

**BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH**  
**FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT / COMMUNION SUNDAY      February 26, 2023**

\*Indicates stand as able

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

**\*Opening Hymn: Jesus Tempted in the Desert – Voices United #115**

(Words: Herman Stuempfle, 1990; Music: The Sacred Harp, 1884)

1 Jesus, tempted in the desert;

lonely, hungry, filled with dread:

“Use your power,” the tempter tells him,

“Turn these barren rocks to bread!”

“Not alone by bread,” he answers,

“Can the human heart be filled.

Only by the Word that calls us

is our deepest hunger stilled!”

3 Jesus, tempted on the mountain

by the lure of vast domain:

“Fall before me! Be my servant!

Glory, fame, you’re sure to gain!”

Jesus sees the dazzling vision,

turns his eyes another way:

“God alone deserves our homage!

God alone will I obey!”

2 Jesus, tempted at the temple,

high above its ancient wall:

“Throw yourself from lofty turret,

angels wait to break your fall!”

Jesus shuns such empty marvels,

feats that fickle crowds request:

“God, whose grace protects, reserves us,

we must never vainly test.”

4 When we face temptations power,

lonely, struggling, filled with dread,

Christ, who knew the tempter’s hour,

come and be our living bread.

By your grace, protect, preserve us

lest we fall, your trust betray.

Yours, above all other voices,

be the Word we hear, obey.”

***Lighting of the Christ Candle:***

**Acolytes: David Stafford & Barbara Bole**

We give thanks for the light of Christ,

our guide in this season of Lent.

Strong and unafraid, persistent and unrelenting.

May this light enflame our hearts with God’s grace and love.

***Song of Assurance: Don’t Be Afraid – More Voices #90***

(Words; John Bell & Graham Maule, 1995; Music: John Bell, 1995)

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.

***Welcome & Centering for Worship***

**Rev. Kim Vidal**

Good morning! I welcome and greet you in the name of Jesus Christ on this First Sunday in Lent as we celebrate the sacrament of communion. We are glad you have come today. Join us for coffee and fellowship after the service in the main hall.

Lenten season is a 40-day period to reflect inwardly, a time of renewal, a time of confession and repentance and for others, a time of contemplative fasting or giving up of something.

May this Lenten journey bring us closer with God, with others and with yourself.

some announcements: AGM – March 5

Friends, let us now centre ourselves in the Spirit of God as we begin our journey in Lent.

Let us gather in worship.

**Call to Gather: (Responsively)**

**Rev. Lorrie Lowes**

(Lorraine MacKenzie Sheppard, Gathering, Lent/Easter 2017. Used with permission)

Lent is a time of returning,  
**returning to God, our first love.**  
Lent is a time of turning away,  
**turning away from sin that wastes us.**  
Lent is a time of lifting,  
**lifting guilt's heavy burden.**  
Lent is the time of renewing,  
**renewing heart, mind and soul.**  
Now is the time:  
**Lent's hard, joyful pilgrimage begins.**

**Prayer of Confession: (Responsively)**

**Rev. Lorrie**

(An excerpt from Wendy Maclean's "Inspiratio", Gathering, LE 2022. Used with permission)

During Lent, silence is our desert.  
We are sent by the Spirit to encounter temptations.  
**We are ministered there in our exhaustion, to provide for our souls,  
by the mercy that arises in the emptiness...**  
We are formed by many kinds of silence:  
**silence that wounds and betrays,  
silence that blesses and renews.**  
May our silence be a spacious invitation for lost voices in forgotten languages  
**to share the gospel of mountains and rivers.**  
Holy One, Great Spirit, *Creator* of Life:  
**Meet us where we stand, tempted by bread and pinnacles,**  
and give us words, if words are what you need for justice,  
**and silence, if that is the way to resist the temptation**  
to hear only what we want to hear,  
to receive only what we want to receive...  
**Pray your wisdom into our famished desert hearts  
Until our words and silence dance together**  
And feast in the wonder of being heard and loved. **Amen.**  
*A Moment of Silence*

**Special Music: I'm Gonna Sit at the Welcome Table**      **CGS director : Erin Berard**

**Time for the Young at Heart:**

**Rev. Lorrie**

**Song: It's Me, O Lord**

*Chorus (2x):* It's me, (it's me), it's me, O Lord,  
Standin' in the need of prayer.

