

**STONY PLAIN UNITED CHURCH
MEWASSIN UNITED CHURCH
MARCH 26, 2023
FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT**

**Stony Plain United Church & Mewassin United Church
Mailing Address: Box 3196, Stony Plain, AB T7Z 1C2
Phone: 780 963-4745 Email: stonyuc@telus.net
WELCOME to our service this morning!**

Thanks to the Men's Group for Breakfast this morning!!!

WE GATHER TOGETHER BEFORE GOD
on traditional territory of Treaty Six Peoples and of the Métis Nation

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING SONG: MV #15 “Holy Sacred Spirit” x2 (no solo part)

Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your breath on us.

Holy sacred Spirit, breathe your life in us.

REPEAT

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CALL TO WORSHIP: (Responsive)

We gather today on the journey to the cross.

This journey is long and our burdens are heavy.

Yet we gather to dream of the hope God brings.

We despair when we witness communities that are parched and lifeless. Will they ever be revived?

Yet God calls us back again and again to be reminded:

God brings the breath of life to the lifeless!

As we gather on this day of worship,

may we once again be inspired, revived and filled with hope!

OPENING PRAYER (Unison)

Holy One, if we pay attention to what is behind us, we notice your presence. When we pay attention to what is beside us, we know that you accompany us on our Lenten journey. Spirit of Gentleness, we recognize that the path ahead is unclear, but we remember your promise through the ages to break ancient schemes and breathe new life into parched bones. No matter who we are, no matter where we come from, no matter where we are going, you call us to stir from placidness and participate in your dream of wholeness for all. May we arise to be your people in the midst of brokenness in your beloved world. Amen.

OPENING HYMN: VU #375 “Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”

REFRAIN: Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow thro' the wilderness calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, Wind, Wind on the sea.

Verse 1: You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
and over the eons you called to each thing:
Wake from your slumbers and rise on your wings.

REFRAIN

Verse 2: You swept thro' the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
and when they were blinded with their idols and lies,
then you spoke thro' your prophets to open their eyes.

REFRAIN

Verse 3: You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.

REFRAIN

Verse 4: You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams,
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes,
with bold new decisions your people arise.

REFRAIN

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CONNECTING TO CREATION THROUGH LENT

HYMN: VU #291 “All Things Bright And Beautiful” (Refrain, vs. 1&5, Refrain)

REFRAIN:

**All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful: in love, God made them all.**

Verse 1: Each little flower that opens, each little bird that sings,
God made their glowing colours, God made their tiny wings.

Verse 5: God gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
how great is God our maker, who has made all things well.

REFRAIN:

**All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small,
all things wise and wonderful: in love, God made them all.**

Words: Cecil Frances Alexander 1848. Music: 17th c. English melody, arr. Martin Shaw 1915. Arr. © 1921 K. Carwen & Sons Ltd. All rights Reserved. Reprinted under One License #A-718663

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE: (Responsive)

...so may the light of Christ be in you,
and also in you.

BRINGING ALL OF WHO WE ARE

PRAYER FOR GRACE (Unison)

Lord of new life, we find ourselves searching in the valley of dry bones. When we witness lives that are parched and dry, we despair that they will ever find new life. In this time of Lent we yearn impatiently for the transformation that is imminent, yet we feel hopeless that it will ever come. We pray for your grace.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

JOYS AND CONCERNS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

AND LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD FOR OUR LIVES

SP GIFT OF MUSIC: Choir "Morning Has Broken"

Words by Eleanor Farjean; Music: BUNESSAN: Gaelic melody, Arr. by Rick Powell

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Scripture Through Music: Ezekiel's Dream (Ezekiel 37.1-14) based on Linnea Good's *O Dry Bones, hear the Word!*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSY_xCBtgt0&list=RDMSY_xCBtgt0

John 11.1-45 The raising of Lazarus

REFLECTION: Can these bones live?

SING: VU #700 "God of Freedom, God of Justice"

Verse 1

God of freedom, God of justice, you whose love is strong as death,
you who saw the dark of prison, you who knew the price of faith:
touch our world of sad oppression with your Spirit's healing breath.

Verse 2: Rid the earth of torture's terror, you whose hands were nailed to wood;
hear the cries of pain and protest, you who shed the tears and blood:
move in us the power of pity restless for the common good.

Verse 3: Make in us a captive conscience quick to hear, to act, to plead;
make us truly sisters, brothers of whatever race or creed:
teach us to be fully human, open to each other's need.

