

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH

January 21, 2024, 10 am 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

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

Gathering Music

**Indicates stand as able*

***Hymn: I Am the Light of the World** – Voices United #87 (Words & Music: Jim Stratthdee, 1967)

Refrain: I am the light of the world!
You people come and follow me!
If you follow and love you'll learn the mystery
of what you were meant to do and be.

1. When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and the shepherds
have found their way home,
the work of Christmas is begun. R

2. To find the lost and lonely one,
to heal the broken soul with love,

to feed the hungry children
with warmth and good food,
to feel the earth below, the sky above! R.

3. To free the prisoner from all chains,
to make the powerful care,
to rebuild the nations with strength of good will, to
see God's children everywhere! R

4. To bring hope to every task you do,
to dance at a baby's new birth,
to make music in an old person's heart,
and sing to the colours of the earth! R

Lighting of Christ Candle: Acolytes: George & Susan Young

We light this Christ candle to centre ourselves in a time of worship. A time when we pause to renew our faith in God, the Creator. May this light shine forth in our hearts bringing us peace and comfort.

Sung Response: O Radiant Christ, Incarnate Word – Voices United #84 verse 4

O Light of Nations, fill the earth; Our faith and hope and love renew.
Come, lead the peoples to your peace, As stars once led the way to you.

Welcome: Rev. Kim Vidal

Good morning! On this 3rd Sunday after Epiphany, I welcome you to this blessed place of connections where God's love and life-giving experiences are embraced by all. Welcome in the spirit of Jesus Christ who calls us where we are. Welcome in the spirit of mutuality by blessing each other with peace. You are welcome here! Join us for coffee and fellowship after the service in the main hall...announcements.

Centering for Worship:

Friends, in the church and in the world, in our tears and in our laughter, we meet God, who is light to the world. Let us come as faithful people, centering ourselves on this light as we worship together.

Call to Gather: (Responsively) Erin Berard

(Bill Steadman, Gathering, ACE 2024, Year B Used with permission.)

In the midst of the shadows and despair, the chaos and uncertainty
that existed before the world was born,

God said: "Let there be light."

In the trials and temptations of everyday life,
we seek assurance that we are not alone.

God says: "Let there be light."

In the journey to the future, inspired and remaining open
to the guidance of mentors and prophets from yesterday,
today and tomorrow, we live with anticipation.

God will say: "Let there be light."

Opening Prayer: (Together) (Richard Bott, Gathering ACE 2024, Year B. Used with permission.)

**In a world filled with noise, you are a place of quiet, God.
In a world filled with complexity, you are wisdom.
In a world filled with brokenness and loss,
you are the sturdy ground of our being.
Through this time together, through the love of Jesus Christ,
may the world be changed, and may all be made whole. Amen.**

Special Music: ?

Time for the Young at Heart: Erin Berard

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: You Are Holy – More Voices #45*

1. You are holy, you show us the way, (4x)
Refrain: You show us, you show us, you show us the way, (4x)
2. You are freedom, you show us the way, (4x)
3. You are justice, you show us the way, (4x)
4. *Zulu:* Ham-ba na-thi Mkhu-lu-li we-thu. (4x)
Refrain: Mkhu-lu-li, Mkhu-lu-li, Mkhu-lu-li we-thu (4x)

Prayer for Illumination: (Together) Reader: Chris Brown

God of Epiphany, open our ears to the call of your voice. Open our eyes to see the wonders of your love. Bless us as we hear your holy Word in fresh ways. Amen.

Responsive Psalm Reading: Psalm 62: 5-12 (Voices United pg779)

Sung Response: Rest in God alone, rest in God alone, my soul, my soul.

How long will all of you set upon me and batter me,
though I were a tottering wall or a leaning fence?

**Their purpose is to thrust me down from my eminence, they delight in lies,
they bless with their lips but curse me in their hearts.**

Yet be still, my soul, and wait for God,

from whom comes my hope of deliverance. R

In God is my deliverance and my honour,
the rock of my strength and my place of refuge.

**Put your trust in God always, you people,
pour out your hearts before the One who is our refuge. R**

For we mortals are only a puff of wind,
the great among us are but illusion,

**placed in the balance,
we weigh less than a breath.**

Put no trust in extortion, set no vain hopes on plunder,

if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them.

Once God has spoken, and twice have I heard it said:
“Power belongs to you. O God. Steadfast love is yours.”

You reward us all according to our deeds. R

Scripture Reading: Jonah 3:1-10; 4:1-5 (The Message)

Conversion of Nineveh 3 ¹⁻² Next, God spoke to Jonah a second time: “Up on your feet and on your way to the big city of Nineveh! Preach to them. They’re in a bad way and I can’t ignore it any longer.” ³ This time Jonah started off straight for Nineveh, obeying God’s orders to the letter. Nineveh was a big city, very big—it took three days to walk across it. ⁴ Jonah entered the city, went one day’s walk and preached, “In forty days Nineveh will be smashed.” ⁵ The people of Nineveh listened, and trusted God. They proclaimed a citywide fast and dressed in burlap to show their repentance. Everyone did it—rich and poor, famous and obscure, leaders and followers.

