

Sunday March 16, 2025
Second Sunday of Lent

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Recitativo (Arioso)" St. Matthew Passion. J.S. Bach.

Nancy Quinn

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation

Hymn VU 101 "Songs of Thankfulness and Praise" Words: Christopher Wordsworth, 1862, alt.

Music: Jakob Hintze, 1678; harmony adapted from J.S. Bach, ca. 1765.

Words and Music in the Public Domain.

Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus Christ, to you we raise,
manifested by the star to the sages from afar;
branch of royal David's stem in your birth at Bethlehem;
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

Manifest at Jordan's stream, Prophet, Priest, and King supreme;
and at Cana wedding guest, in your Godhead manifest;
manifest in power divine, changing water into wine;
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

Manifest in making whole palsied limbs and fainting soul;
manifest in valiant fight, quelling all the devil's might;
manifest in gracious will, ever bringing good from ill;
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

Grant us grace to see you Lord, mirrored in your holy Word;
with you grace our lives endow, grace to imitate you now,
that we like to you may be at your great epiphany,
anthems be to you addressed, God in flesh made manifest.

Lenten Candle Liturgy written by Jim McKean. **Gathering**, Lent/Easter 2025. Page 70. Used with permission.

Today is the second Sunday of Lent, a time of reflection as we proceed with Jesus toward Jerusalem.

Once more, we are on a collective journey of faith as we travel toward Holy Week and its culmination at Easter. We continue our theme of the many covenants God has with God's people.

Today we begin with one of the purple candles in our Lenten triad already extinguished. The five purple candles signify the royal status that Jesus has within our hearts and our minds. The Christ candle signifies the light of Christ in our world, and it will be the last candle we extinguish on Good Friday.

Today we mark the journey by extinguishing the second candle, even as we remember God's covenant of trust, made with Abram and Sarai.

(second purple candle is extinguished)

Opening Prayer *(unison)*

Ground of Being, we find the bedrock of our faith in you. Today, as we extinguish this candle, we are reminded of the trust that you have placed in us throughout our lives. May this symbol of our faith be a promise to us and the future of our community of faith. May your wisdom fill us with an overwhelming trust so that we may be a spiritual presence in this part of your creation. Amen.

Ministry of Music: “Be Near Me Still (Prayer)” Words: Alma Strettell Music: Ferdinand Hiller, OP. 46

Apostles’ Creed VU 918

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn VU 663 “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” Words: Ray Palmer, 1830. Music: Lowell Mason, 1831.
Words and Music in the Public Domain.

My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Saviour divine.
Now hear me while I pray; take all my guilt away.
O let me from this day be wholly thine.

While life’s dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread,
be thou my guide, bid darkness turn to day; wipe sorrow’s tears away;
not let me ever stray from thee aside.

May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart,
my zeal inspire. As thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire.

We Open Ourselves to Receive God’s Blessings

Responsive Reading: Psalm 27

God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

God is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear?

**God is the stronghold of my life,
of whom shall I be afraid?**

When the wicked close in to devour me,

it is they, my enemies and my foes, who stumble and fall.

If an army should encamp against me,
my heart shall not be afraid;
**if war should arise against me,
even then I will not be dismayed.**

God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

One thing I have asked of God, for which I long:
that I may dwell in God's house all the days of my life,
**to gaze on your beauty, O God,
and to seek you in your temple.**

For in the time of trouble you will give me shelter;
**you will hide me under the cover of your tent,
you will set me high upon a rock.**

And now you have raised my head
above my enemies round about me.

**Therefore I will offer in your dwelling
a sacrifice with great gladness.**

God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

Hear my voice, O God, when I call; have mercy and answer me.
Your face, O God, I seek.

**Do not hide your face from me;
do not reject your servant in anger,
you who have been my helper.**

Do not cast me off, or forsake me, O God my saviour.

**Though my father and mother forsake me,
my God will take me up.**

God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

Teach me your way, O God,
**lead me on a level path,
safe from those who lie in wait for me.**

Do not give me up to the will of my enemies,

God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

I believe that I shall see God's goodness
in the land of the living.

**Wait for God; be strong, and take courage;
yes, wait for God!**

God is my light and saving health, I shall not be afraid.

Scripture: Luke 13:31-35 The Lament over Jerusalem

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me, 'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.' "

*The other readings for this week are: **Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Philippians 3:17-4:1***

Meditation: "Lament"

Hymn VU 108 "Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights" Words: James Gertmenian, © 1993 Hope Publishing

Vss. 1-5

Music: *Musikalisches Handbuch*, Hamburg 1690; arr. W.H. Havergal

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Throughout these Lenten days and nights
we turn to walk the inward way,
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,
we live in hope till Easter Day.

The pilgrim Christ, the Lamb of God,
who found in weakness greater power,
embraces us, though lost and flawed,
and leads us to his Rising Hour.

We bear the silence, cross and pain
of human burdens, human strife,
while sisters, brothers help sustain
our courage till the Feast of Life.

And though the road is hard and steep,
the Spirit ever calls us on
through Calvary's dying, dark and deep,
until we see the coming Dawn.

So let us choose the path of One
who wore, for us, the crown of thorn,
and slept in death that we might wake
to life on Resurrection Morn!