(2x) Not my brother or my sister, but it's me, O Lord,  
Standin' in the need of prayer.

(2x) Not my mother or my father, but it's me, O Lord,  
Standin' in the need of prayer.

(2x) Not the stranger or my neighbour, but it's me, O Lord,  
Standin' in the need of prayer.

**Minute for Social Action: SOSA Lenten Appeal**                      **Barbara Bole**

**Prayer for Illumination:**                      **Reader: Mary Schmieder**

Gracious God, be with us now as we turn to the pages of your Word.  
We ask for your Spirit of Wisdom, to help us understand your will for us  
in this season of Lent. Amen.

**The Reading: Matthew 4: 1-11 (NRSV Updated Edition)**                      **The Testing of Jesus**

**4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil.

**2** He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished.

**3** The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." **4** But he answered, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "

**5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, **6** saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' "

**7** Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' "

**8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, **9** and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." **10** Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.' "

**11** Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

May the Spirit of Love and Wisdom dwell where the Word is spoken. **Thanks be to God!**

**Ministry of Music: Psalm 23: Brother James' Air – James Bain arr. Jacob**                      **Choir**

**Sermon: "Temptations"**                      **Rev. Kim**

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer:**                      **Rev. Kim**

Our prayer today was written by diaconal minister, the Rev. Ted Dodd.

Let us gather our hearts in prayer.

You who refused to turn stone into bread, yet fed the hungry;

You who rejected a grab for far-reaching political authority,

yet preached a realm of peace and justice;

You who rebuffed the temptation to test God by jumping off a roof,

yet went to the cross trusting in new life and God's grace;

we come to you in our own wilderness:  
sanctions and brazen assaults, war and nuclear threats;  
we come to you in the midst of harshness and hostility:  
blockades and debates about the meaning of freedom,  
lifting restrictions and lingering anxiety;  
we come to you surrounded by despair and difficulty:  
environmental gloom and climate change desperation,  
species loss and forest clearing.  
In the myriad of personal and societal trials, troubles, and tests,  
lead us not into temptation. Deliver us from evil.  
In this season of Lent may the Spirit lead *us*.  
Renew our faith.  
Restore our vision.  
Return us to hope.  
All these we ask in the name of Jesus, our brother and our friend. Amen.

### ***Communion Hymn: Let Us Break Bread Together – Voices United #480***

1 Let us break bread together on our knees,  
let us break bread together on our knees.      2 Let us drink wine together on our knees;  
let us drink wine together on our knees. R

*Refrain:* When I fall down on my knees,  
with my face to the rising sun,  
Oh, Lord, have mercy on me.      3 Let us praise God together on our knees;  
let us praise God together on our knees. R  
(Words & Music: African-American spiritual)

### ***Celebration of Communion:***

#### ***The Greeting & Proclamation:***

Kim: The God of hope be with you  
**and also with you.**

Kim: Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to God.**

Kim: Let us give God our thanks and praise.  
**In thanksgiving, let us proclaim our oneness in Christ.**

Kim: O God, in this season of trying times and repose, we gather around this table of nourishment, bread for the journey and wine for gladness of heart, within a world that often thinks this can never be enough. True friend of all, you draw us to this special, yet disturbing place of self-giving, where we again re-live your body broken and life-blood shed. Throughout all time, you have sent prophets, wisdom teachers, visionaries and sages to teach us the fullness and wonder of your love.

