

January 23, 2022  
Third Sunday after Epiphany

**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Gathering In Song VU 951** "Holy, holy, holy"

Holy, holy, holy, my heart, my heart adores you!

My heart is glad to say the words: You are holy, God!

**Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation – see last page ...**

**Call to Worship**

Welcome, sisters and brothers in Christ.

**We have gathered to hear the word of God.**

Welcome, children of God.

**We have come to learn God's desire for us.**

Welcome, you who are God's delight.

**We have come to rejoice and praise our God.**

Let us worship the Lord our God.

**Hymn VU 312** "Praise with Joy the World's Creator"

Praise with joy the world's Creator,  
God of justice, love, and peace,  
source and end of human knowledge,  
God whose grace shall never cease.

Celebrate the Maker's glory,  
power to rescue and release.

Praise to Christ who feeds the hungry,  
frees the captive, finds the lost,  
heals the sick, upsets religion,  
fearless both of fate and cost.

Celebrate Christ's constant presence:  
friend and stranger, guest and host.

Praise the Spirit sent among us,  
liberating truth from pride,  
forging bonds where race or gender,  
age or nation dare divide.

Celebrate the Spirit's treasure:  
foolishness none dare deride.

Praise the Maker, Christ, and Spirit,  
one God in community,  
calling Christians to embody  
oneness and diversity.

This the world shall see reflected:  
God is One and One in Three.

## **Opening Prayer** (*unison*)

Holy God, week after week we come to church to worship you. Week after week we hear your word. Week after week we leave this sanctuary and live as we see fit, which isn't always according to the spirit of your message. Forgive us, God, for setting ourselves up as gods who decide how things should be. Our hearing is fine; unplug our hearts that we might receive the word we hear. Our eyesight is fine; focus our attention on the many blessings in our lives. Our hands are fine; help us turn them to the work of blessing others. Help us to rejoice, not because there is no pain in our lives, but in spite of it; for you are our God. Amen.

## **We Are Blessed By God**

**Anthem** [Celtic Laud \(Craig Courtney\) Adagio Trio](#)

**Time for the Young and the Young** @ 

**Hymn VU 605** "Jesus, Teacher, Brave and Bold"

Jesus, teacher, brave and bold, let us serve you, young and old.  
Let us faith-filled workers be, all around, your wisdom see.  
Let us play and dance and sing, your goodness find in everything.

Jesus, friend, so strong and true, show us good, brave work to do.  
Show us those who need a friend, all things broken help us mend.  
Free our minds and stretch our care, teach us to serve you everywhere.

## **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer**

God of community, Creator, Christ, and Spirit; One. Through your Holy Spirit you become one with us. Through Christ you call us to be one with you and with one another. We are gathered here as one body, and as one we lift our prayers to you.

By your Holy Spirit inspire your church with power, unity and peace.

May it maintain the diversity of over 30,000 denominations and, for the sake of the world, may it act as one.

This week we pray especially for the Ruthven Pastoral Charge and their minister, the Rev. Olav Kitchen. Sovereign God, grant both wisdom and compassion to the leaders of this world that they may lead in righteousness, and that all peoples may live in peace, security, and prosperity. We pray especially, this week, for the people of Cyprus, Greece and Turkey.

Compassionate God, you sent your son, our Saviour, to cure the lame, give sight to the blind, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and heal the sick, for you know that when one of us suffers we are all affected.

We pray for those in our community who are mourning. Comfort them and grant them peace.

We pray also for those in our community who are ill or dying, awaiting medical intervention or recovering from treatment, especially we remember: Sammy Gardner, Cecil Jenkins, Marleen Parish, Carol Reid, Mac Toner, and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our hearts.....

Heal them in mind, body, or circumstance.

Restore all for whom we pray that they and we may be made whole. This we pray in the name of the one who came to teach us how to renew our relationship with you, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, and who taught us to pray, saying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come, your will be done  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

### **Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

We are many members, but we are all part of the body of Christ.  
If one member suffers, all suffer together. Let us offer what we have in solidarity with those members who are suffering in many places, in this community and around the world.

Loving and Generous God, we are thankful for your many gifts to us. We thank you that, in Christ, we are one. Accept these gifts as symbols of our gratitude and love. Use these gifts to bless all those who are in need. Amen.

### **Responsive Reading: Psalm 19**

The heavens declare the glory of God;  
and the vault of the sky reveals God's handiwork.

**One day speaks to another,  
and night shares its knowledge with night,**

and this without speech or language;  
their voices are not heard.

**But their sound goes out to all the lands,  
their words to the ends of the earth.**

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun  
which comes out like a bridegroom from under the canopy,  
like an athlete eager to run the race.

**Its rising is at one end of the sky,  
it runs its course to the other,  
and there is nothing that is hidden from its heat.**

God's law is perfect, refreshing the soul;

**God's instruction is sure,  
giving wisdom to the simple;**

God's precepts are right, rejoicing the heart;

**God's commandment is pure  
giving light to the eyes;**

God's fear is clean, enduring forever;

**God's judgements are true,  
every one of them righteous;**

more desirable than gold, even much fine gold;

**sweeter also than honey,  
pure honey from the comb.**

By them is your servant warned;

**for in keeping them there is great reward.**

But who can discern unwitting sins?

