

March 3, 2024
Third Sunday of Lent

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: “

Extinguishing a Lenten Candle *written by Won Hur. Used with permission. The United Church of Canada*

We live in a world of many divisions: class, gender, religion, race, and politics.

It is not easy to risk our vulnerabilities in order to get to know someone who seems different.

Though God welcomes all peoples, invites the gifts of all nations, and celebrates the uniqueness of each culture, we live in poverty when we remain separated.

Our lines of separation diminish our togetherness and diminish our humanity.

Like the Samaritan woman at the well, we are thirsty for a drink that will quench our deepest yearnings.

We long to drink deeply at the well.

Yet, we remain thirsty and we live a life of quiet desperation.

The third candle is extinguished.

Refrain: MV 90 “Don't Be Afraid” Words: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, Music: John L. Bell

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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:

O Christ, you said, “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.” Therefore, O God, we pray that you will quench our deepest thirst for acceptance, love, and peace. Fill our cup with your spirit till it overflows. May we drink to our heart's content at your well.

May we live a life of blessing by giving to others what you give to us with generosity, courage, and hope. Amen.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Call to Worship

And God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy,
because on it God rested from the work of creation.

**And God said, “Six days you shall labour and do all your work,
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God.**

And so it is that on this day we gather together in this place,
**to rest in God's presence, to be restored by God's love,
to be renewed by God's grace, to listen again to God's words,
to love and be loved.**

This is the day that our God has made!

Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Hymn: MV 1 “Let Us Build a House” Words and Music: Harty Haugen

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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 gorgive.

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*)

Your breath, O God, whispers words of wisdom to us, inviting us to live in community with you, and with all around us. You yearn for us to know the deep fulfilment of a close relationship with you. You even speak to us of how to achieve such closeness with you and with others. Yet, even with those simple instructions, O God, we manage to get it wrong. We misuse your name on an almost daily basis, and dishonour our friends and neighbours by talking behind their backs. We hunger for what others have, and think we can put you in a box and store you away on a shelf. We find little enough time for our families, for ourselves, for you - much less setting aside an entire day for that rest you call Sabbath. We think we are so wise with the choices we make, only to end up with all that keeps us from you. Your Word has come, to fill our speech with grace, with hope, with peace. As we journey to Jerusalem, may we invite others to join us as we seek to follow Jesus Christ, our Lord, our Saviour. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

A New Creed

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17 The Ten Commandments

Then God spoke all these words,

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.

"You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

"You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

"Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.

"Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female slave, ox, donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

*The other readings for this week are: **Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22***

Meditation: "Boundaries"

Hymn VU 701 "What Does the Lord Require of You" Words and Music: Jim Strathee

Words and Music: Desert Flower Music OneLicense.net A620168

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

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

In the gospel reading for today Jesus gets angry, and makes a whip of cords, and drives the cattle and the sheep from the temple court, and overturns the tables and pours out the coins of the moneychangers. The covenant between God and humankind is not a business opportunity to be exploited, rather it is a torrid love affair where each party is totally consumed in their passion for the other. The covenant, for us, is about our zeal for the kingdom of God, and the humble recognition of God's extravagant grace in our lives. May God make us foolish enough in our giving that we might become wise enough to know that our offerings will bless those who are weak and in need. Our tithes and other offerings will be received.

Offertory Hymn *to tune Old 100th written by G.W. Dub Shepherd. Used with permission.*

Music in the Public Domain

Praise God throughout these forty days;
Praise Christ, our Lord, whom God did raise;
And praise the Spirit who imparts
God's love in Christ into our hearts.

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, we have learned that when we give away, we are enriched, and when we let go, we receive. Bless what we give away and let go of this day for the sake of the kingdom of God. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer

O God, we give you thanks for You, for You are good. Your love endures forever. When lost and uncertain about where to go; when no choice seems to be the best choice; when the road ahead looks for all the world to be a dead end; when backs are against the wall with nowhere to turn and fear is all around; when we cry to you in our trouble, You whisper a word about faithfulness and cross-bearing. Lighten the darkness in which we walk. Illumine the path on which we stumble. Strengthen our resolve. Quicken our step. Give us confidence, for we know Your steadfast love endures forever.

God, help your church be true to its promises to care for the very young and the very old, the homeless, the prisoner, the poor, the lonely and the bereaved. Help us to make good Your promises to all people. This week we pray especially for St. Andrew's United Church in Comber as they anticipate the arrival of their new spiritual leader, Rev. Kim Gilliland, this June.