Lorrie: In time you sent Jesus to live among us. He lived as we live; experienced joy and sorrow, love and tenderness, betrayal and loyalty, temptation and faithfulness. He knew what we faced; he knew the full range of human life. Be with us in our lives today, Jesus Christ.

Kim: In an upper room, Jesus took bread and broke it. Then he took the wine and poured it. Jesus gave thanks as we give thanks, then shared the bread and cup, saying to his friends,

“Eat this bread and drink this cup. This is the new covenant. Do this in memory of me.”  
And so, recalling the spark and wonder of his life, the anguish of his death, and the hope of his resurrection, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ has risen.**

**Christ reigns in our hearts.**

Lorrie: God of wilderness and sacred places, song of hope when all seems lost, bless what we do here. May your Spirit of humility and compassion come gladly and rest.  
And in that resting, may we yearn for a rising to new and hopeful beginnings. Amen.

***The Sharing of the Bread and the Cup*      **Kim****

Let us now share and partake the bread and the cup  
reminding us of God’s unconditional love:

This is the bread – food for the Lenten journey.

Take, eat and be nourished by God’s love.

This is the cup – drink for the Lenten journey.

Take, drink and be sustained by God’s grace.

***Prayer after Communion: (in unison)*      **Lorrie****

**We give you thanks, life-giving One, for the gifts you have given us;  
for the Bread of Life and the Cup of Grace; for speaking to us in the wilderness,  
proclaiming hope and peace to us all. We pray that having been refreshed at your  
table, we may offer your life and grace to one another and to the world.  
In the name of the One who comes in your name, we pray. Amen.**

***Music Offering: Psalm 84: Cantique de Jean Racine – Fauré*      **BCUC Choir****

***Invitation to Offer:*      **Rev. Lorrie****

The Holy Spirit that led Jesus on his wilderness experience is with us in amazing and powerful ways, bringing new hope and healing into the world. As we remember our own moments of wilderness, may we participate in the ministry of our church with that great hope, trusting in the promises of God. I now invite you to offer your time, talents and treasures as a sign of our gratefulness to God’s blessings. you will find the offering plates on the narthex table. 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 (v4)***

(Words: Isaac Watts, 1707; Music: 2<sup>nd</sup> supplement to Psalmody in Miniature, 1780)

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:** (Karen Boivin, Gathering, LE 2022. Used with permission.)

Loving God, may these gifts be a catalyst for truth  
about how we are blessed and how we are broken  
and how we are given to your world for hope and healing. Amen.

**\*Hymn: Sent Forth by God's Blessing – Voices United #481**

(Words: Omer Westendorf, 1964; Music: Welsh folk tune, harm. Leland Bernhard Sateren, 1972)

1 Sent forth by God's blessing, our true faith confessing,  
the people of God from this dwelling take leave.

The supper is ended. Oh, now be extended  
the fruits of this service in all who believe.

The seed of Christ's teaching, receptive souls reaching,  
shall blossom in action for God and for all.

Your grace shall incite us, your love shall unite us  
to work for your kingdom and answer your call.

2 With praise and thanksgiving to God ever-living,  
the tasks of our ev'ryday life we will face—

our faith ever sharing, in love ever caring,  
embracing God's children, the whole human race.

With your feast you feed us, with your light now lead us;  
unite us as one in this life that we share.

Then may all the living with praise and thanksgiving  
give honor to Christ and his name that we bear.

**\*Sending Forth: (Responsively)      Rev. Kim**

Go and seek hope in the wilderness of your life.

**We go forth with open hearts, confident of God's love.**

Go and seek relationships of wholeness with others.

**We go forth knowing that God will be with us.**

May the peace of God,

the hope in Jesus Christ

and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit

**transform and strengthen us in our wilderness encounters**

today and always. **Amen.**

**\*Sung Blessing: Depart in Peace** words: Ruth Duck, music: Ron Klusmeier

Depart in peace to do God's will;

Walk ever in the light;

For Christ is with you ever more,

To guide you day and night.

A-men, A-men, A-men, A-men.