**O cleanse me from my secret faults.**

Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins,  
lest they get the better of me.

**Then shall I be clean and innocent of great offence.**

**Let the words of my mouth**

**and the thoughts of my heart**

**be acceptable in your sight, O God,**

**my strength and my redeemer.**

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-10

all the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. <sup>2</sup> Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup> He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. <sup>4</sup> The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose; .... <sup>5</sup> And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. <sup>6</sup> Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> ... the Levites helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. <sup>8</sup> So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

<sup>9</sup> And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. <sup>10</sup> Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

*The other readings for this week are: **1 Corinthians 12:12-31a, Luke 4:14-21.** You can look them up on [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) and search for the passage.....in any translation you prefer (ie. King James - KJV, NKJV, NRSV, etc.)*

**Hymn VU 313 "God, Whose Almighty Word"**

God, whose almighty word  
chaos and darkness heard, and took their flight,  
hear us, we humbly pray, and where the gospel day  
sheds not its glorious ray, let there be light.

Jesus, who came to bring  
on your redeeming wing, healing and sight,  
health to the troubled mind, sight to the Spirit-blind,  
O now to humankind let there be light.

Spirit of truth and love,  
lifegiving, holy dove, speed forth your flight;  
move on the water's face, bearing the lamp of grace,  
and in earth's darkest place let there be light.

Blessed and holy three,  
glorious trinity, wisdom, love, might,  
boundless as ocean's tide rolling in fullest pride,  
through the world far and wide, let there be light.

**Meditation:** "Oh Shoot!"

### **We Respond to God's Blessing**

**Hymn VU 626** "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down your head upon my breast.'  
I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'Behold, I freely give  
the living water; thirsty one, stoop down, and drink, and live.'  
I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say, 'I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, your morn shall rise, and all your day be bright.'  
I looked to Jesus, and I found in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk till travelling days are done.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

People of God, be attentive to the Word of God;  
**for day after day, God speaks to our hearts.**

People of God, rejoice and be glad;  
**for the joy of God is our strength.**

People of God, go, share your joy with the world!

**We go, sharing all of our blessings with a world in need.**

**Sung Response: VU 963** May the Grace of Christ Attend Us

May the grace of Christ attend us,  
and the love of God surround us,  
and the Holy Spirit keep us,  
now and ever. Amen.

## Announcements.....

### Union:

The deadline for submissions to the Annual Report is Tuesday, January 25.

Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, February 6, following worship.

### Dorchester:

The deadline for submissions to the Annual Report is Wednesday, January 26.

Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, February 13, following worship.

### ALL:

**Lenten Reflections:** Rev. Mark is trying determine interest in a weekly reflection on scripture, based on Betty Lynn Schwab's book *Diving Deeply*, for the season of Lent. Sessions could be held Wednesday or Thursday afternoons, depending on what works best for those who are interested, commencing Wednesday, March 2 (or Thursday, March 3) until Wednesday, April 13 (or Thursday, April 14). If you are interested, please let Rev. Mark know, and indicate your preference of day and time.

**Five Oaks** is offering **Books and Coffee** online on February 8, 15, 22, and March 1.

This online book club focuses on learning from different cultures and interacting with diverse people. Each week you will read specified chapters and answer reflection questions and Nazra Ranmall will lead the online chat about what was read and your thoughts about Arundhati Roy's book *The God of Small Things*. To register, go to:

<https://fiveoaks.venue360.me/public/events/homepage?&org=ALL&eventPlan=ALL&season=ALL&groupBySeason=false&event=81>

**Five Oaks** is offering **Sister Water and the Sultan** online on February 10, 17, 24, and March 3,

7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Len Desroches will gently guide you through an exploration of the spirituality of Francis of Assisi, including a powerful encounter with the Muslim Sultan of Egypt. To register, go to:

<https://fiveoaks.venue360.me/public/events/homepage?&org=ALL&eventPlan=ALL&season=ALL&groupBySeason=false&event=72>

**Five Oaks** is offering **Family Fun Day** live in-person on February 19. Join in an afternoon of winter fun: family activities, crafts, storywalk, campfire and more. All activities will be facilitated in line with the latest Public Health guidelines. Registration coming soon to <https://fiveoaks.on.ca/program-schedule/>

**Horseshoe Falls Regional Council** invites you to join their Sunday Evening Discussion Group on the topic **Racism is a Pandemic**. The group meets twice monthly from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., commencing Sunday, January 16. For more details, and to register, go to: <https://arwrcucc.ca/racism-is-a-pandemic/>

**Lectionary Readings for next week:** (January 30, Fourth after Epiphany)

Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30

(February 6. Fifth after Epiphany)

Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13); Psalm 138; I Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11