

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH

February 18, 2024, 10 am 1st Sunday in Lent

** The live service will be broadcasted and recorded on YouTube, check your email for the link.*

Gathering Music:

**Indicates stand as able*

***Hymn: God of the Bible** – More Voices #28 Words: Shirley Erena Murray, 1995; Music: Tony E. Alonso, 2001

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|---|--|
| 1. God of the Bible, God in the Gospel,
hope seen in Jesus, hope yet to come,
you are our center, daylight or darkness,
freedom or prison, you are our home. | 3. Those without status, those who are nothing,
you have made royal, gifted with rights,
chosen as partners, midwives of justice,
birthing new systems, lighting new lights. <i>Ref</i> |
|---|--|

Refrain

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
God always faithful,
you do not change. (2X)

4. Not by your finger, not by your anger
will our world order change in a day,
but by your people, fearless and faithful,
small paper lanterns, lighting the way. *Ref*

2. God in our struggles, God in our hunger,
suffering with us, taking our part,
still you empow'r us, mothering Spirit,
feeding, sustaining, from your own heart. *Ref*

5. Hope we must carry, shining and certain
through all our turmoil, terror and loss,
bonding us gladly one to the other,
'til our world changes facing the Cross. *Ref*

Lighting of Christ Candle: (Responsively)

Acolyte: Samantha Jones

One: As we enter this time of Lent, O God, we light this candle to remind us
that you are still with us, even in our darkest days.

All: Let your light guide us on our Lenten journey.

Sung Response: Don't Be Afraid – More Voices #90

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.	N'avez pas peur, mon amour est plus fort, Il est plus fort que votre peur. N'avez pas peur, mon amour est plus fort; Je vous ai promis d'être toujours là.
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Welcome:

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

Centering for Worship:

“Don't be afraid,” God urges us, and so, as we move from Epiphany's light into the shadows of Lent,
we go with hearts open to the lessons this season may bring, lessons that may help us bring light to this
dark and hurting world. Let us gather in worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively)

Rev. Kim Vidal

Last Sunday, the church was filled with stories of light and Transfiguration!

We cried out with Peter, “It is good to be here!”

But today, things are different. Even the colours have been changed to sombre purple hues.
The excitement we felt as Jesus spread his ministry has been replaced with sadness at the stories
we know are coming.

Must we remember these days? Can't we just skip to the joy of Easter morning?

We could simply remember the stories of healing and learning, and acceptance. But then we might miss
the stories of Jesus' commitment, his passion for justice, his resilience in the face of evil.

Perhaps these are the most important stories of all.

God calls us together as a community to hear the truth, to face the evil in the world, to stand up for justice.

But we are afraid. What if we can't handle what we find?

God says, "Don't be afraid. My love is stronger than your fear." God holds us in love. Jesus guides us. The Holy Spirit sustains us. We come together in this place to hear those words of strength and grace.

It is good to be here! Let us worship God!.

Opening Prayer: (Together) (Fern Gibbard, Gathering Lent/Easter 2014, p 32. Used with permission.)

**God of all our journeys,
You call us from our places of bondage
Into a wilderness where old things will become new.
Where we will be restored and refreshed.
In this Lenten season, we pray that you will give us strength for the journey,
New hearts to discover your promises,
And a new calling to follow Jesus. Amen.**

Special Music When God Makes a Promise – Brown Bell Canto : director – Erin Berard

Time for the Young at Heart: Rev. Kim Vidal

The Prayer of Jesus / Lord's Prayer:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kin-dom 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 kin-dom, the power and the glory, Forever and ever, Amen.*

***Children's Song: Like a Healing Stream** - More Voices #144 Words and Music © 2003 Bruce Harding

1. Like a healing stream in a barren desert,
Spirit water bringing life to dusty earth,
God is trickling through our lives as in a dream unfolding,
promising revival and rebirth... like a healing stream.
2. Like a gentle rain on a thirsty garden,
Spirit water come to nourish tiny seed,
God is bubbling through the soil to coax a new creation
yearning for an end to want and need... like a gentle rain.
3. Like a river strong with a restless current,
Spirit water rushing on to distant shore,
God is carving out a channel in a new direction,
calling for an end to hate and war...like a river strong.
4. Like a mighty sea reaching far horizons,
Spirit water with a love both deep and wide,
God is working in our hearts to shape a new tomorrow:
God will always challenge and provide!
...like a mighty sea...like a river strong...like a gentle rain...like a healing stream.

