

**Sunday February 2, 2025**  
**Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**

**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Prelude:** "This Is My Father's World" Franklin L. Shephard. Arr. by Cindy Berry

**Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation**

**Lighting the Christ Candle**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

**those who lived in a land of deep darkness— on them light has shined.**

*Isaiah 9:2*

**Preparing Our Hearts for Worship**

**Call to Worship**

In unexpected times and unexpected places, God speaks to us,

**calling us to be God's message of love to the world.**

In our comfortable and predictable lives, God speaks to us,

**challenging our notions, asking us to stretch our imaginations.**

On this day, may God speak to us yet again,

**and may we be open to God's word of love and reassurance.**

**Hymn VU 220 "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"** Words: Joachim Neander, 1680.

English Translation Catherine Winkworth, 1863. Music: Straslund Gesangbuch, 1665.

Words, English Translation, and Music in the Public Domain.

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, who rules all creation;

O my soul praise him, at all times your health and salvation.

Come all who hear: brothers and sisters draw near,

joining in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so mightily reigning,

keeping us safe at his side, and so gently sustaining.

Have you not seen how all you needed has been

met by God's gracious ordaining.

Praise to the Lord who will prosper our work and defend us;

surely his goodness and mercy will daily attend us:

ponder anew what the Almighty can do,

who out of love will befriend us.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!

All that has life and breath come now with praises before him!

Let the Amen sound from God's people again:

gladly with praise we adore him.

**Opening Prayer** (*unison*)

Lord, into the darkness and chaos you spoke your Word, and there was light and life. You spoke to Samuel and he was unsure of whose voice was calling. You spoke to Moses and Jeremiah, and they sought to excuse themselves from doing as you requested. You spoke in the synagogue in Nazareth, and upset the comfortable notions people held about their tradition. You speak to us too, and we are unsure, we make excuses, we don't like to be challenged any more than they did. Forgive us God. Speak your word of reassurance to us as you spoke it to them. Stretch our imaginations and fill our hearts to overflowing with your love, that we would be your new prophets and ministers to the world of our day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Ministry of Music:****A New Creed** VU 918

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 660 "How Firm a Foundation"** Words: "K" in John Rippon's A Selection of Hymns, 1787.

Music: Welsh folk melody, arr. Joh Roberts (Henllan) in Caniadau y Cyssegr, 1839.

Words, Music, and Arrangement in the Public Domain.

How firm a foundation, you servants of God,  
is laid for your faith in God's excellent word!  
What more can be said that to you has been said,  
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

“Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed!  
For I am your God and will still give you aid;  
I’ll strengthen and help you, and cause you to stand,  
upheld by my righteous omnipotent hand.

“When through the deep waters I call you to go,  
the rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;  
for I will be with you, your troubles to bless,  
and sanctify to you your deepest distress.

“When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie,  
my grace, all sufficient, shall be your supply:  
the flame shall not hurt you; I only design  
your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.

“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose  
I will not – I will not desert to his foes; that soul,  
though all hell should endeavour to shake,  
I’ll never – no, never – no, never forsake!”

### **We Open Ourselves to Receive God’s Blessings**

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 71:1-6 VU 789 *part 1*

**A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.**

In you, O God, I seek refuge;  
may I never be disappointed.

**In your righteousness, save and rescue me;  
incline your ear and deliver me.**

Be a sheltering rock for me,  
a fortress where I may find safety;

**for you are my rock and my stronghold.**

Rescue me, O God, from the hand of the wicked,  
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

**For you are my hope, my trust from my youth;  
from the time of my birth I have leaned on you.**

**A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing.**

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as

for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I am fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*The other readings for this week are: **Jeremiah 1:4-10; Luke 4:21-30***

**Meditation:** "Mirror, mirror"

**Hymn VU 713 "I See a New Heaven"** Words and Music: Carolyn McDade, 1979. Harmony: Janet McGaughey, 1991

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I see a new heaven. I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there on the banks of a river bright and free,  
yielding her fruit, firm in her root,  
the Tree of Life will be.