Words Shirley Erena Murray, 1980; Music: French traditional carol 17th c. Words © 1992 Hope Publishing Company.
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THAT WE MIGHT LIVE WITH INTENTION

MINUTE FOR MISSION: “Your belief and support make all the difference!”

INVITATION TO GIVE

OFFERING HYMN: VU #542 “We Give You But Your Own”

We give you but your own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is yours alone, we give it gratefully.

Words: William W. How 1858, alt. Music: Johann B. Konig, adapt William H. Havergal 1847. Public Domain.

DEDICATION OF GIFTS (Unison)

God of transformation, we are a people living in a valley of bones. Breathe life into us as we share our gifts. May you bless the bones of our giving, knitting them together with sinews of joyful grace, blessing us as we are called out of the graves of despair into life in its wholeness. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER (Responsive)

...Mortal one, can these bones live?

God, you're the one who knows.

AND LEAVE TO SERVE GOD IN THE WORLD

CLOSING HYMN: VU #633 “Bless Now, O God, The Journey”

Verse 1: Bless now, O God, the journey that all your people make,
the path through noise and silence, the way of give and take.

The trail is found in desert and winds the mountain round,
then leads beside still waters, the road where faith is found.

Verse 2: Bless sojourners and pilgrims who share this winding way,
whose hope burns through the terrors, whose love sustains the day.
We yearn for holy freedom while often we are bound.

Together we are seeking the road where faith is found.

Verse 3: Divine Eternal Lover, you meet us on the road.
We wait for lands of promise where milk and honey flow.
But waiting not for places, you meet us all around.
Our covenant is written on roads, as faith is found.

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CARRYING CHRIST'S LIGHT WITH US

BLESSING/BENEDICTION

MEW – THREE FOLD AMEN

SP – POSTLUDE

SUNDAY OFFERINGS AT STONY PLAIN

To be safe & healthy we no longer pass the plate during the service. You will see by each set of sanctuary doors offering boxes in which we invite you leave any gifts you may wish to provide.

Thank you! Your generosity allows us to support locally and globally.

ANNOUNCEMENTS MARCH 26, 2023

NEW

UCW MEETING WED. APRIL 5, 1:30 PM: We will begin in the Council Room upstairs to watch "The Sacred Relationship", a documentary by Native Counseling Services of Alberta. It begins by showing how protocol is followed to ask for teachings. Four Cree Elders will teach us their relationship with water. If you are interested, join us to consider "The Sacred Relationship". Our business meeting will follow downstairs.

REMINDERS

PALM SUNDAY, APRIL 2 AT STONY PLAIN: Palm Sunday at Stony will be a bit different this year, with the group High Level Bridge coming. There may not be a Palm Parade, but there will be plenty of music! We hope you will enjoy this special service.

2023 LENTEN JOURNEY: This year's theme is "All Things Bright and Beautiful" – Connecting to Creation Through Lent. **We are asking for donations for the Parkland Food Bank each week (as you are able)**, based on the theme colour for that week. **This week's colour is GREEN.** Copies of "The Lenten Journey" are on the table outside the Sanctuary.

EASTER CHOCOLATES: Place and pay for your orders on-line at:

<https://fundraising.purdys.com/1499006-105541> or by submitting a form to Cathy Yamada-Swan or the church office, with cheques addressed to Catherine Yamada. **Order & Pay by Sat., March 25, (or paper forms to the office on Sun, March 26).** Pickup: April 4, 2023 or earlier at Stony Plain U.C..

REGIONAL UCW CONFERENCE AND AGM, APRIL 27 - 29 IN CALGARY. "We Are One: A Look At Bias And Racism". See information and registration form on the bulletin board. Open to all ladies of the United Church. **Deadline to register is March 24, 2023.**

WORSHIP LEADERS: A big Thank-You to all who continue to lead worship!

MINISTER COVERAGE: Please contact Reverend Sharon McRann at 780-823-9794.

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Ukulele Practice: Wednesdays, 6:15 pm
Choir Practice: Wednesdays, 7:00 pm
Card Recreators: Thursdays, 10 am

MEETINGS/SPECIAL EVENTS

Feb. 26 to Mar 26 Lenten Journey – Donations to Parkland Food Bank
Sun. Mar 26 Stony – Breakfast at 9:00 am (Men's Group)
Wed. Apr. 5 UCW Meeting 1:30 starting in the Board Room upstairs
April 27-29, 2023 Regional UCW Conference & AGM in Calgary – Register by Mar. 24