

**BELLS CORNERS UNITED CHURCH**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost    November 12, 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:** God of the Bible – More Voices #28

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. God of the Bible, God in the Gospel<br>Hope seen in Jesus, hope yet to come,<br>You are our centre, daylight or darkness,<br>Freedom or prison, you are our home.                      | 3. Those without status, those who are nothing,<br>You have made royal, gifted with rights,<br>Chosen as partners, midwives of justice,<br>Birthing new systems, lighting new lights. <i>Refrain</i> |
| 2. God in our struggles, God in our hunger,<br>Suffering with us, taking our part.<br>Still you empower us, mothering Spirit,<br>Feeding, sustaining, from your own heart. <i>Refrain</i> | 4. Not by your finger, not by your anger<br>Will our world order change in a day,<br>But by your people, fearless and faithful,<br>Small paper lanterns, lighting the way. <i>Refrain</i>            |
|   | 5. Hope we must carry, shining and certain<br>Through all our turmoil, terror and loss,<br>Bonding us gladly one to the other<br>Till our world changes facing the cross. <i>Refrain</i>             |

*Refrain:*

Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,  
God always faithful, you do not change. (Repeat)

***Lighting of Christ Candle:***      Acolytes: Chris & Kaylee Brown

As we light this Christ candle, let us remember the words from Psalm 18: 28:  
“It is you who light my lamp; the Lord, my God, lights up my darkness.”

***Ministry of Music: Light a Candle for Peace – Schram***      BCUC choir

***Welcome:***      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. Join us for coffee and fellowship after the service in the main hall... some announcements...

***Centering for Worship:***

Friends, in the church and in the world, in our tears and in our joy, we meet God, who offers hope. Let us come as faithful people, centering ourselves on this hope as we worship together.

\****Call to Gather & Opening Prayer: (Responsively)***

(God Dunbar, Gathering, Pentecost 2 2023 Year A, Used with permission.)

Come in from the cold after being teased by a taste of winter this week.

**We come into the warmth and into the shelter of this building.**

Come in from the anxieties and challenges of our ever-changing world.

**We come hoping for the comfort of grace**

**abounding as we shelter with people we know and love,  
and who know and love us.**

Come in as those sent out by Christ to transform the world with good news.

**We come to recharge, to renew and to re-engage with the Spirit’s power.**

As we gather, let us pray together:

**Open us, peace-loving God, to the possibilities for life-giving in the world.**

**Equip us to be the people you trust to call for your purposes and into the world.**

**Enthuse us, as you breathe strength, courage and wisdom into our hearts. In Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**Special Music:** Give Me Oil in My Lamp – Trad. CGS – director : Erin / piano : Noah

**Time for the Young at Heart:** Abe

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:** I Am Walking – More Voices #221

I am walking a path of peace (3X) Lead me on. Lead me on.

2. path of love (3X) 3. path of grace (3X) 4. path with heart (3X)

**Prayer for Illumination: (Unison)** Reader: Keith Bailey

**God of sacred story, open our hearts and enable us to get ready to receive your  
Word in our hearing. Help us to listen as we seek to follow and trust. Amen.**

**Responsive Psalm Reading:** Psalm 78 (Part 1 Voices United pg792)

**Sung Response: We will tell new gen-er-a-tions of the won-ders God has done.**

*Part One (1-7)* Give heed to my teaching, O my people,  
turn your ears to the words of my mouth.

**I will open my mouth in a parable,**

**I will reveal the hidden meaning of things in the past.**

What we have heard and known, what our parents have told us,  
we will not hide from their grandchildren,

**but declare to the next generation the testimony that you gave to Jacob  
and the law you appointed in Israel,**

**which you commanded them to teach their children,**

that the next generation might know them, children yet unborn,  
and these in turn should arise, and tell their children,

**that they should put their trust in you, and not forget your great deeds,  
but keep all your commandments. R**

**Scripture Reading: Matthew 25: 1-13 (NRSVUE) The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids**

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup> Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup> When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; <sup>4</sup> but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup> As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup> But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' <sup>7</sup> Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' <sup>10</sup> And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup> Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' <sup>12</sup> But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.'

