regional Representative: Do you offer your encouragement for the continuing ministry here?

Minister: I do, through the grace of God.

Regional Representative: On behalf of the Northern Spirit Region of the United Church of Canada, I witness to the words spoken: words of thankfulness, forgiveness and release. The communities of faith of our denomination hold each of you in prayer. We pledge our support in the transitions signified in this service.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Presider: Let us pray:

All: O God, we give thanks for remembered times, when we, together, have shared this life of faith. We thank you for the moments we have shared with Geoffrey in worship, in prayer, and in presence. We pray that Geoffrey will always be aware of your Spirit's guidance in his life and ministry. Help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions, until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other. In the name of Jesus your Christ we pray. Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: *Grapes from the Hillside* Rwanda

The Sacrament of Communion

May the God of joy be with you.
And also, with you.

People of God, open your hearts to the One who does wonders for you.

We offer our hearts to God, who plants gardens of peace within us.

Children of God, sing praises to the One who leads us to this place.

We join all creation in singing our thanks God, our Creator.

On that first glad morning, Architect of glory,
you built the house of creation for us to dwell in with peace as our neighbor; you planted gardens in the valleys and meadows that we might be fed by your goodness. But we chose to live in the exile of self-reliance and fear of neighbour believing it would provide a better home.

You made covenants with us, carrying words of promise and hope, and we were fearful of commitment and the responsibility of being ourselves So, seeking the welfare of all creation,
and longing to restore us to wholeness,
you opened your heart to us through the presence of your Christ.

With all the earth that worships you, with all brought to spacious places, we sing your glory forever:

All: Sanctus and Benedictus (sung) Kingsfold

Holy are you, God of peace and hope,
and blessed is Jesus your Christ, our healer,
your freedom for all your people. He set free the gospel which