

February 12, 2023  
Sixth after Epiphany  
**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Prelude:**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

**Moment of Silent Reflection**

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

**Call to Worship**     *(based on 1 Corinthians 3:1-9)*

We gather this morning as infants in Christ.

**Each of us wanting what we want, regardless of what others want.**

We gather this morning as infants in Christ.

**Each of us wanting what we want, right now, if not sooner.**

We gather this morning as infants in Christ,

**Yet called to grow into spiritual maturity,**

Called to set aside our competing agendas and to work together,

**Called to be coworkers with God,**

**to make the realm of God real, here, in this time and place.**

Let us worship the Lord our God.

**Hymn: VU 227** “For the Fruit of All Creation”

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.

For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.

For the ploughing, sowing, reaping,

silent growth while we are sleeping,

future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour, God's will is done.

In the help we give our neighbour, God's will is done.

In our worldwide task of caring

for the hungry and despairing,

in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

For the harvests of the Spirit, thanks be to God.

For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.

For the wonders that astound us,

for the truths that still confound us,

most of all that love has found us, thanks be to God.

**Opening Prayer** *(unison)*

**Your wisdom, Word of God, is not a word of condemnation but of liberation, for it instructs us in the way to live in community in harmony. All too often we end up focusing on the details and miss the deeper issues. All too often we look at others and condemn their actions while ignoring our own faults. All too often we see life as a competition of Olympic proportions instead of a team sport where we are all on the same team, and we win or lose together. Help us to set aside our quarreling nature that we may be united in common worship, common service, and a common purpose, as we follow you, O Christ. Amen.**

## **We Are Blessed By God**

**Anthem:** "Take Now My Voice" by Doug Nolan

**Psalm 119:1-8**

**Refrain: Happy are they who follow your law, O God!**

Happy are those who live a blameless life,  
who follow your law, O God.

**Happy are those who keep your decrees,  
who seek you with their whole heart.**

They also do no wrong, but walk in your ways.

**You have given your precepts for us to keep diligently.**

**Refrain: Happy are they who follow your law, O God!**

O that my ways might be steadfast  
in the keeping of your statutes.

**Then I will not be put to shame,  
when I hear all your commandments.**

I will truly thank you from the heart,  
when I learn your righteous decrees.

**I will keep your statutes. O do not utterly forsake me.**

**Refrain: Happy are they who follow your law, O God!**

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 3:1-9

**On Divisions in the Corinthian Church**

And so, brothers and sisters, I could not speak to you as spiritual people but rather as fleshly, as infants in Christ. I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for solid food. Even now you are still not ready, for you are still fleshly. For as long as there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not fleshly and behaving according to human inclinations? For when one says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I belong to Apollos," are you not all too human? What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and each will receive wages according to their own labor. For we are God's coworkers, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

*The other readings for this week are: **Deuteronomy 30:15-20; 1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37***

**Hymn VU 520** "We Plough the Fields"

We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land,  
but it is fed and watered by your almighty hand;  
you send the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain,  
the breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain.

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;  
we thank you, God, O holy God, for all your love.

You only are the maker of all things near and far;  
you paint the wayside flower, you light the evening star;  
the winds and waves obey you, by you the birds are fed;  
much more to us, your children, you give us daily bread.

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;  
we thank you, God, O holy God, for all your love.

We thank you then, O Maker, for all things bright and good,  
the seed-time and the harvest, our life, our health, our food;  
accept the gifts we offer for all your love imparts,  
and, what from us you long for, our humble, thankful hearts.

All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above;  
we thank you, God, O holy God, for all your love.

**Meditation:** "Sow what"

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

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

We don't give to God from the pittance that is left over after everything else we need and want is taken care of, but from the abundance with which God blessed us, before anything else is considered. We don't give to God begrudgingly or out of a sense of obligation, but gladly, because we believe in God's mission of justice and equity for all. Our tithes and other offerings will be received, through the offering plate or the mail slot, by CanadaHelps, by Canada Post, or by e-transfer.

