

January 29, 2023  
Fourth after Epiphany

**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Prelude: "**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Moment of Silent Reflection**

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

**Call to Worship**

We come this morning,

**Our heads swimming with this world's wisdom;**

**A way of punishment, retribution, and revenge.**

We come this morning seeking to learn a different way;

**To learn how to live lives of God's justice and compassion.**

We come this morning seeking to reflect the light of God's wisdom;

**To walk humbly through this life;**

**Offering mercy to all who wish us harm;**

**To be the blessing to others that God made us to be.**

**Hymn: MV 1 "Let Us Build a House"**

Let us build a house where love can dwell and  
all can safely live, a place where saints and  
children tell how hearts learn to forgive. Built of  
hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of  
grace; here the love of Christ shall end divisions;  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and  
words are strong and true, where all God's children  
dare to seek to dream God's reign anew. Here the  
cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's  
grace; here as one we claim the faith of Jesus;  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found in  
water, wine and wheat; a banquet hall on  
holy ground, where peace and justice meet. Here the  
love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and  
space; as we share in Christ the feast that frees us;  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond  
the wood and stone to heal and strengthen,  
serve and teach, and live the Word they've known. Here the  
outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's  
face: let us bring an end to fear and danger;  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.


Let us build a house where all are named, their  
songs and visions heard and loved and treasured,  
taught and claimed as words within the Word. Built of  
tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of  
grace; let this house proclaim from floor to rafter;  
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

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

Lord Jesus, you reach out to us in 'our world' from 'your world.' Your world seems like a place of  
'make believe' to us, who live in the 'real world.' In actuality, it is our 'real world' that is the place of  
'make believe,' and your world that is 'real.' Help us to face the facts, to admit this truth, to get real,  
and, having seen the real world that you offer, give us the courage to recreate *this* world as *your*  
world; part of your blessed realm. Amen.

### **We Are Blessed By God**

**Anthem:** "We Will Be a Shelter for Each Other" Lyrics: Tom Long Music: Allan Poe

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

**Hymn VU 701** "What Does the Lord Require of You"

What does the Lord require of you?  
What does the Lord require of you?

Justice, kindness,  
walk humbly with your God.

To seek justice, and love kindness,  
and walk humbly with your God.

**Psalm 15**

**Refrain: Within your holy place, O God, who shall a dweller be?**

God, who may be a guest in your house,  
**or who may dwell on your holy mountain?**

**Refrain: Within your holy place, O God, who shall a dweller be?**

One who leads a blameless life,  
**who does what is right,**  
**who speaks truthfully from the heart;**  
one whose tongue is free from malice,  
**who never wrongs a friend,**  
**who utters no reproach against a neighbour;**  
one who cannot respect the unworthy,  
but honours those who fear God;  
**who stands by a promise given,**  
**though it be to personal disadvantage;**  
one who will not take interest on a loan,  
nor accept a bribe to testify against the innocent.  
**Whoever does this shall never be overthrown.**

**Refrain: Within your holy place, O God, who shall a dweller be?**

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

**Christ the Power and Wisdom of God**

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,

“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of the proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews ask for signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God’s weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

*The other readings for this week are: **Micah 6:1-8; Matthew 5:1-12***

**Meditation:** “Wisdumb”

**Hymn MV 12 “Come Touch Our Hearts”**

Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,  
from failing embers build a blazing fire;  
love strong enough to overturn injustice, to  
seek a world more gracious, come touch and bless our hearts.

Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,  
your quiet presence all our fears dispel;  
create a space for spirit to grow in us, let  
life and beauty fill us, come touch and bless our souls.

Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,  
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;  
help us to open doors of understanding, to  
welcome truth and wisdom, come touch and bless our minds.

Come touch us in the moments we are fragile,  
and in our weakness your great strength reveal;  
that we may rise to follow and to serve,  
steady now our nerve, come touch and bless our wills.

Come touch us now, this people who are gathered,  
to break the bread and share the cup of peace;  
that we may love you with our heart, our soul, our  
mind, our strength, our all, come touch us with your grace.

### **We Respond To God's Grace**

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

I don't know about you, but I don't give to the church, the local church, the denomination, or even the global church. I do, however, give to God. God has blessed me, and I believe that I have not been blessed for my benefit alone. I believe that I have been blessed in order to share my blessings with others. Our tithes and other offerings will be received, through the offering plate, by CanadaHelps or by Canada Post.

#### **Offertory Hymn VU 544 "In Gratitude and Humble Trust"**

In gratitude and humble trust we bring our best today  
to serve your cause and share your love with all along life's way.  
O God, who gave yourself to us in Jesus Christ, your Son,  
teach us to give ourselves each day until life's work is done.

