

**Sunday February 23, 2025  
Seventh Sunday after Epiphany**

**We Gather In God's Presence**

**Prelude:** "Open The Eyes of My Heart" Words and Music by Paul Baloche. Arr. by Paul Medema

**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**

We come, trusting in God

**We commit ourselves to love those around us,  
as we would have them love us.**

We come, delighting in all the wonders God provides for us.

**We let go of worry, fear, vindictiveness,  
and open ourselves to God's heart.**

We come, waiting patiently for God to speak.

**We listen for God's words of love and of hope.**

**We come to worship God.**

**Hymn VU 226 "For the Beauty of the Earth"** Words: Folliot Sandford Pierpoint, 1864. Music: Conrad Kocher, 1838,  
adapted William H. Monk, 1861.  
Words and Music in the Public Domain.

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,  
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,  
hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,  
friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For each perfect gift sublime to our race to freely given,  
graces human and divine, flowers of earth and buds of heaven,  
God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

**Opening Prayer** (*unison*)

You are our heart's Desire, who chooses grace over grudges, who provides rather than withholding, who creates community with us rather than standing isolated from us.

You are our Brother and Servant, who delights in those who resist you, who cradles the fists of hatred in your scarred hands, who does good to those who do evil.

You are the Breath of wonder, who blows death's dust off our shoulders, who fills our empty souls with resurrection life, who whispers words of peace into hearts full of anger.

We are the ones who find ourselves wandering the shadows of this world, even in this season of light.

We are the ones who hold tight to hatred, fear, and worry, which continue to harm us and the world.

We are the ones who find it easier to listen to the seductive words of this world, rather than the difficult words of your justice.

Help us to focus on your message of hope, of love, of justice which endure forever.

Walk with us from that far country of fear and doubt to your dominion of resurrection life. Amen.

**Ministry of Music:** "Hallelujah!" Leonard Cohen. Arr. by Roger Emerson

**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 223 “Eternal, Unchanging, We Sing”** Words: R.B.Y. Scott, 1938.

Music: Welsh folk song, arr. John Roberts (Henllan) in *Caniadau y Cyssegr* 1839.

Words © 1988 Emmanuel College, c/o Office of the Principal, 75 Queen’s Park Cr. E., Toronto, ON M5S 1K7.

Words used by permission. Music in the Public Domain.

Eternal, Unchanging, we sing to your praise:  
your mercies are endless, and righteous your ways;  
your servants proclaim the renown of your name  
who rules over all and is ever the same.

Again we rejoice in the world you have made,  
your mighty creation in beauty arrayed,  
we thank you for life, and we praise you for joy,  
for love and for hope that no power can destroy.

We praise you for Jesus, our Master and Lord,  
the might of his Spirit, the truth of his word,  
his comfort in sorrow, his patience in pain,  
the faith sure and steadfast that Jesus shall reign.

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

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 37

**Commit your way to God and trust the One who takes your part.**

Do not fret because of the wicked, or envy those who do evil.

**For they soon wither like grass and fade away like the green leaf.**

Trust in God to do good;

**dwell in the land and there find safe pasture.**

Find your delight in God,

**who will grant the desires of your heart.**

**Commit your way to God and trust the One who takes your part.**

God will make your vindication shine like the light,

**the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.**

Be still before God and wait patiently;

**do not fret because some prosper in evil schemes.**

Let go of anger and abandon wrath.

**Do not fret – it can only do harm.**

**Commit your way to God and trust the One who takes your part.**

Those who do evil shall be cut off,

**but those who look to God shall inherit the earth.**

in a little while the wicked will be no more;

**you will look where they were and their place will be empty.**

But the meek shall inherit the earth;

**they shall enjoy fullness of peace.**

Salvation for the righteous comes from God, their refuge in time of trouble.

**God helps and delivers,  
and rescues from the wicked those who seek shelter.**

**Commit your way to God and trust the One who takes your part.**

**Scripture:** Luke 6:27-36 **Love for Enemies**

“But I say to you who are listening: Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you; pray for those who mistreat you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from anyone who takes away your *coat* do not withhold even your shirt. Give to everyone who asks of you, and if anyone takes away what is yours, do not ask for it back again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive payment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. Instead, love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, for he himself is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

*The other readings for this week are: **Genesis 45:3-11, 15; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50***

**Meditation:** “GOK”

**Hymn VU 348 “O Love, How Deep”** vss. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 Words from Latin, 15<sup>th</sup> C, trans. Benjamin Webb, 1854.  
Music melody from Piae Cantiones, 1582, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1609.  
Words, Music, Adaptation in the Public Domain.