Prayer for Illumination: (Together) Reader: Al Bentley

Loving God, as we listen to the ancient words of scripture, open our hearts and minds to hear what you are saying to your people. Amen.

Responsive Psalm Reading: Psalm 25:1-10, Voices United pg752

Sung Response: **To you, O God, I lift my soul, to you I lift my soul.**

To you, O God, I lift my soul; my God, in you I trust.

Let me not be put to shame, nor let my foes gloat over me.

Let none who wait for you be shamed;

Let them be shamed who wantonly break faith.

Show me your ways; teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me;

For you are God my saviour.

For you I wait all the day long. *Response*

Remember your mercy, O God, and your steadfast love,

For they are as old as time.

Do not remember the sins and offences of my youth.

According to your steadfast love remember me,

For your goodness' sake, O God! *Response*

You are upright and good, O God,

Therefore you show the path to those who go astray.

You guide the humble to do what is right,

And teach the lowly your way.

All your ways are loving and sure

For those who keep your covenant and commandments. *Response*

Scripture Readings: Genesis 9:8-17 (The Living Bible)

⁸ Then God told Noah and his sons, ⁹⁻¹¹ “I solemnly promise you and your children and the animals you brought with you—all these birds and cattle and wild animals—that I will never again send another flood to destroy the earth. ¹² And I seal this promise with this sign: ¹³ I have placed my rainbow in the clouds as a sign of my promise until the end of time, to you and to all the earth. ¹⁴ When I send clouds over the earth, the rainbow will be seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ and I will remember my promise to you and to every being, that never again will the floods come and destroy all life. ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ For I will see the rainbow in the cloud and remember my eternal promise to every living being on the earth.”

Herein is wisdom. **Thanks be to God**

Mark 1:9-15 (The Living Bible)

⁹ Then one day Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized by John there in the Jordan River. ¹⁰ The moment Jesus came up out of the water, he saw the heavens open and the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending on him, ¹¹ and a voice from heaven said, “You are my beloved Son; you are my Delight.” ¹²⁻¹³ Immediately the Holy Spirit urged Jesus into the desert. There, for forty days, alone except for desert animals, he was subjected to Satan’s temptations to sin. And afterwards the angels came and cared for him. ¹⁴ Later on, after John was arrested by King Herod, Jesus went to Galilee to preach God’s Good News. ¹⁵ “At last the time has come!” he announced. “God’s Kingdom is near! Turn from your sins and act on this glorious news!”

Herein is Good News. **Praise be to Jesus the Christ. Amen.**

Ministry of Music: Rise Up and Call Them Blessed - Choplin (*Family day long weekend*)

BCUC Choir

Sermon: “The Power of Water”

Rev. Lorrie Lowes

Prayers of the People: Covenanting God,

Be with us on our Lenten journey.

Help us to remember the promises received and made at the time of our baptism.
Today we give thanks for the beauty of these cold winter days
And for the comfort of our homes.
We pray for those who haven't the resources to be warm and safe in this climate,
That they may find what they need to see them through.
We ask blessings on all those who work to ensure that they find the shelter, the food, and the help they need.
We pray for those who are going through difficult times.
For the members of this congregation who are facing illness, injury, loneliness, or the loss of loved ones.
For all those facing difficulty, we ask that they feel your presence and strength to help them through.
And help us to offer the words and comfort they may need at this time.
We pray for those around the world who are facing war, or drought, or famine, or fear, or injustice. May they
see the light of hope and love – and may we be part of that hope.
Help us to be alert for your call.
Help us see where our gifts are needed.
And give us the insight and courage to answer.
All this we ask, in the name of God the Creator, Jesus, the Beloved, who guides us along the Way, and the
Holy Spirit that moves and breathes in us. Amen.

Communion Anthem: Come, Be Fed – Schram/Staggers

BCUC Choir

Communion (Adapted from the liturgy by Rev Gal Blog Pals)

**Invitation*

Dear friends, we are going to Jerusalem with Jesus.

He is our pardon, our healing, and our peace!

We will suffer the trial with him, resisting evil.

With him, we will walk the path to life.

But come first to the table where there is food for the journey.

With hearts full of joy we come,

giving thanks to God, our maker,

and offering our praise!

**Praise*

We are right to praise you, faithful God!

You answer sin with grace; you guide our wayward steps toward home.

You are mending for the broken, safety for the poor, belonging for the outcast,
strength for the weak, and pardon for the sinner.

