

March 17, 2024
Fifth Sunday of Lent

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "How Beautiful Are the Feet" from Handel's Messiah.

Nancy Quinn

Extinguishing a Lenten Candle *written by Won Hur. Used with permission. The United Church of Canada*
O Jesus, you wept over your friend Lazarus.

Do you still weep for us?

Do you weep when forest fires rage, when homes are burnt, animals die, and the smoke blows? Do you weep as floods destroy homes and livelihoods?

Do you weep for those suffering from illness and for their families? Do you weep for those who Live with a myriad of worries, anxiety and depression?

Do you weep for injustice, for those who experience ongoing racism, bullying and discrimination of all sorts?

Do you weep for those who have no more tears to shed, who have no more prayers to say, who have no more dreams to dream?

Then we are willing to shed our tears with you. We shed tears for the world you love.

The fifth candle is extinguished.

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

Words and music copyright 1995, 2007 WGRG Iona Community. OneLicence.net A620168

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, who weeps for us and with us, we know that you are in our pain and in our suffering. We also know that you are in our deepest longing. We long for your kingdom to come. We pray that our tears of sorrow will lead to tears of joy. Then may our tears of joy turn into a celebration as we dance our way into a revolution of your love. Amen.

Moment of Silent Reflection

Call to Worship

© 2009 Thom M. Shuman. Used with permission

Each day is a gift from God;

each moment an opportunity

to reach out in service to all creation.

Each day is a reminder of the new covenant;

not written on stone tablets, easily broken,

but inscribed on our hearts, filled with joy and hope.

Each day we draw closer to God;

who has forgotten more than we ever knew,

who has forgiven us more than we ever acknowledge.

Hymn: VU 415 "God, We Praise You for the Morning" Words: Jim and Jean Strathdee 1984

Music: Jim Strathdee Words and Music © Desert Flower Music

OneLicense.net A620168

God, we praise you for the morning; hope springs forth with each new day,
new beginning, prayer, and promise, joy in work and in play.

God, we praise you for creation, mountains, seas, and prairie land.

Waking souls find joy and healing in your bountiful hand.

God, we praise you for compassion, all the loving that you show;
human touching, tear, and laughter, help your children to grow.

God we praise you for your Spirit, Comforter and daily friend,
restless searcher, gentle teacher, strength and courage you send.

God, we praise you for the Saviour, come that we may know your ways.
In his loving, dying, rising, Christ is Lord of our days.

Opening Prayer (*unison*)

“Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness,” you said, Creator of all life, and it was so. You created us to be your people and promised to be our God throughout all of time and space. And we hardened our hearts against You, and against one another. Create in us new hearts, O God; hearts of flesh in place of hearts of stone; hearts inscribed with your righteousness, that we would be the people You yearn for us to be, serving Your children in every time and place, making Your love known throughout the world, just as Jesus made Your love known. Amen.

We Are Blessed By God

Ministry of Music: “God Is My Shepherd” from Biblical Songs by Antonin Dvořák

Nancy Quinn

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.

Hymn VU 584 “Through the Heart of Every City” Words: Sylvia Dunstan 1987

Music: Charles Venn Pilcher 1935 – Public Domain, harm. Walter MacNutt 1968

Words © 1991 GIA Publications Inc., Harmony © Walter MacNutt OneLicense.net A620168

Through the heart of every city runs the flow of human need.

‘Mid the glass and steel are pulsing smoldering wick and bruised reed.

Has our church a word to offer, some hope shining from our creed?

Walking through the concrete furrows Jesus sows the Word as seed.

Through the passing generations, in their spirit, flesh and bone,

Jesus Christ becomes incarnate; holy hearts are living stone

building here a house of refuge as a temple, as a home.

So, within the city’s shadow Jesus’ planted Word has grown.

Through our worship and our witness, Jesus, grant that we may still

hear the heartbeat of compassion calling us to do your will.

You, our vine, and we, your branches, deadened not by any chill,

working for that final city where the harvest is fulfilled.

Psalm 119:9-16 (Part Two)

R: Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.

How shall the young be faultless in their way?

By keeping your words.

With my whole heart I seek you;

let me not stray from your commandments.

I treasure your word in my heart

for fear I should sin against you.

Blessed are you, O God, teach me your statutes.

With my lips I proclaim all the judgements you have uttered.

I find more joy in the way of your commandments

than in all manner of riches.

I will meditate on your precepts;

I will give heed to your ways.

I will delight in your statutes;

I will not forget your word.

R: Your word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Scripture: Jeremiah 31:31-34 A New Covenant

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more.