⁶⁻⁹ When the message reached the king of Nineveh, he got up off his throne, threw down his royal robes, dressed in burlap, and sat down in the dirt. Then he issued a public proclamation throughout Nineveh, authorized by him and his leaders: “Not one drop of water, not one bite of food for man, woman, or animal, including your herds and flocks! Dress them all, both people and animals, in burlap, and send up a cry for help to God. Everyone must turn around, turn back from an evil life and the violent ways that stain their hands. Who knows? Maybe God will turn around and change his mind about us, quit being angry with us and let us live!”

¹⁰ God saw what they had done, that they had turned away from their evil lives. God *did* change God’s mind about them. What God said God would do to them, God didn’t do.

Jonah’s Anger 4 ¹⁻² Jonah was furious. He lost his temper. He yelled at God, “God! I knew it—when I was back home, I knew this was going to happen! That’s why I ran off to Tarshish! I knew you were sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness! ³ “So, God, if you won’t kill them, kill *me*! I’m better off dead!” ⁴ God said, “What do you have to be angry about?” ⁵ But Jonah just left. He went out of the city to the east and sat down in a sulk. He put together a makeshift shelter of leafy branches and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city.

Hear what the God of light is saying to all of us. **We listen and we respond with action.**

Ministry of Music: Peter on De Sea Sea Sea Sea (*it will make sense*) – arr. Ouchterlony BCUC Choir

Sermon: “Jonah and the God of Second Chances” Rev. Kim

Prayers of the People:

Rev. Kim

Let us pray.

God of unfailing love, with confidence we gather in prayer; to praise your holy name; to express to you our trust and confidence in your promise of your loving presence. Within the safety of your love, we pray that your people will respond to that love with trust and an acceptance of your merciful forgiveness. God of second chances, you called Jonah but he ran away the first time. Yet you did not give up and Jonah turned back to you. Let us answer your call, O God. When we think we’ve turned as far as we can, let us turn back to you until we understand the wideness of your mercy.

Compassionate God, call us to care for all your peoples, whether they are here around us or in far off places. Call us bring the good news to them. Call us to care for those who are sick, in pain, in the hospital, home bound and in nursing homes. Nudge us to pray for those who carry heavy burdens, the broken hearted, the grieving, the lonely and the anxious, the unemployed, the homeless, those who are struggling. Encourage us to answer your call to preach and teach your word, to offer pastoral care, and reach out to people and places in need. And now in silence, hear the deepest longings and concerns of our hearts.

God of light, grant us humility to seek what we need to bring us to fullness of life; to recognize in the stranger your spirit at work. Call us again to compassionate helping in the world you have created. Enable us to follow the example of Jesus, to reach out without bias to those who are needy and searching. All these we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Musical Offering: Seekers of Your Heart – Tunneys, Darnell arr Hart BCUC Choir

Invitation to Offer:

There are many signs we claim for our faith but ultimately it is our active love that reveals who we are, just like Jesus who showed his love for others. I now invite you to offer your gifts of time, talents and resources as expressions of your gratitude to God's blessings. 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: In Loving Partnership** – Voices United #603 verse 1

In loving partnership, we come, seeking O God, your will to do.
Our prayers and actions now receive, we freely offer them to you.

***Offertory Prayer: (Unison)**

Generous God, we offer the treasures of our lives: our resources, our work and talents, our hopes for this community, our dreams for the world. May your light shine upon these gifts and bless what we offer. Amen.

***Closing Hymn: Christ Has No Body Now but Yours** – More Voices #171

Refrain Christ has no body now but yours, no hands but yours.
Here on this earth, yours is the work, to serve with the joy of compassion.

1. No hands but yours to heal the wounded world,
no hands but yours to soothe all its suffering,
no touch but yours to bind the broken hope of the people of God.
2. No eyes but yours to see as Christ would see,
to find the lost, to gaze with compassion;
no eyes but yours to glimpse the holy joy of the city of God.
3. No feet but yours to journey with the poor,
to walk this world with mercy and justice.
Yours are the steps to build a lasting peace for the children of God.
4. Through ev'ry gift, give back to those in need;
as Christ has blessed, so now be his blessing,
with ev'ry gift a benediction be to the people of God.

***Sending Forth: (Responsively)** (Robert Cosby, Gathering, ACE 2024, Year B, Used with permission.)

Go forth boldly to do God's work in the world.

We will go with the strength of the spirit in us and by the strength of our faith.

Go forth overflowing with God's love and peace.

We will bring healing to all we meet along the way.

And as you go, may the wind of God the Creator be at your back,
the grace of Christ journey by your side,
and the presence of the Holy Spirit within you,
lead you to paths of righteousness. **Amen.**

Sung Blessing: One More Step Along the World I Go – Voices United #639 verse 2

Round the corner of the world I turn, more and more about the world I learn;
All the new things that I see you'll be looking at along with me;
And it's from the old I travel to the new; keep me travelling along with you.