

BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT March 26, 2023 – 10 am

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

Gathering Music:

**indicates stand as able*

*** Hymn: In the Bulb, there is A Flower - Voices United #703**

1. In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

2. There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

3. In our end is our beginning; in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

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Lighting of the Christ Candle:

Acolytes: Monica, Dave & Samantha Jones

It is within the hidden mysteries of life we discover vulnerability.
Within the dancing shadows cast by a flickering candle flame
we discover the promise of comfort and of new possibilities.
We light this Christ candle reminding us that God's comforting presence is near.

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 Fifth Sunday in Lent. We are glad you have come today. Join us for coffee and fellowship after the service in the main hall.

Highlight some announcements.

Friends, let us remind ourselves that the message of Jesus is all about unconditional love. Today is the right time to put this kind of love into action. With grateful hearts, let us gather in worship.

Call to Gather: (Responsively)

Erin Berard

Every morning, God calls you to be,
and when you rise and as you become, God gives a promise:

“As I live and as you live, I will never abandon you.”

And each day, we may respond:

As you live and as I live, I will go with you.

And each day, we may say to one another:

As God lives and as I live, let us worship and serve together.

Prayer of Confession: (Unison)

Erin Berard

(Carol E. Bayma, Gathering, Lent-Easter 2014, Used with permission.)

Holy God, we are quiet in your presence. Perhaps we are too quiet, still and lifeless. We make our excuses that we do not understand what you want from us. Our throats close up as we wait to be sure of what you want us to say. Our hands wither while we wait for you to tell us how much we should give. Our feet stiffen waiting for you to tell us how much far to walk. Our hearts grow cold as we wait for guidance about whom we should love. Forgive us, forgive our sin of hopelessness, we pray.

A Moment of Silence

Special Music: Circle of Love – source unknown CGS - director : Erin

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.

***Song: O Let the Power Fall on Me - More Voices #13**

O let the power fall on me, my Lord, let the power fall on me.

O let the power from heaven fall on me, let the power fall on me.

For we want justice and truth and love, my Lord, we want justice and truth and love

For we want justice and truth and love, my Lord, we want justice and truth and love

*Music: traditional Caribbean song Words verse 1 and Adaptation by Birchfield Aymer
arrangement by Patrick Prescod © the Caribbean conference of Churches*

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Prayer for Illumination: (Unison)

Reader: Leven Woo

**Life-giving God, pour out your Spirit in our hearts as we reflect on your Word of Life.
Amen.**

The Gospel Reading: John 11: 1-45 (NRSVUE)

The Death of Lazarus: ¹ Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. ² Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. ³ So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." ⁴ But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." ⁵ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, ⁶ after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

⁷ Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." ⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" ⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not

stumble because they see the light of this world. ¹⁰ But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them.” ¹¹ After saying this, he told them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.” ¹² The disciples said to him, “Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.” ¹³ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. ¹⁴ Then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵ For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” ¹⁶ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Jesus the Resurrection and the Life: ¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. ²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. ²¹ Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³ Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴ Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷ She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

Jesus Weeps: ²⁸ When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, “The Teacher is here and is calling for you.” ²⁹ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. ³⁰ Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. ³¹ The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. ³² When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” ³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. ³⁴ He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Lord, come and see.” ³⁵ Jesus began to weep. ³⁶ So the Jews said, “See how he loved him!” ³⁷ But some of them said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?”

Jesus Raises Lazarus to Life: ³⁸ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. ³⁹ Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, “Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.” ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?” ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, “Father, I thank you for having heard me. ⁴² I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.” ⁴³ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

The Plot to Kill Jesus: ⁴⁵ Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did believed in him.

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

Ministry of Music: Ave Verum - Mozart BCUC Choir

Sermon: "Lazarus"

Rev. Kim

Prayers of the People: A Prayer for the Grieving by Joyce Rupp

"May your circle of understanding and caring persons be many and may you allow them to support and sustain you in your sadness.

"May you rest your heartache in the compassionate arms of God each day and find comfort from this Enduring Love.

"May you welcome the tears you shed as friends of your soul, gifting you with an opening to release your pain.

"May disappointment, anger, guilt, or any other hurts that cling to you be acknowledged and set free.

"May you trust the hidden part of you where your resilience resides and remember often the inner strength your spirit contains.

"May you find the balance you need between activity and quiet so you can be attentive to your grief.

"May you be gentle and compassionate with yourself by caring well for your body, mind, and spirit.

"May you believe in your ability to eventually heal from your loss, no matter how much loneliness or desolation you now experience.

"May you have the necessary energy to focus on the details of life that must be done, in spite of how you feel.

"May the day come when memories of your departed one bring you more comfort than sadness.

"May the empty hollow in you grow less wide and deep as you receive touches of consolation and assurances of peace.

"May you be healed from your grief and extend your compassion generously to others who hurt.

"May you recognize when it is time for you to let go and move on, doing so when your grief has faded and you are ready to allow the past to be at rest.

"May you trust that love is stronger than death and draw comfort from the bond that unites you with your loved."

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Musical Offering: The Blessing Riddle – Choplin BCUC Choir

Minute for Social Action:

Moderator's Message Video on Guaranteed Livable Income - <https://youtu.be/3KYhAsZT-e0>

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)** (Gord Dunbar, Gathering-L/E 2021 Year B. Used with permission.)

**Take what we offer and bless it, O God, for your mission of love.
In a world of deaths and conflicts, may these gifts and we, ourselves,
become agents of change and transformation, in Jesus' name. Amen.**

***Hymn: God of the Bible (Fresh As the Morning) - More Voices #28**

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. R

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

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. R

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. R
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. R

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Sending Forth: (Responsively) (Wendy MacLean, Gathering-L/E 2021 Year B. Used with permission.)

In a world that is closed in and distanced, be a sign of comfort and love.

May our our faith lead us into a life that blesses the world.

Go now, knowing that God goes before you and calls you to come.

Beside us is Jesus Christ, our teacher, our healer, our friend.

Surrounding you like light, like breath is the Spirit.

Go in peace and serve God, today and each day. **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.