I see a new heaven. I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there where death dies and our lives are born again,  
body and soul, struggling but whole  
like flowers after the rain.

I see a new heaven. I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there where the darkness brings visions from above.  
There where the night, bearing new light,  
reveals the promise of love.

I see a new heaven. I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

There, there where we work with the love of healing hands.  
Labour we must, true to our trust  
to build a promised new land.

I see a new heaven. I see a new earth  
as the old one will pass away,  
where the fountain of life flows  
and without price goes  
to all people who abide in the land.

### **We Respond To God's Grace**

#### **Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

We don't give to God from the pittance that is left over after everything else we need and want is taken care of, but from the abundance which God blessed us with before anything else is considered. We don't give to God begrudgingly, but gladly, because we believe in God's mission of justice and equity for all. Our tithes and offerings will be received.

**Offertory Hymn VU 81** "As with Gladness Men of Old" **vs. 3** Words: William Chatterton Dix, ca. 1858.

Music: Conrad Kocher, 1838. Adapted William H. Monk, 1861.

Words, Music and Adaptation in the Public Domain.

As they offered gifts most rare at that manger crude and bare,  
so may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,  
all our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

God, we offer these gifts in gratitude for the love you have made known to us. Accept them, bless them, and use them to make your love known to the unloved, the unlovely, and the unlovable, and make us willing witnesses of your grace. Amen.

#### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord's Prayer**

Mysterious God, we struggle to understand how you can be both one and three at the same time, yet we know that it is through the outpouring of the boundless love that you share as a community of three that creation was made. Your cup runneth over, and we are the beneficiaries. For the extravagance of your love, lavished upon us, we bless you and give you thanks.

Passionate God, as you hold our lives in your compassionate embrace, we cry out for wholeness. We cry from the depths of our anger, our fear, our pain, our sorrow, our hatred, our frustration. We cry out for ourselves, for those we love, for those we hate, for those who hate us, for all the world. May your healing presence transform the places of our lives where we hold our emotions. May your loving presence be a comforting reality for all those who find themselves in despair, lost or alone. May your transforming presence create generosity in place of greed, harmony in place of hatred, and everlasting justice where evil now reigns.

O God, lover of the world, we bring before you these people and places that need your healing, loving, transforming presence: we pray for the people of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Western Sahara, and Tunisia; we pray for those who mourn the death of a loved one; we pray for Christa, Christina, Kurt, David, and their loved ones and caregivers and those known only in the silence of our own hearts...

Holy One, all these prayers we lift up to you in the name of our 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 thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come,**

**Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;**

**and forgive us our trespasses,**

**as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation,**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,**

**forever and ever. Amen.**

**Hymn VU 642 “Be Thou My Vision”** Words: Irish ca. 8<sup>th</sup> C, translation Mary Elizabeth Byrne, 1905.

Versified by Eleanor H. Hull, 1912. Words, Music, Translation, Versification in the Public Domain.

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, not 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 heave, 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**

God, help us see our past clearly,

**And celebrate past successes,**

**And acknowledge past failings.**

Christ, help us see our present clearly,

**Without distortion or wishful thinking.**

Spirit, help us see our future clearly,

**Faithfully, realistically, hopefully.**

Amen.

**Response: VU 298** “When You Walk from Here” Words & Music: Linnea Good, 1991.

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When you walk from here, when you walk from here,

walk with justice, walk with mercy, and with God’s humble care.

**Postlude:** “Amazing Grace” Early American Melody. Arr. by Cindy Berry

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Please submit all reports for the Annual Congregational Meeting to Dianne by February 5.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, March 2.

**Something Sacred—Lenten Study 2025. Tuesdays, March 11 - April 15, 2025 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET**

In this six-week series, join Rev. Stephen Fetter and people from across the country to explore some of the readings from Something Sacred, our new devotional resource. Join us as we explore how music unveils something awesome, something more, something faithful, something honest, something grace-filled, something hopeful, something sacred. Register on [CHURCHx.ca](http://CHURCHx.ca)

**LECTIONARY READINGS:** February 9 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8, (9-13); Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11