O love, how deep, how broad, how high!

It fills the heart with ecstasy,  
that God, in Jesus Christ, should take  
our mortal form for mortals' sake.

God sent no angel to our race  
of higher or of lower place,  
but wore the robe of human frame,  
and freely to this lost world came.

For us he was baptized, and bore  
a holy fast, and hungered sore;  
for us temptations sharply knew;  
for us the tempter overthrew.

For us he prayed, for us he taught,  
for us great daily works were wrought,  
by words and signs, and actions, thus  
still seeking not himself, but us.

To God whose boundless love has won  
salvation for us through the Son,  
to God all praise and glory be  
both now and through eternity.

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

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

We don't give to God begrudgingly, but gladly, because we love God, and that means that we love who God loves, everyone; the just and the unjust alike. 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**

Holy One, you pour out grace upon us, not that we might be filled, but that we might empty ourselves for others. Accept the gifts we offer and use them to bring new hope and new life to all around us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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

Loving God, your patience with us is beyond our capacity to imagine. Your desire for us to hear and respond to your beckoning and to be one with you is unfathomable. The blessings you offer to us are unbelievable. We cannot hope to understand you, all we can do in our humility is to bless you and give you thanks. Especially we give you thanks for...

Passionate God, as you hold our lives in your compassionate embrace, we cry out for wholeness. We cry from the depths of our pain, our sorrow, our hatred. 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 pain. 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:

The people of Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands

Those who mourn a loss,

Those who are ill or dying, awaiting medical intervention or recovering, especially Butch, Christa, Christina, David, Jack, Kurt, and their loved ones and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our hearts...

Loving God, all this we pray in the name of your Beloved, 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 260 “God Who Gives to Life Its Goodness”** Words: Walter Farquharson, 1970.

Music: Cyril Vincent Taylor, 1941. Words © 1970 Walter Farquharson.

Music © 1942 Cyril Vincent Taylor, renewal 1970 Hope Publishing Co.

OneLicense.net A620168

God who gives to life its goodness,  
God creator of all joy,  
God who gives to us our freedom,  
God who blesses too and toy:  
teach us now to laugh and praise you,  
deep within your praises sing,  
till the whole creation dances  
for the goodness of its King.

God who fills the earth with beauty,  
God who binds each friend to friend,  
God who names us co-creators  
God who wills that chaos end:  
grant us now creative spirits,  
minds responsive to your mind,  
hearts and wills your rule extending  
all our acts by Love refined.

### **Commissioning**

We leave, hearts filled with God's love.

**We go to offer the wonders of laughter  
and hope to everyone we meet.**

We leave, following Jesus into the world.

**We will serve alongside him in the brokenness  
of our neighbours and our communities.**

We leave, having heard the whispers of the Spirit.

**We will speak justice to those  
who would hoard it only for themselves.**

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

Words & Music © 1991 Borealis Music. OneLicense.net A620168

When you walk from here, when you walk from here,  
walk with justice, walk with mercy, and with God’s humble care.

**Postlude:** “I Could Sing of Your Love Forevermore” (Based on *Morning* by Edvard Grieg).

Words and Music by Martin Smith. Arr. by Ken Medema

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Sunday March 2 is Transfiguration Sunday and we will be celebrating Holy Communion. If you are joining online, please make sure to have a bread product and juice or wine at hand. The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held following the service.

Ash Wednesday, March 5 we will be hosting St. Peter’s Anglican church for a joint service at 12 noon.

**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)

**Being Christian: Baptism, Bible, Eucharist, Prayer – Lenten Book Study. Thursdays, March 6-27**

**7:00 p.m.** We are invited to join our Anglican neighbours at St. Peters for their Lenten book study, written by the former Archbishop of Canterbury. You can order the book online at Thrift Books or Amazon.

**LECTIONARY READINGS:** March 2 – Transfiguration Sunday – Communion - ACM  
Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12 - 4:2; Luke 9:28-36, (37-43)