#### **Offertory Hymn MV 27 "Creator God You Gave Us Life" vs. 3**

When with our hearts, our hands our minds,  
we share our gifts with all the world,  
our spirits soar beyond the veil, to touch the very face of God.  
Through hands that paint majestic skies, and voices chanting melody,  
with words that reach beyond the page, we comprehend your mystery.

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

May the gifts we offer, Loving God, be used to fix breakfast for hungry children, to shower others with grace, and to patch the potholes poverty has created in the roadways of the kingdom. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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

Faithful God, Empower your church throughout the world in its life and witness. Inspire it's creativity in building your kingdom. Encourage it's risk taking for your eternal realm. Break down the barriers that divide, that, united in your truth and love, the church may confess your name, share one baptism, sit together at one table, and serve you in one common ministry. This week we pray especially for the Thorndale Pastoral Charge, and their spiritual leader, Pastor Pam Wilcox.

Sovereign God, You hold both the history of the nations and the humble life of villages in your care. Preserve the people of every nation from tyrants and protect them in time of upheaval and disaster, that all may enter the kingdom that cannot be shaken. This week we pray especially for the people of Austria, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland.

Eternal God, Strengthen this nation to pursue just priorities so that the young may be educated, the elderly cared for, the hungry filled, the homeless housed, and the sick comforted and healed.

God of Comfort, Stand with those who mourn; reassure them that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, shall separate them from your love. We pray for the friends and family of Betty Lawson, Agnes Worthy, and Patsy Sherriff.

Merciful God, You bear the pain of the world. Look with compassion on those who are sick; cheer them by your word, and bring healing as a sign of your grace. This day we pray especially for John Broomfield, Rev. Jim Evans, Christopher Pierce, Rev. Lewis Snow, their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy. 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, singing, (VU 959)

**Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done  
on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil  
for the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.**

**Hymn VU 579** "The Church is Wherever God's People"

The church is wherever God's people are praising,  
singing God's goodness for joy on this day.

The church is wherever disciples of Jesus  
remember his story and walk in his way.

The church is wherever God's people are helping,  
caring for neighbours in sickness and need.

The church is wherever God's people are sharing  
the words of the Bible in gift and in deed.

### **Commissioning and Benediction**

Worship has ended, service begins.

Go, be the church, the body of Christ.

**We go, sharing God's blessings  
in this community, throughout the land, and around the world.**

May the blessings of God, the love of Christ,  
and the grace of the Holy Spirit go with us all.

**Response: VU 969** "Amen"

Amen, amen, amen.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **ALL:**

Next Sunday, February 19, is the final Sunday prior to the beginning of Lent. It is the Sunday we celebrate the Transfiguration of Jesus. We will be celebrating with the sacrament of Holy Communion. If you are joining online, please make sure that you have a bread product and juice or wine available to join in with everyone else.

The United Church of Canada is working with global partners in Turkey and Syria to assess what is most urgently needed and how we can be of assistance in responding to the devastating earthquake there. In the meantime, the Philanthropy Unit is accepting donations to the Global Emergency Response fund, for this and other global emergencies. For more information, you can go to: <https://united-church.ca/social-action/act-now/global-emergency-response>

Part Two of our study “The Heart of Christianity” runs Tuesdays at Two for the seven weeks of Lent, from February 21 until April 4 inclusive. We will plan to meet in person at Dorchester United Church, with a zoom link for those not comfortable or able to attend in person. If you are interested in joining this study, please contact Rev. Mark. (Please read Chapter 6 Born Again, for the 21<sup>st</sup>)

The Soul is the Piano with Many Strings  
A Piano recital with Bruce Vogt  
Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.  
Dundas Street Centre United Church  
42 Dundas Street, London.  
Freewill offering to support the church’s Out of the Cold Meals Program.

### **DORCHESTER:**

Annual Congregational Meeting is TODAY following worship.

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 to set up an information session. Training and support would be provided to you if you chose to take on this call.

### **UNION:**

Outreach for February – Port Stanley and Sparta Food Bank (personal hygiene products)

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

(February 19, Transfiguration)

Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2 OR Psalm 99; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9