

November 19, 2023
Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost / Proper 28

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Blessed Assurance" Phoebe P. Knapp Arranged by Melody Bober

Lighting the Christ Candle

Moment of Silent Reflection

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

Call to Worship

To you we lift up our eyes;

you, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Our hearts grow faint within us, for it is difficult to remain faithful to you

when all around us are asleep in their beds, or playing in arenas.

You spoke to the Israelites through your prophetess Deborah,

speak also to us in this time of worship,

and in our everyday lives,

for you are God, from everlasting to everlasting,

and we are your faithful servants.

Hymn: VU 222 "Come, Let Us Sing"

Come, let us sing to the Lord our song,

we have stood silently too long;

surely the Lord deserves our praise,

so joyfully thank God for our days.

O thirsty soul, come drink at the well;

God's living waters will never fail.

Surely the Lord will help you to stand,

strengthened and comforted by God's hand.

You dwell among us and cause us to pray,
and walk with each other following your way;

our precious brothers and sisters will grow
in the fulfilling love they know.

Deserts shall bloom and mountains shall sing
to the desire of all living things.

Come, all you creatures, high and low,
let your praises endlessly flow.

Opening Prayer (unison)

Holy and Gracious God, you stooped and formed us from the dust of the ground, and breathed the breath of life into us. You blessed us, placing us in a world containing an abundance and diversity of life. You blessed us with partners and children. You blessed us, giving us skills with which to earn our livelihood, and we offer back our selfishness. You sent Jesus amongst us to become servant of all, and we offer back fear and hatred and anger. Remind us of our call to follow in Jesus' footsteps as servants of this world. Replace our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh. Give us strength and courage to stand and speak out against systems of injustice. Give us a world of love and justice and true peace. In the name of the Prince of Peace we pray. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Anthem: "I Will Joyfully Sing" Mary McDonald

Time for the Young and the Young @ 

Hymn: VU 288 "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Great is thy faithfulness, God our Creator;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou has been thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow –
wondrous the portion thy blessings provide.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided
great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

Psalm 123

R: To you, O God, our eyes we raise until your mercy we may praise.

To you I lift up my eyes,

to you who are enthroned in the heavens.

As the eyes of servants look to their master's hands,
as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to you, O God,
as we wait till you show us your favour.

R: To you, O God, our eyes we raise until your mercy we may praise.

We have had more than enough of contempt.

**Too long we have suffered the scorn of the wealthy,
and the contempt of the arrogant.**

R: To you, O God, our eyes we raise until your mercy we may praise.

Scripture: Judges 4:1-7 Deborah and Barak

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. So the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

At that time Deborah, a prophet, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Position yourself at Mount Tabor, taking ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops, and I will give him into your hand.' "

The other readings for this week are: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30

Meditation: "A Risk Worth Taking"

Hymn VU 690 "From the Slave Pens of the Delta"

"From the slave pens of the delta, from the ghettos on the Nile,
let my people seek their freedom in the wilderness a while":
so God spoke from out of Sinai, so God spoke and it was done,
and a people crossed the waters toward the rising of the sun.

"From the aging shrines and structures, from the cloister and the aisle,
let my people seek their freedom in the wilderness a while":
so the Son of God has spoken, and the storm clouds are unfurled,
for his people must be scattered to be servants of the world.

When we murmur on the mountains for the old Egyptian plains,
when we miss our ancient bondage, and the hope, the promise, wanes,
then the rock shall yield its water and the manna fall by night,
and with visions of a future shall we march toward the light.

In the maelstrom of the nations, in the journey into space,
in the clash of generations, in the hungering for grace,
in our agony and glory, we are called to newer ways
by the God of our tomorrows who is God of earth's today's.

We Respond To God's Grace

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

Lord of all being and source of every blessing, we thank you for all good things: for life and love, for health and food, for work and home, for nature's beauty and comfort, for human skills and laughter, for memory and hope, for everything which gives us pleasure, nourishment, and strength.

Gracious God, Jesus taught us saying that when two or more were gathered in his name he was there with us, and that anything we asked in his name, it would be done, and so we pray: for the faithful all over the world, that all who love you may be united in your service. This week we pray especially for Springfield Pastoral Charge, and their spiritual leader Mary Dillon.

We pray for the peoples and leaders of the nations, that they may be reconciled one to another in pursuit of your justice and peace. This week we pray especially for the people of East Timor, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

We pray for all who suffer from prejudice, greed or violence, that the heart of humanity may warm with your tenderness. We pray for all affected by war or terroris, and for all refugees, especially the people of . Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gaza, Israel, Mali, Russia, Ukraine, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

We pray for all in need by reason of famine, flood or earthquake, that they may know the hope of your faithfulness through the help of others, especially the people of Yemen, Italy, East Africa, and Iceland.

We pray for the land, the sea, and the sky, that we may learn to live with respect in creation and use your gifts with reverence.

We pray for all who mourn a loss in their lives, especially we pray for the friends and family of Archie Fletcher, Sharon Young, and the Rev. Colin Swan.

We pray for all who suffer the pain of sickness, loneliness, fear or loss, that those whose names are in our hearts, in the hearts of others, or known to you alone, may receive strength and courage. We pray especially for Ernie Reid, and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

God of compassion, into your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, now and forever. We continue praying, saying the words Jesus taught us,

**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 yours is the kingdom the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

O God, you give to us in measure so great we cannot count the ways. We offer back a pittance of all that you have blessed us with. We are your stewards on this great earth, we must learn to provide for all. Help us, O God, to seek the opportunity to serve your will. Our tithes and offerings will now be accepted, via CanadaHelps and Canada Post, PAR, the offering plate or the mailslot.