We Respond To God's Grace**Invitation to Invest in God's Mission**

God shelters us from the ways of the world with love, with grace, with hope. Through our givings we extend God's love, grace, and hope to the community in which we live, and around the world.

Our tithes and other offerings will be received.

Offertory Hymn VU 537 “Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands” Words: Calvin Weiss Laufer, 1927.
 Music: Neil Dougall, ca. 1831.
 Words and Music in the Public Domain

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 offering now we make:
 be pleased to use it as your own, we ask for Jesus’ sake.

Prayer of Dedication

Holy One, you have blessed us beyond all expectation and need. We delight in imitating you by offering gifts which will bring hope, healing, and help to those who struggle in this life. Bless all that we offer, that all may come to know your Realm of Righteousness. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession & The Lord’s Prayer

All knowing and All powerful God, we passionately pray:

May this Lent bring a return to the covenant in which we love you and our neighbours as Jesus teaches.
 Renew the covenant between you and your church, that it may, once again, be a source of safety and hope for all.

Holy One, renew our faith and love for you;

May this Lent be a time for truth, justice and peace in the decisions of all levels of government around the world. This week we pray especially for the peoples of Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

Holy One, renew our hunger for righteousness;

May this Lent be a time for each household to strengthen bonds of love and communication.

Holy One, renew our love for one another;

May this Lent be a time of comfort for those who mourn,

Especially we think of the friends and family of Christa, and Mary Lee Patience.

Holy One, renew our hope in life beyond death;

May this Lent be a time of healing for all who suffer in flesh, mind and spirit,

Especially we pray for Jack, Kurt, and their loved ones, and caregivers, and those known only in the silence of our own hearts.....

Holy One, renew our spirits, our minds, our bodies, our lives;

May this Lent be a time of resolution for all those concerns known only to us.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, joining to them our promise to live Jesus’ way of love,
 and in whose name we pray:

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 the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
 now and forever. Amen.**

Hymn VU 421 “Lead On, O Cloud of Presence” Words: Ruth Duck, 1974, alt. © 1992 G.I.A. Publications Inc
 Music: Henry Thomas Smart, 1836. In the Public Domain
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Lead on, O cloud of Presence, the exodus is come.
 In wilderness and desert our tribe shall make its home.
 Our slavery left behind us, new hopes within us grow.
 We seek the land of promise where milk and honey flow.

Lead on, O fiery Pillar, we follow yet with fears,
 but we shall come rejoicing though joy be born of tears.
 We are not lost, though wandering, for by your light we come,
 and we are still God’s people. The journey is our home.

Lead on, O God of freedom, and guide us on our way,
 and help us trust the promise through struggle and delay.
 We pray our sons and daughters may journey to that land
 where justice dwells with mercy, and love is law’s demand.

Commissioning

God of the wilderness,
be with us as we wander through the desert of our lives.
 Keep us from running back to the safety of old assumptions,
and walk with us as we learn to trust you fully,
and to live according to your righteousness.

May it be so.

Amen.

Response: MV 90 “Don’t Be Afraid” Words: John L. Bell and Graham Maule, 1995. Music: John L. Bell, 1995.
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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.

Postlude: “Savior Like A Shepherd Lead Us *with* He Leadeth Me” William Bradbury. Arr. Cindy Berry

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 30 to decide on the future direction of the congregation.

Midweek Lenten Series at Belmont United Church. Light supper at 6:00 p.m. followed by worship at 6:45 p.m. Wednesday March 12th and 26th, April 2nd.

David Knoppert will present his “Reflections of Palestine” at Siloam United Church at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 18

Cross Country Check-In with the General Secretary and members of General Council Executive online, on Wednesday, April 2 at 6:00 p.m. EST. Register on CHURCHx.ca

Wanted: People to knit or crochet small woolen hearts to be handed out at the Thames Centre Pride event this coming July 6. Rev. Mark has instruction sheets if you are willing and able.

LECTIONARY READINGS:

March 23, 2025 (Third Sunday of Lent)

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

It's Here!

Presenting... the *Centennial Legacy Campaign*

When God calls, *we answer:*

"here we are!"



a **bold, vibrant future** for United Church of Canada ministry

THE CENTENNIAL LEGACY CAMPAIGN

your **generous** United Church of Canada **community of faith**

Let's connect United Church of Canada generosity to ministry that matters – to you, to your community, and *to the future.*

As we in The United Church of Canada celebrate our centennial year, God is calling us to create a strong foundation for our next century. The Centennial provides a unique opportunity to unite around a shared goal—honouring our past, celebrating the present and looking to the future.

But how do we do that? Through the blessing of legacy giving!

We're inviting ALL communities of faith across the church to join our most ambitious and impactful fundraising initiative ever. The aim is to inspire legacy gifts to support local communities of faith, Mission and Service, and the Foundation. Gifts that will commemorate the past 100 years and help ensure the church's vitality to embrace the next 100!

Joining this campaign means that *with our support* you can confidently invite the people who love and participate in the life, work and ministry of your congregation, to make a gift that secures its vibrant future.

Let's answer God's Call to be bold. Connected. Evolving. Diverse. Courageous. Filled with hope. And most of all, United— in deep spirituality, bold discipleship, and daring justice.

When God calls us, we must answer as Moses, Samuel, and Mary did: by saying, "**Here I Am!**"

For more information, go to: www.unitedchurchfoundation.ca/centennialcampaign/