

March 5, 2023
Second Sunday of Lent
We Gather In God's Presence

Acknowledging the Land

We are gathered this morning on traditional lands. We recognize and deeply appreciate the historic connection to this ground we share. We also recognize the contributions of the Metis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made to our country. As settlers, this recognition must be clearly connected to our commitment to make the promise and the challenge of the Truth and Reconciliation real in the communities in which we live and worship. We are grateful to the Creator for this time and this place.

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.

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

Lenten Candle Liturgy

*Written by Won Hur. **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2023, pages 66-69. Used with permission.*

We live unaware of the spiritual realities around us.

We fail to grasp the reality of God's presence in our world.

Like Nicodemus, we cannot grasp the kingdom of God.

Thus, we muddle through life, suffering the consequences of our lack of attentiveness.

Thus, we bear the impact of climate change in the pursuit of economic gains.

We live with enormous amounts of plastic waste in the name of convenience.

We live with micro-aggressions and systemic racism.

We mourn our ignorance and under-developed religious beliefs.

The second candle is extinguished.

MV 90 "Don't Be Afraid"

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger, my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger and I have promised, promised to be always near.

Prayer (*unison*)

O God, we pray to be born anew, in order to grasp the meaning of your kingdom. We long to discover our authentic selves as we shed our false selves in this Lenten season. May your truth set us free. May we abide in your spirit of truth so that we can live a life worthy of eternity. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Anthem:

Time for the Young and the Young @ 

Hymn VU 589 "Lord, Speak to Me"

Lord, speak to me that I may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as you have sought, so let me seek
your straying children lost and lone.

O lead me, so that I may lead
the wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, so that I may feed
your hungering ones with manna sweet.

O teach me, so that I may teach
the precious truths which you impart;
and wing my words, that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.

O fill me with your fullness, Lord,
until my very heart o'erflows
in kindling thought and glowing word,
your love to tell, your praise to show.

We Respond To God's Grace

Minute for Mission – Empowering Women to be Agents of Change

Creating a safe space for single women in India



Maina Bai can now read and write and is empowering others to become literate.

Credit: ASWA

Maina Bai's mother died when she was a baby, and Maina never went to school. When she was just 10 years old, her father married her off to an older man. By 16, she had a child. A few years after the birth of her daughter, her husband died. When she returned to her maternal home, Maina was married off—again.

After a few years of marriage, Maina became a widow again. Single, she faced extraordinary stigma.

Approximately 2.18 million single women like Maina live in the state of Rajasthan, India. Whether they are widowed, divorced, or have never been married, these women are deemed “incomplete” and a disgrace to their families. As a result, many live lives marked by stigma, fear, and violence—simply for not being married.

Your gifts support Mission & Service partner Astha Sansthan, “Association of Strong Women Alone” (ASWA). In 20 years, the association grew from 450 single women to over 70,000 members.

ASWA's approach is simple: Create a safe space for single women to come together and get the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their lives.

The association has made all the difference for Maina.

She can now read and write and is empowering other women to become literate. Because of her leadership, 35 women have enrolled in adult learning. All of them now have grade eight certificates. What's more, the generational cycle of illiteracy has been broken. Maina's daughter can not only read and write but is also teaching others to do the same, opening up opportunities and increasing independence.

Your [Mission & Service](#) gifts empower women like Maina to be agents of change within their communities. Thank you for your generosity.

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

We gather with the symbols of the ancient church before us.

The cross – empty – not about torture and death, but resurrection

The word – the stories that the first communities of Jesus followers told

The pitcher, towel, basin – foot washing – service

The bread and cup – a meal that all are invited to share, like Judas

The oil – anointing – healing

We gather, individuals and a community, blessed.

Out of gratitude for the blessings, we share what we have.

Offertory Hymn VU 218 “We Praise You, O God” vs. 1

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.

We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, bless and transform all that we offer: our faltering steps, our brokenness, our hope, our risking, our hearts, that your covenant may be written on our hearts and we may be a people who know we are blessed and who share that blessing. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer (VU 959)

Jesus, vulnerable and alone in the desert you faced the force of evil and withstood temptation.

Be with us in our struggles and temptations, that by your strength we may reject evil in whatever form it comes.

Jesus, you wept over the state of Israel, be with our cities, our villages, our places of worship.

This week we pray especially for the people of Ireland, and the United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

Jesus, you wept alone at Gethsemane, be with all who feel alone, all who face difficult decisions.