Offertory Hymn VU 537 "Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands"

Your work, O God, needs many hands to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve unless our gifts we share.
Because we love you and your work, our offerings now we make:
be pleased to use it as your own, we ask for Jesus' sake.

Prayer of Dedication

Through our service and through our offering we pursue every opportunity to serve your will by serving the hungry, the homeless, the addict, the mentally ill, the black, the indigenous, the sex trade worker, and yes, even the unlovable. Bless all who are in need, and bless our giving, in Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Hymn VU 625 "I Feel the Winds of God"

Please Use Hymn Books

Commissioning and Benediction

Go, dare to stand against the values of this world.

**We go, risking all that we have, even our good name,
for the sake of the gospel.**

Go, expend all that you have for the kingdom of God.

**We go, expending our time, our effort, our skill, our wealth
for justice and righteousness for all.**

Go, create hope and peace for all.

**We go, spreading grace and joy and wonder
in a world filled with greed and fear and entitlement.**

May the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
go with us all, this day and every day.

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: "Forward in His Name" P. Kevin Boesiger

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Christmas is coming! Fortunately, the new Gifts with Vision catalogue is available to help you buy that perfect gift for the person with everything and transform lives at the same time. You can find it at www.giftswithvision.ca

Gospel Concert - Saturday, November 18 & 19

Be sure to mark November 18 or November 19 on your calendars to make sure you can attend the St. Andrew's Choir Gospel Concert. The concerts will be at 2:30 p.m. Several guest musicians will be joining us for two afternoons of wonderful music. Tickets are \$15. To purchase a ticket contact Susan Grieve at grievescan@gmail.com or 519.495.2281. St. Andrews-Westminster U.C. is located at the corner of Glanworth Drive and Highbury S.

THE THAMES CENTRE COMMUNITY CHOIR presents its **Fall Concert and Silent Auction** on Tuesday, November 21 at 7 p.m. in Room #3 at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre. The choir presents a variety of songs and invites the audience to sing along with some familiar tunes. Homemade pies, tarts, squares and preserves are some of the tasty treats to be had along with many fun and interesting items up for auction. Admission by donation. Call 519-461-1679 for more information.

Screening Party: The new documentary, *INVASION: In an era of reconciliation, Indigenous land is being taken at gunpoint*, will be shown at Wesley-Knox United Church, 91 Askin St., London, on Wednesday, November 22 at 7 p.m. The documentary is 18 minutes long, and will be followed by a discussion of solidarity and possible next steps.

A “**Bethlehem Walk**” will be held November 23, 24, and 25 at Hi-Way Pentecostal Church, 584118 Beachville Road, Ingersoll. This is a very engaging, live, outdoor drama to the Christmas Story of Jesus' birth. Tickets are FREE but you must register in advance. Phone the church office at 519-485-0961 or visit the website at www.hiwaypentecostal.ca to reserve your tickets for the time that works best for you. Note that the pathways are mulched so are not easily navigable for wheelchairs, walkers, or strollers. For safety reasons, organizers request that visitors park in the church lot and not on the shoulder of Beachville Rd.

Westminster United Church, Thamesford, presents **It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play** on November 24, 25, December 1, 2 at 7 p.m., and December 2 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$35 each and include Christmas desserts and beverages. Tickets are available by calling 519-285-3212 or at www.makingconnexions.com/show

The 96th Annual Royal Canadian College of Organists Christmas Carol Service is being held on December 3 at 7:30 at Metropolitan United Church. It will feature Bible Readings on Advent and Christmas, a Mass Choir of choristers from church choirs in the area singing beautiful Christmas anthems, and the Salvation Army Citadel Band, along with several talented young organists. We hope you can attend this wonderful service. There is no fee to get in, but a donation to the RCCO would be appreciated. Hope to see you there!

DORCHESTER:

Effective immediately, and until further notice our services will no longer be available via Zoom. We will attempt to record the services and post them on the website later on Sunday.

Central Board meets Wednesday, November 29 at 7 p.m. Please review the information regarding Remit 1 and come ready to discuss.

An **Advent Lessons and Carols Service** will be held Sunday, December 3 at 3 p.m. at St. Peter's Anglican Church. This is a joint service with St. Peter's Anglican Church, Dorchester Presbyterian Church, and Dorchester United Church. An invitation is extended to the wider Dorchester community to join in this seasonal celebration.

Sox in a Box: We will be collecting new socks, mitts, hats, and other clothing items for the homeless. Please bring all donations to the church and place them in the boxes under the Christmas tree.... When it goes up.

Food Bank: A box is located at the back door of the church for our ongoing collection for the food bank.

Coffee Time Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m.

Pop Cans and Aluminum: Keep collecting cans, aluminum pie and tart plates, meal containers, etc. Ernie Reid converts them into cash for the church. Call Ernie at 519-268-3129.

UNION:

Unified Board meets Wednesday, November 22 at 7 p.m. Please review the information regarding Remit 1 and come ready to discuss.

Cookie Decorating at Union Church, December 8, 6:30 to 8 p.m. This is an evening of fun for the young and young at heart. Come join the messy fun as our children create masterpieces on cookies and enjoy a cup of hot chocolate. All are welcome.

November Outreach Focus

The Christmas Shoppe in St. Thomas. New items such as pajamas, tops, pants, sweaters, socks, underwear or toys are greatly appreciated. The age range for these items is newborn to 12 years (up to size 16). If you have time to volunteer the first week of December, please let Roberta know and she will pass the information on.

December Outreach we will be collecting food items for Christmas Care as well as toys. These will be collected until Dec. 10, in time to donate them to Christmas Care for distribution.

LECTIONARY READINGS:

November 26 – Reign of Christ / Christ the King Sunday

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46