

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH

March 10, 2024, 10 am 4th Sunday in Lent / National Affirming PIE Sunday

**Most parts of this service are adapted from the UCC 2024 PIE Sunday Liturgy written by Shane Goldie.*

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

Gathering Music: Sally Lujetic (Guest Music Leader)

**Indicates stand as able*

Acknowledgement of Territory: Desna Sulway

As we gather here today, let us take a moment to acknowledge the land upon which we stand and the Indigenous Peoples who have stewarded this land since time immemorial. We recognize that our worship space is situated on the traditional territories of the and we extend our gratitude and respect to the Algonquin / Anishinaabe people for their enduring presence and care for this land. In this moment of recognition, we honour the diverse histories, cultures, and spiritualities of the Indigenous Peoples who continue to shape and enrich our communities. We commit ourselves to the ongoing work of reconciliation, healing, and justice, walking alongside our Indigenous brothers, sisters and kin with humility, empathy, and open hearts. As we worship and celebrate together, let us be mindful of our shared responsibility to protect and nurture the land, to honor the wisdom and resilience of Indigenous Peoples, and to cultivate relationships rooted in respect, understanding, and unity. In doing so, we contribute to a more inclusive, equitable, and compassionate world for all.

***Hymn:** More Voices 145 **Draw The Circle Wide**

(Words and Music: Gordon Light; Arrangement: Michael Bloss)

Refrain:

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.
Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
Standing side by side,
Draw the circle wide.

1. God the still-point of the circle, 'round
whom all creation turns;
nothing lost, but held forever, in God's
gracious arms. *Refrain*

2. Let our hearts touch far horizons, so
encompass great and small;
Let our loving know no borders,
faithful to God's call. *Refrain*

3. Let the dreams we dream be larger, than
we've ever dreamed before.
Let the dream of Christ be in us,
open every door. *Refrain*

Lighting of Christ Candle:

Acolytes: Tamara Glanville & Mya Wightman

Voice 1: We light this Christ Candle as a symbol of God's enduring love and unceasing presence in our lives. May this flame remind us of Jesus Christ, who illuminates our path and guides us with His teachings of love, compassion, and justice.

Voice 2: As this candle casts its gentle light upon us, help us to recognize and cherish the divine spark in every person we meet. Teach us to nurture this light through acts of kindness, words of encouragement, and deeds of justice.

Sung Response: More Voices 90 **Don't Be Afraid**

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! Welcome to this sacred place of belonging where we embrace God's presence and the sacredness of life. Welcome in the spirit of Jesus Christ in whom we live and move and have our being. Welcome to this special worship service in honour of National Affirming PIE Day, a day dedicated to celebrating and embracing inclusivity and diversity within our communities. Today, we gather to

recognize and uphold the significance of PIE - Public, Intentional, and Explicit - in our collective journey towards creating a more inclusive world. Let's make BCUC a place of welcome, respect, and love for all. Thank you for being here and for being a part of this important journey.

Join us for fellowship and conversations right after the service while enjoying pies and beverages followed by a learning event.

Highlight some announcements.

May our gathering today reflect God's inclusive Kin-dom, where all are welcome, all are loved, and all are celebrated. Let us gather in worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively) Rev. Lorrie Lowes

In this sacred space, where love is spoken and grace abounds,

We gather with hearts open and spirits willing.

We come together, diverse in our experiences, united in our purpose,

To celebrate the beauty of creation in all its forms.

Here, where the light of Christ guides us on our journey,

We seek to be reflections of that light in the world.

In a world that often divides, we choose to unite,

Embracing each other with the love and acceptance that Christ showed.

As we celebrate the diversity of God's creation,

We affirm the dignity and worth of every person.

In our worship, in our words, and in our actions,

May we always strive to create a world where all are welcome, all are loved.

Let us worship God, who loves us all beyond measure,

And who calls us to love one another in the same way.

Come, let us worship together!

With joy, with hope, and with love. Amen.

Opening Prayer: (Responsively) Barbara Bole

Let us unite our hearts in this prayer. Gracious and Loving Creator, we gather here today with hearts full of gratitude and spirits eager to embrace Your love.

We ask for your guidance in creating a world that reflects your inclusive love and boundless grace.

Remind us again, O God, that each of us is beautifully and wonderfully made in your image.

Help us to see Your reflection in each face we encounter, honouring the diversity and uniqueness You have lovingly bestowed upon us all.

Grant us the courage to be publicly affirming, to stand in solidarity with those who feel marginalized and unheard.

May our actions and words be a beacon of your unconditional love and acceptance. with hearts open to Your transformative power.

Guide us in our worship, that it may be pleasing to You and that it may inspire us to carry Your light into the world.

In the name of Jesus Christ, who welcomes all and turns none away, we pray. Amen.