Jesus, you wept, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Be with all who are tortured, all who are victims, all who suffer from disaster, whether of human or natural origin.

Jesus, you wept over the death of Lazarus, be with all who grieve: esp. the friends and family of John Broomfield, Patsy Sherriff, and Lyle Quackenbush.

Jesus, you offered up prayers with loud cries and tears, hear our prayers, our requests for those who are ill or dying, awaiting medical intervention, or recovering from medical treatment, especially we think of Rev. Jim Evans, Butch Hoxar, Mac Toner, and their loved ones and caregivers and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

Jesus, you wept in sympathy and frustration, you know our pains and our joys. Be with us this day and always, as we pray,

**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.

Psalm 121

Refrain: Our help is in the name of our God who made heaven and earth.

I lift up my eyes to the hills.

From where will I look for help?

**My help comes from God,
who has made heaven and earth.**

God will not let your foot stumble;
the One who protects Israel will not slumber.

**The One who protects you
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

Refrain: Our help is in the name of our God who made heaven and earth.

It is God who protects you,
your defense at your right hand.

**The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

God will protect you from all evil,
God will protect your life.

**God will protect your going and coming,
now and forever.**

Refrain: Our help is in the name of our God who made heaven and earth.

Scripture: John 3:1-17

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You must be born from above.' The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

"Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

"Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

*The other readings for this week are: **Genesis 12:1-4a; Romans 4:1-5, 13-17***

Hymn: VU 500 “Blessed Jesus, at Your Word”

Blessed Jesus, at your word
we have come again to hear you;
let our thoughts and hearts be stirred
and in glowing faith be near you.
As the promises here given
draw us wholly up to heaven.

All our knowledge, sense, and sight
lie in deepest darkness shrouded
till your Spirit breaks the night,
filling us with light unclouded.
All good thoughts and all good living
come but by your gracious giving.

Radiance of God's glory bright,
Light of light from God proceeding,
Jesus, send your blessed light;
help our hearing, speaking, heeding,
that our prayers and songs may please you,
as with grateful hearts we praise you.

Meditation: “Hear, hear”

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

May you feel the Spirit blowing in your life.

May the Spirit blow away all that is outdated,
making way for new ways of thinking and being.

May the Spirit whisper to you the promise of new possibilities.

Amen.

Response: "Go Now In Peace"

Go now in peace. Never be afraid.

God will go with you each hour of ev'ry day.

Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true.

Know He will guide you in all you do.

Go now in love, and show you believe.

Reach out to others so all the world can see.

God will be there supporting us with love.

Go now in peace, in faith, and in love.

Amen, amen, amen.

Postlude:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ALL:

Next Sunday, March 12 is the beginning of Daylight Savings Time. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead one hour at bedtime on Saturday, or you won't be at church at the right time on Sunday.

You're invited to a free screening of 'SAFE' on Monday, March 6 at the Hyland Cinema in London, or Monday, March 13 at the Galaxy Cinemas in St. Thomas. 'SAFE' is a documentary that features Indwell tenants and their stories with hope-filled solutions to homelessness.

You'll be inspired! Reserve your seat at indwell.ca/events.

Warning: some strong language and mature subject matter.

In response to the devastating earthquakes in Türkiye and northern Syria, The United Church of Canada is working with partners in the Middle East Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and the Humanitarian Coalition to show tangible support for the people of Türkiye and Syria. To contribute to the United Church response, you can mail a cheque to:

The United Church of Canada

Philanthropy Unit - Emergency Response

3250 Bloor Street West, Suite 200

Toronto, ON M8X 2Y4

Please be sure to note "Emergency Response—Türkiye" on the face of your cheque.

Or, go online to:

<https://www.gifttool.com/donations/Donate?ID=1955&AID=2274&PID=6564>

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 7 Thin Places: Opening The Heart, for the 7th)

UNION:

Broadview subscriptions are to be renewed by March 31. Please let Roberta Gillard know if you do not wish to continue receiving this magazine. The group rate for each subscription is \$25.

Outreach for March – Inn Out of the Cold.

personnel hygiene products...shaving cream, deodorant, combs, brushes.

art supplies...paper, markers, crossword puzzles.

snack food - individually packaged....water, drink boxes, cereal bars, pudding/fruit cups.

tea, coffee, hot chocolate

paper cups - no lids

Lectionary Readings for next week:

(March 12, Third Sunday of Lent)

Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95; Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42