We pray for all of those in the Dorchester area who don't currently have a spiritual home and are looking for one that they might deepen their relationship with God and with community. We pray that we at Dorchester United Church may have the opportunity to engage with the work God is already doing in their lives.

We pray for all people of every tribe, race and religion, those who are faced daily with terrorism and war, those who are struggling with the effects of natural disaster, those who live in fear of their leaders, those who live without hope for the future. Especially we pray for the people of Ireland, the United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Give hope to any who grieve this day, especially: the friends and family of Doug Busche, Lorna Freymond, Richard Fulton, and David Woods.

Give strength to any who are ill today, especially and their friends and families and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts...

All this we pray in the name of our Lord and Saviour, who lives 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 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.**

Hymn VU 504 "How Clear Is Our Vocation, Lord" Words: Fred Pratt Green Music: C. Hubert H. Parry
Words: Hope Publishing Company Music: Public Domain OneLicense.net A620168, CCLI 11438349

How clear is our vocation, Lord, when once we heed your call:
to live according to your word, and daily learn, refreshed, restored,
that you are over all and will not let us fall.

But if, forgetful, we should find your yoke is hard to bear,
if worldly pressures fray the mind and love itself cannot unwind
its tangled skein of care: our inward life repair.

We mark your saints, how they become in hindrances more sure,
whose joyful virtues put to shame the casual way we wear your name,
and by our faults obscure your power to cleanse and cure.

In what you give us, here, to do, together or alone,
in old routines and ventures new, may we not cease to look to you,
the cross you hung upon all you endeavoured done.

*******ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING*******

Opening Prayer

**God of all seasons and ages,
as we gather for the Annual Meeting of our Congregation we pray for your guidance,
that your Holy Spirit may open our hearts to hear one another,
as we consider the issues close to our life in Christ,
and decide how to journey faithfully with you in the year ahead.
As we offer our gifts in your service, keep us mindful of your son, Jesus Christ,
who always sought your guidance and your will.
Amen.**

Closing Prayer

**Holy One, our meeting has ended, but life in you begins anew.
Thank you for the freedom in which we gathered,
and for the privilege of serving your church.
For the decisions we have made, and the visions we have glimpsed;
for the challenges we meet, and the joys and successes we celebrate, we thank you.
Bless us as we return to our homes and families.
Help us to carry out the work that lies ahead of us, and keep us faithful, each in our own way,
to the light, the truth, and the life of Jesus in whose name we rejoice and go forth.
Amen.**

*******END OF MEETING*******

Commissioning and Benediction (*in unison*)

May God, who searches us out in covenant love be with us throughout the coming week.

May we seek to be faithful to Christ's call in our lives and in our ministries.

And may the Spirit empower and equip us in our faithful discipleship.

Amen.

Grace

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Worship Committee meets at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13.

Daylight Savings Time begins next Sunday, March 10. Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead before bed on Saturday night or you will be late for church on Sunday morning.

Rev. Mark will be on Continuing Education the week of March 4 to 10. For pastoral emergencies please contact Karlene Kimber at 519-282-3056.

Belmont United Church is hosting a mid-week Lenten supper and worship series on Wednesdays from February 21st to March 20th (with the first session on Tuesday, February 13th at 7 p.m., following Pancake Supper.) A light supper will commence at 6:00 p.m., followed by a brief worship service at 6:45 p.m. Suggested donation for supper is \$5. Worship leaders include Karlene Kimber, Lynne Allin, Mary Dillon, David Dillon, and Mark Perry.

Maundy Thursday - March 28: A Seder/Potluck dinner is being planned.

* Please register for this event so we know how many people to plan/set up for.

Good Friday – March 29: A joint service with St. Peter's Anglican Church is planned for 10:30 a.m. The service will be held at DUC.

Holy Saturday – March 30: Selections of "Holy Week Meditations" will be performed by vocalists from the Don Wright Faculty of Music at St. Peter's Anglican Church at 2 p.m. Freewill offering for choir honorarium.

Easter Sunday – March 31: A Communion Service is planned for the First Sunday of Easter.

LECTIONARY READINGS:

March 10 – 4th of Lent

Numbers 21:1-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22; Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

March 17 – 5th of Lent

Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12 OR Psalm 119:9-16; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33