*The other readings for this week are: **Psalm 51:1-12; Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33***

Hymn VU 661 "Come to My Heart" Words and Music: Joe Pinson 1979

Words and Music © Joe Pinson 1981

OneLicense.net A620168

Come to my heart, Lord Jesus; teach me to walk in your way.

Come to my heart, Lord Jesus; come to my heart today.

Give me the peace and joy that only you can bring.

Come to my heart, Lord Jesus; give me a song to sing.

Fill me with love, Lord Jesus; teach me to walk in your way.

Fill me with love, Lord Jesus; fill me with love today.

Give me the peace and joy that only you can bring.

Fill me with love, Lord Jesus; give me a song to sing.

Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus; teach me to walk in your way.

Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus; answer my prayer today.

Give me the peace and joy that only you can bring.

Answer my prayer, Lord Jesus; give me a song to sing.

Meditation: "Beyond Body Art"

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

In the gospel lesson for today Jesus says, "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Likewise I say to you, if we hoard the blessings we receive from God, they are of little benefit, yet if we share our blessings, great things can come from them.... the hungry can eat, the homeless are housed, the sick are healed, the lonely are visited. 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

O God, as you write upon our hearts, soften them with your love. And as they become softer, may we become increasingly aware of the needs of all around us, in every part of the world, and may we become as generous, loving God, in sharing our blessings. Bless all that we offer, for the sake of your kingdom. 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

Creator God, we rejoice in all life! We rejoice in this beautiful world! Thank you, God, for deserts, dry and forbidding, yet bursting with life at even the hint of rain. Thank you for mountains, stunning and humbling. Thank you for forests, deep and quieting. Thank you for the prairies, vast and ennobling. Thank you for oceans, teeming and unknown. Thank you for farmland, rich and bountiful. Thank you for clean air, life-giving, yet unseen. Thank you for clean water, sparkling and clear. Thank you, God, for giving us life. Truly, all good gifts are from you and all that we have is yours.

Jesus, you came that we might have abundant life, a life filled with your grace and your spirit. Thank you for physical and spiritual health. Thank you for your church, the very Body of Christ, given to work for justice for all, especially the vulnerable and marginalized. Thank you for Brooksdale United Church, and their spiritual leader, Janet Uren, as they live out your calling in Embro and beyond. Thank you for those who fill our lives with joy. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to be our comforter. Thank you for all of those in the Dorchester area who seek to deepen their relationship with you, O God, and with this community. For those who don't currently have a spiritual home we pray that we may be granted the opportunity to engage with the work that you are already doing in their lives.

Holy Spirit, when concerns burden us and words fail us, you intervene for us with sighs that go beyond words. Sigh with us as we think of your children of every tribe, and religion, those who are faced with daily 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. This week we pray especially for the peoples of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Sigh with us as we think of those who mourn the death of loved ones, especially the friends and family of Doug Busche and David Woods Sigh with us as we think of those who are ill or dying, awaiting medical intervention or recovering from medical treatment, especially ... and their loved ones, and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

We gather all of these prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus, the 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, 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 MV 79 "Spirit, Open My Heart" Words: Ruth Duck Music: traditional Irish melody. Arr. Arthur G. Clyde
Words © 1996 and Arrangement © 1997 The Pilgrim Press OneLicense.net A620168

Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

God, replace my stony heart with a heart that's kind and tender.
All my coldness and fear to your grace I now surrender.
Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

Write your love upon my heart as my law, my goal, my story.
In each thought, word and deed, may my living bring you glory.
Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

May I weep with those who weep, share the joy of sister, brother.
In the welcome of Christ, may we welcome one another.
Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living.
As you love may I love, in receiving and in giving,
Spirit, open my heart.

Commissioning and Benediction

**With God's covenant of love written on our hearts;
with God's word of acceptance carved in our souls;
with God's will as our life's desire
we go to share the good news of God's eternal realm,
in word and in deed, with all whom we meet this week.**

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

Response: VU 425 "God, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing" vs. 1

God, dismiss us with your blessing;
fill our hearts with joy and peace;
let us each your love possessing,
triumph in redeeming grace;
O refresh us, O refresh us,
travelling through the wilderness.

Postlude: "Near The Cross" William H. Doane. Arr. By Victor Labenske

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. The Seder is the traditional Passover meal that includes reading, drinking 4 cups of wine, telling stories, eating special foods, singing and other Passover traditions.

*** Please register for this event by phoning, emailing or talking with Rev. Mark this week, 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.

Holy Humour Sunday – April 7: Now collecting jokes (appropriate for worship) for Holy Humour Sunday

LECTIONARY READINGS:

March 24 – Liturgy of the Palms

Mark 11:1-11 OR John 12:12-16; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

– Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16; Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1 – 15:47