Special Music: Donne-Moi la Main - Auger Director: Erin, accompanist: Noah

Time for the Young at Heart: Rev. Lorrie

The Prayer of Jesus / Lord's Prayer:

Our Creator, 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: Love Round**

Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and all your soul and all your mind
and love all humankind as you would love yourself.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and all your soul and mind

and love all humankind .
We've got Christian lives to live.
We've got Jesus love to give.
We've got nothing to hide.
Because in God we abide --- Love!

Prayer for Illumination: (Together)

Reader: Susan Young

Loving God, fill us with Your Holy Spirit, that our worship may not just be in words and songs but in our very lives. May our actions reflect the teachings of Jesus, who showed us the way of love, acceptance, and justice. Amen.

Gospel Reading: John 3:13-21 (The Message)

¹³⁻¹⁵“No one has ever gone up into the presence of God except the One who came down from that Presence, the Son of Man. In the same way that Moses lifted the serpent in the desert so people could have something to see and then believe, it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up—and everyone who looks up to him, trusting and expectant, will gain a real life, eternal life. ¹⁶⁻¹⁸“This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again. Anyone who trusts in him is acquitted; anyone who refuses to trust him has long since been under the death sentence without knowing it. And why? Because of that person's failure to believe in the one-of-a-kind Son of God when introduced to him. ¹⁹⁻²¹“This is the crisis we're in: God-light streamed into the world, but men and women everywhere ran for the darkness. They went for the darkness because they were not really interested in pleasing God. Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work it is.”

Hear what these words are saying to all of us. **We listen and we respond with action.**

Ministry of Music: God So Loved the World - Stainer BCUC Choir

Skit: “It's BCUC's Kind of Church!”

Jordan, Erin & Noah Berard

Reflections: “Love is all that Matters”

Rev. Kim & Griz Morrison

Prayers of the People: Rev. Kim

Loving and Compassionate God, we come before you with our prayers for the world, our community, and ourselves. You have called us to be a people of prayer, and so we lift our voices to you, trusting in your endless mercy and grace. We pray for the world, a place of both beauty and brokenness. We ask for your peace in regions torn by conflict, your sustenance in places marred by poverty and hunger, and your healing in areas devastated by natural disasters and disease. Guide the leaders of nations, that they may make decisions with wisdom and compassion, seeking justice and peace for all. In our community, God, we pray for those who are struggling—those facing illness, grief, loneliness, and anxiety. May they feel your comforting presence and find strength and hope in your unwavering love. We remember those who are marginalized and voiceless, asking that they find advocacy and support in their fight for dignity and respect. We lift up our church and its leaders. Bless our efforts to be a beacon of your love. Guide us in our ministries, that we may be effective in reaching out and touching lives with your grace. Help us to be a community where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and loved. For ourselves, we ask for your guidance in our personal journeys. Help us to grow in faith, to deepen our understanding of your word, and to live out your teachings in our daily lives. Grant us courage to face our challenges, wisdom to make right choices, and a heart always ready to forgive and to seek forgiveness. We remember those who have asked for our prayers, spoken or unspoken. In your abiding love, hear our prayers.

God of all comfort and hope, we also give thanks for the joys and blessings in our lives. Help us to recognize your hand in moments of happiness and grace, and to be thankful for your gifts, big and small. Unite us, O God, in our diversity, and

strengthen us in our common purpose. May our prayers lead to actions that reflect your love and justice in the world. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ who taught and lived love. Amen.

Musical Offering: **The Gift of Love** -folk tune arr. Hopson BCUC Choir

Invitation to Offer:

Rev. Lorrie

Beloved in Christ, we now come to a moment of generosity and sharing. In our worship, we not only offer our prayers and praises but also our tangible gifts as a sign of our commitment and gratitude. Each contribution, no matter the size, is an important part of the work we do together as a community of faith.

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:** 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: (Together)**

With these offerings, we reaffirm our commitment to follow the teachings of Christ, to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to work tirelessly for justice and equity. May our gifts and our lives be a testament to the transformative power of Your love.

***Closing Hymn:** More Voices 138 **My Love Colours Outside the Lines**

(Words and Music: Gordon Light; arr. Andrew Donaldson)

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| 1. | My love colours outside the lines, exploring paths that few could ever find; and takes me into places where I've never been before, and opens doors to worlds outside the lines. | | |
| 2. | My Lord colours outside the lines, turns wounds to blessings, water into wine; and takes me into places where I've never been before | 3, 4 | and opens doors to worlds outside the lines. We'll never walk on water if we're not prepared to drown, body and soul need a soaking from time to time. And we'll never move the grave-stones if we're not prepared to die, and realize there are worlds outside the line |

***Sending Forth: (Responsively)**

Rev. Kim

Beloved community, as we step out from this sacred gathering into the wider world, we carry with us the light of Christ and the spirit of our shared journey.

We have been nourished by word and prayer, and now we are called to action from this place and beyond.

Be agents of change, ambassadors of love, and bearers of light in a world that so desperately needs it. Know that you not go alone. You are accompanied by the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Sung Blessing: More Voices 211 **Go Now in Peace, Guided by the Light**

Go now in peace, guided by the light of Christ,
so you may be nourished by the Word of Life. Repeat