You reveal your kindness in every sorrow, your mercy even in death.

All your creatures see your works; they sing your steadfast love.

We too declare your wonder and grace as with angels and saints we sing:

**Kingsfold Communion - More Voices #203*

O holy, holy, holy God,

O God of time and space.

All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace.

Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.

And blessed is the One who comes and bears your name always.

Remembering and Giving Thanks

Now, O God, we remember Jesus.

Silence...

He fasted and prayed; he was tempted and tried.

He relied on you for everything.

He was obedient to you and scorned by the powers of this world.

He confounded the haughty and gave hope to the humble.

He was betrayed and deserted. He died between thieves and was buried in a borrowed grave.

You gave him new life. He lives even now, our healer and friend.

He loved us well, loved us to the end, and loves us still.

Even on the night of betrayal, he ate supper with his friends.

Words of Institution...

We remember that he took a piece of bread, and after blessing it, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat. This is my body broken for you. Whenever you eat this, remember me." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, passed it to his friends, saying, "drink. This cup poured out for you is God's eternal love, making a new covenant. Whenever you drink it, remember me."

In solemn vow, we offer ourselves to you that our lives may proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, come! Make all things new.

Bless this bread which you have given and human hands have made.

Let it become for us the bread of life.

Bless also this cup, fruit of the vine and work of human hands.

Let it become for us the cup of salvation.

Bless us also who eat and drink, that in this sharing we may know the living Christ who is with us now, and to the end of the age.

Nourish us by these gifts to be willing servants of your world until the new kin-dom comes, and every creature beholds it.

Breaking Bread

The body of Christ,

the bread of life.

The lifeblood of Christ,

the cup of blessing.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

Sharing Bread and Cup...

Hymn: Bread for the Journey - More Voices #202

Words and Music: Bruce Harding, 2000; French translation : David Fines, 2005

Bread for the journey, food for the way,

Cup of God's blessing, tomorrow, today.

Pain pour la route, pour nos chemins,

De Dieu la coupe, aujourd'hui, demain.

**Thanksgiving*

Let us give thanks!

**Thank you, merciful God,
for gladness in this bread and cup,
for love that cannot die,
for peace the world cannot give,
for joy in the company of friends,
for the splendors of creation,
and for the mission of justice
you have made our own.**

**Give us the gifts of this holy communion —
oneness of heart, love for neighbors,
forgiveness of enemies,
the will to serve you every day,
and life that never ends.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Invitation to Offer: Rev. Kim Vidal (Gord Dunbar, Gathering, Lent/Easter 2018, p34. Used with permission.)

Our covenant is lived out through the giving of ourselves – our time, our talent, our treasure.

May we live the promise of faith this morning, in part, as we present our morning offering.

You will find the offering plates on the table as you enter the sanctuary. There are many additional ways you can financially support the work of the church – through PAR, by dropping into the office or by e-transfer.

Thank you for your continued love and support of Bells Corners United Church.

***Offertory Hymn: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross -** Voices United #149, verse 4

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a present far too small;

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

***Offertory Prayer: (Responsively)** (Kate Crawford, Gathering Lent/Easter 2018, p34. Used with permission.)

Teach us, O God, to offer the very best of who we are

in the service of your will, through the mission of this church:

may we offer hope,

may we offer joy,

may we offer reconciliation

in a world so much in need.

Receive what we give for the sake of Jesus, our teacher. Amen

***Closing Hymn: Crashing Waters at Creation –** Voices United #449

Words: Sylvia Dunstan, 1987; Music William A. Gross, 1992

1. Crashing waters at creation

Ordered by the Spirit's breath,

First to witness day's beginning

From the brightness of night's death.

3. Cleansing water once at Jordan

Closed around the one foretold,

Opened to reveal the glory

Ever new and ever old.

2, Parting water stood and trembled

As the captives passed on through.

Washing off the chains of bondage –

Channel to a life made new.

4. Living water, never ending,

Quench the thirst and flood the soul.

Wellspring, Source of life eternal,

Drench our dryness, make us whole.

***Sending Forth:** Rev. Lorrie Lowes (Elaine Bidgood Sweet, Gathering Lent Easter 2015, p36. Used with permission.)

The strength of our Saviour equip you for all that lies ahead. Our Creator, Christ,

and Spirit are in you. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Sung Blessing: Go Now in Peace – More Voices #211

Go now in peace .. guided by the light .. of Christ,

So you may be .. nourished by the Word .. of Life.

repeat