

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT March 19, 2023

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

Gathering Music: Lullaby (op.109, no.7) - Burgmuller piano: Noah Berard

**indicates stand as able*

***Hymn: Voices United #371 - Open My Eyes that I May See**

1. Open my eyes that I may see, glimpses of truth thou hast for me,
Place in my hand the wonderful key, that shall unclasp and set me free

Chorus: Silently now I wait for thee, ready my God thy will to see,
Open my eyes (ears, heart), illumine me Spirit divine.

2. Open my ears that I may hear, voices of truth thou sendest clear;
And while the wave-notes fall on my ear, everything else will disappear. *Chorus*

3. Open my mouth and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere;
Open my heart and let me prepare love with thy children thus to share. *Chorus*

Lighting of the Christ Candle: Acolytes: Chris and Kaylee Brown

We light this Christ candle as a sign of God's love at work in the world.
Through the warmth of this light, let us celebrate God's presence among us.
May the light of Christ shine through us as we brighten the world.

Song of Assurance: 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.

Welcome & Centering for Worship Rev. Kim Vidal

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

Friends, we are called to open our eyes to understand the truth that the power of love, not the love of power, journeys with us in this season of Lent. Let us worship together.

Call to Gather: (Responsively) Erin Berard

This is the place and this is the time; here and now God is ready to break into our lives:

To change our minds, to convert our lives, to transform our ways;

To make us see the world and the whole of life in a new way;

To fill us with hope, joy and openness to the future.

This is the place, as are all places; this is the time, here and now.

Let us worship and praise God. Amen.

Prayer of Confession: (Unison) Erin Berard

Gracious God, sometimes we wander into far places of the soul, without ever thinking where we are going. We take your love for granted; we presume that we can always find our way back to you. Lonely and afraid, blinded by our pride and arrogance, we do not know where to turn. Speak to us, God of love. Stir up within us a longing to be with you again. May we find grace to trust that the heart of the mystery is love. Then the darkness shall be as light to us. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

A Moment of Silence

Time for the Young at Heart:

Erin Berard

The Prayer of Jesus / The Lord's Prayer (Unison)

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.

***Hymn: You are Holy – More Voices #45** (Words and Music: traditional song, South Africa)

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) R

3. You are justice, you show us the way. (4X) R

Prayer for Illumination: (Unison)

Reader: John MacFarlane

We come to your Word, O God, seeking inspiration, courage, and possibility.

Open our eyes to see the truth in your Word. Amen.

The Gospel Reading: John 9: 1-41 A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

9 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. **2** His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” **3** Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. **4** We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. **5** As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” **6** When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, **7** saying to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. **8** The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, “Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?” **9** Some were saying, “It is he.” Others were saying, “No, but it is someone like him.” He kept saying, “I am he.” **10** But they kept asking him, “Then how were your eyes opened?” **11** He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ Then I went and washed and received my sight.” **12** They said to him, “Where is he?” He said, “I do not know.”

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. **14** Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. **15** Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.” **16** Some of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And they were divided. **17** So they said again to the blind man, “What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.” He said, “He is a prophet.” **18** The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight **19** and asked them, “Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?” **20** His parents answered, “We know that this is our son and that he was born blind, **21** but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for

himself.”²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue.²³ Therefore his parents said, “He is of age; ask him.”²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, “Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.”²⁵ He answered, “I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.”²⁶ They said to him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”²⁷ He answered them, “I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?”²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”³⁰ The man answered, “Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes.³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will.³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”³⁴ They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.”³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.”³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him.³⁹ Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see may see and those who do see may become blind.”⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?”⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

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

Ministry of Music: I can see Clearly Now - Nash **BCUC band**

Sermon: “The Blind Man” **Rev. Kim**

Prayers of the People: Rev. Kim *Let us gather our hearts in this prayer written by Rex Hunt.*

During this time of prayer and quiet reflection,
may we be enabled to find that power that already lies within us:
for love,
for creativity,
for hope.
May our eyes be open to compassion,
our minds open to wisdom,
our hearts open to grace.
May we offer ourselves to and with
the reverberating hum, mystery and presence of life.
We acknowledge our significance and responsibility in this global village.
We acknowledge our insignificance in the face of it all:
this expanding, exploding, wondrous thing called ‘universe’.
We commit again to seeing each other with
new desire and intention,
with embrace, laughter, tears and honesty.
May we always rejoice in life
and work to cultivate a sense of its giftedness.
May ours be a faith that shines to the world
as the light of deeds and the witness of actions.

And let our best thoughts this day be caring thoughts for others.
May it be so in Jesus' name. Amen.

Musical Offering: God Leads Us On! - Parker/Lantz III

BCUC Choir

Invitation to Offer:

Rev. Kim

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)**

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: (Unison)**

**Generous God, we offer these gifts to the service of kindness and compassion.
Help us to use these gifts in your name. Amen.**

***Hymn: Be Thou My Vision – VU642**

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| 1. Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light | 2. Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife
I ever with thee and thou in my life
Thou loving parent, thy child may I be
Thou in me dwelling and I one with thee | 3. Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight
be thou my dignity, thou my delight | 4. Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and thou only first in my heart
Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art | 5. Great God of heaven, after victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all |
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Sending Forth: (Responsively) Rev. Kim (Jan Richardson, The Painted Prayerbook)

May God, who comes to us in the things of this world,

bless our eyes and be in our seeing.

May Jesus Christ, who looks upon you with deepest love,

bless our eyes and widen our gaze.

May the Spirit, who perceives what is and what may yet be,

bless our eyes and sharpen our vision.

May the Sacred Three bless your eyes and cause you to see. **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.