<sup>13</sup> Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

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

***Sermon: When the Oil Lamp Runs Dry!***

Rev. Kim

***Prayers of the People:***

Rev. Kim

Loving God, author of our lives, create for us a life that opens a path to new visions and vistas of compassion, love and understanding. Make us a sanctuary of a just society through our acts and deeds. We are your people, your creation and in that creation is your expectation that we offer love to the best of our ability to make that expectation a reality. Continue to challenge us, to push us, to prod us to walk the talk. Broaden our thinking with new ideas. Enrich us with your spirit. Make us a community of love who embraces a purpose of “no condemnation.”

We pray that you would guide us on our journeys through this land of such abundance. Help us not to be seduced into thinking that material resources can ever make us happy or content. Help us as we see our neighbours’ success not to feel inadequate, deprived, or greedy. Help us rather to find our strength, our comfort, and our satisfaction in knowing whose we are and to live life with a sense of hope. Provide us an inner serenity which exterior things can never bring.

God of grace and compassion we are always mindful of our tenuous hold on life and health and safe keeping. We pray for those who are sick and those recovering from illness, may they find comfort from those who tend to them. We especially pray for Rev. Lorrie Lowes as she rests and fully recover.

We pray for leaders in all sectors of the society, may they lead with wisdom and foresight to act with love and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. May we comfort those who have suffered deep losses in their lives and those who are troubled and distressed. We pray for peace in our neighbourhood and wider communities. We also bring to you those who are frail and weak - the bereaved, the dying, the lonely, the lost, the downtrodden. We pray for this church family, for its vitality and its mission to love others. Empower us to be the body of Christ in the world. Be with us as we meet and share the joys and concerns of this congregation.

God of harmony and peace, we turn our attention to the world where your reign of love is still calling each one for transformation; in Gaza and Israel, in Ukraine and Russia, and many places in Asia and Africa, where bombs of war were dropped and people live in terror and death; where people suffer under the pangs of economic upheaval – where unemployment rises in its toll and people live in despair; where people ravaged by calamities and natural disasters seek daily survival. And we pray for ourselves that we may be sustained by the hope and love that you have offered to us.

God of life, God of love, God of all that we have and all that we are, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

***Musical Offering: The Lord is My Light – Crane/Durksen arr.Harris*** BCUC Choir

***Invitation to Offer:*** Rev. Kim

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: What Can I Do? - More Voices #191***

What can I do? What can I bring? What can I say? What can I sing?

I’ll sing with joy. I’ll say a prayer. I’ll bring my love. I’ll do my share.

***\*Offertory Prayer: (Unison)***

**Loving God, accept these gifts we offer and help us to be generous givers of our time, talents, money and our lives, that we might make a difference in the world. Amen.**

**\*Closing Hymn: May the God of Hope Go with Us - Voices United #424**

1 May the God of hope go with us every day,  
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.  
May the God of justice speed us on our way,  
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

*Refrain:* Praying, let us work for peace, singing, share our joy with all,  
working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

2 May the God of healing free the earth from fear,  
freeing us for peace, both treasured and pursued.  
May the God of love keep our commitment clear,  
to a world restored, to human life renewed. R

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**\*Sending Forth: (Responsively)**

People of God, step forward into the world in which we live  
and be life-givers in word and in deed.

**We will prepare our hearts to act on the priorities to which God guides us:  
to love mercy, to do justice, and to walk humbly.**

Go forth with confidence in the name  
of God the Lover,  
of Jesus Christ, the Beloved  
and the Holy Spirit who is Love. **Amen!**

***Sung Blessing: Let There be Peace on Earth* - Songs for a Gospel People #135**

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me  
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
With God our creator, children all are we  
Let us walk with each other, in perfect harmony  
Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now,  
With every step I take let this be my solemn vow.  
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.  
Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me