

March 19, 2023
Fourth Sunday of Lent

We Gather In God's Presence

Acknowledging the Land

We acknowledge that this community is located on the land of the McKee Treaty that was signed on May 19, 1790 by the Wyandot and Anishinaabe Nations, including ancestors of Chippewas of the Thames First Nation. It is also the traditional territory of the, Haudenosaunee, Attiwonderonk (Neutral) and Mississauga Nation. These First Nations continue to provide ongoing stewardship of the land and waters in this area.

Hymn VU 264 "Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise"

Immortal, invisible, God only wise;
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes;
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds, which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
then wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

Thou reignest in glory, thou rulest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all praise we would render, O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee!

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.*

Though we yearn for great vision, many of our visions are limited.

Yet we do not know just how limited we are spiritually.

We do not know that we do not know.

Content to live with illusions and self-delusions, the people of this world do not even want to know wisdom and truth.

As the prophet Joel said, when the leaders lack vision, it is the people who suffer.

We suffer from narrow leadership, compromised integrity, and self-centred values.

We experience the suffering of God's people on our streets, in shantytowns, in refugee camps, and in every neighbourhood.

The fourth 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 long for enlightened leaders to emerge who have the audacity to hope and to declare the truth we long to receive. How long must we wait? How long must we suffer? Or are we the ones who are to embrace the visions and the possibilities? Then open our spirits for us to embrace your truth. Open our minds to receive your wisdom. Open our hearts to love widely, generously. And deeply. May our faith shine through us and may we experience your kingdom on earth as in heaven. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Anthem:

Time for the Young and the Young @



Hymn VU 371 "Open My Eyes, That I May See"

Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
 Silently now I wait for thee,
 ready, my God, thy will to see.
 Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

God has blessed us with the gift of life. God walks with us, on the high plateaus, and in the dark valleys of our life. In gratitude for all that God has blessed us with, and for God's constant presence with us, let us joyfully praise God with our tithes and offerings, on the offering plate, through Canada Post or Canada Helps, or via e-transfer.

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

Good Shepherd, you seek us and all your lost sheep. Use these gifts as your rod and staff to comfort and guide the weary to your pastures, to bind up those who are broken hearted, and strengthen those who are weak, to feed those who hunger and bring sight to the blind. Amen.

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

God of all seasons, in your pattern of things there is a time for keeping and a time for losing; a time for building up and a time for pulling down; a time for mourning and a time for laughing; a time for dying and a time for healing. In this holy season of Lent, as we journey to the cross, help us to discern in our lives what we must lay down and what we must take up; what we must end and what we must begin.

Be with your church, that it might be a light to the nations in these days of distress. Especially we pray for Ilderton United Church, and their spiritual leader Carol Morton.

Be with the nations, and the peoples of the nations as they negotiate the challenging events of these days. Especially we pray for the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Be with all those who mourn. Grant them comfort and peace, especially we remember the friends and family of Doreen Snow, and Teresa Zellas.....

Be with all those who are sick or dying, awaiting medical treatment or recovering from medical intervention, especially we think of ...

and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts...

Grant healing where you would have healing, and where healing is not your will, grant comfort, peace, and wholeness of spirit.

Finally, give us grace to lead a disciplined life, in glad faithfulness and with the joy which comes from a closer walk with 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, singing,

**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 23

Refrain: My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

God is my shepherd,

there is nothing I shall lack.

You, God, make me lie down in green pastures,

you lead me beside peaceful waters;

you revive my spirit,

you guide me in right pathways

for your name's sake.

Refrain: My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

you are with me,

your rod and your staff are my comfort.

You spread a table for me in the sight of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup is overflowing.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I will dwell in God's house my whole life long.

Refrain: My shepherd is the Lord, nothing indeed shall I want.

Scripture: John 9:1-41

A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am he." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

The other readings for this week are: 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Ephesians 5:8-14

Hymn: VU 4 "God of All Places"

God of all places; present, unseen;
voice in our silence, song in our midst,
we are your people, knowing, unsure:
come, Lord Jesus, come!

God of all dreaming, near and yet far;
vision unheard of, wake us to rest.
We are your presence sent forth, afraid: R
come, Lord Jesus, come!

God of all people, dust and the clay;
breath of a new wind, fire in our hearts,
light born of heaven, peace on the earth:
come, Lord Jesus, come!

Meditation: "The Salvation of Jesus"

Hymn VU 642 "Be Thou My Vision"

Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;
naught be all else to me save that thou art,
thou my best thought, by day or by night,
waking or sleeping thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;
I ever with thee, and thou in my life;
thou loving parent, thy child may I be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, after victory won,
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Commissioning and Benediction

Go! Be the light of Christ in the world wherever you go!

**May the goodness of God enfold us,
the light of Christ shine upon us,
and the power of the Holy Spirit guide and comfort us,
this day and every day.**

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:

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 10 The Heart of the Matter: Practice, for the 21st)

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 26, Fifth Sunday of Lent)

Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45