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

Blessed are you, gracious God:

you have given us life and freedom to be your people in the world.

Blessed are you, gracious God:

you have called us into the church, and into this community of faith, pilgrims together on the journey into a new creation.

Blessed are you, gracious God:

you have touched our hearts with hope, so that we long to see the day of your salvation.

Accept now these gifts we bring. Through them may all come to know your blessings as we know your blessings. Through them may your new commonwealth of justice and peace be built. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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

God of the prophets, God of the Christ,

We are reminded today that your blessings do not necessarily follow the logic of the world. We bring our burdens to you, O God.

The world believes that the rich are blessed, but Jesus reminds us that it is the poor who are blessed, the poor in spirit and the materially poor as well. We pray for a more just world in which all have enough and none are left behind. Today we pray especially for the people of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Western Sahara, and Tunisia.

Though we fear death and avoid its inevitable arrival, Jesus tells us that those who mourn are blessed. Help us to experience the truth of this mystery as we pray for those among us who mourn, especially the friends and family of Betty Lawson and Agnes Worthy.

Bring healing and wholeness to those who are sick or dying, awaiting medical intervention or recovering from treatment, especially..... and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

While people covet power, Jesus blesses the meek; instruct us, O God, in the ways of humility; help us to stand in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized; show us your presence in the faces of those the world forgets.

Give us a hunger and thirst for righteousness; fill our hearts with love, overflowing with mercy; make our hearts pure, and give us a vision of your glory. We ask this especially for your church, and in particular the Princeton/Etonia Pastoral Charge.

In a society divided by race, gender, class, ideology, sexual orientation, and so many other labels we alone have created, remind us that we are created in your image, each of us a beautiful reflection of you, each of us your beloved child. Help us then to end our conflicts and wars, help us to be peacemakers and agents of reconciliation.

Gracious God, you have so richly blessed us with life, with love and joy, with hope in the midst of despair. Help us to be the salt of the earth. Help us to be the light of the world, sharing with others that which we have received, boldly proclaiming the good news of your love, finding the seeds of your kingdom within us and letting your way grow in our lives and throughout the world.

Give us eyes to see the ways you are changing the world in which we live. Give us ears to hear your call to join with you in the great transformation. All this we pray in Jesus' name, 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 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 sins,**

**as we forgive those who sin against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

**Hymn VU 686 “God of Grace and God of Glory”**

God of grace and God of glory,  
on your people pour your power;  
now fulfil your church's story;  
bring its bud to glorious flower.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,  
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us  
scorn your Christ, assail your ways;  
fears and doubts too long have bound us;  
free our hearts to work and praise.

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

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

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

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.

**Commissioning and Benediction**

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We have been nourished by God's grace and hope,  
**and so we will go to those who hunger for justice,  
as well as to those who thirst for reconciliation.**

We are called to follow the One who is weak and powerless,  
**and so we will bring healing to the broken among us,  
as well as comfort to those who grieve in every moment.**

We learn what is right and good from the Holy Spirit,  
**and so we will go as fools to be blessings to the wise,  
as well as to do not what is easy, but what is difficult.**

**Response: VU 79 “Arise, Your Light Is Come”**

Arise, your light is come!  
The Spirit's call obey;  
show forth the glory of your God,  
which shines on you today.

**Postlude: “**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **ALL:**

#### **DORCHESTER:**

Central Board meets Wednesday, February 1 at 7 p.m.

Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, February 12

Did you know that the Children's Aid Society (CAS) needs more foster parents? People who are retired are ideal candidates for fostering! There is a need to provide safe spaces for babies right through to teenagers. If you aren't able to commit to fostering a child, you could also act as a relief home for a short period. To learn more about if this might be a good fit for you, please contact [Caitlin.MacInnes@caslondon.on.ca](mailto:Caitlin.MacInnes@caslondon.on.ca) to set up an information session. Training and support would be provided to you if you chose to take on this call.

The Soul is the Piano with Many Strings ..." A piano recital with Bruce Vogt Sunday February 12th, 2023 1:30 p.m. Dundas St. Centre United Church 482 Dundas St. Freewill offering to support the church's Out of the Cold Meals Program.

#### **UNION:**

Annual Congregational Meeting is Sunday, February 5 following worship

#### **Lectionary Readings for next week:**

(February 5, Fifth after Epiphany)

Isaiah 25:1-9a (9b-12); Psalm 112:1-9 (10); 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16); Matthew 5:13-20