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Our Mission as a congregation: *Love the Lord Your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy and love your neighbour as yourself. (Mark 12:19-21 MSG)*

March 10, 2024- Fourth Sunday of Lent

GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER

Prelude *Love Divine, All Love Excelling*

Welcome and Announcements

Introit: (97 MV Listen, God is Calling)

*(Listen) Listen, God is calling, through the Word inviting,
offering forgiveness, comfort and joy*

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Call to Worship (responsive from Joel 2:13)

Rend your hearts and not your garments.

Let us turn ourselves back to the Lord our God.

For we know God is gracious and compassionate.

God is long-suffering and abounding in love.

Prayer of Approach (together)

God, we are unsure and uncertain

as we come before you in this season of turning and returning.

Yet we know you are our source, our destiny, and that you love us.

So we turn to you knowing that you receive

even the broken heart, the troubled conscience,

and the conflicted spirit through your love and by your grace, Amen.

Hymn: 238 VU *O Lord My God*

Children's Story and Lord's Prayer

Hymn: 583 VU *Jesus Came a Child Like Me*

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Responsive Reading: Psalm 107:1-9 (Part One p. 831 VU)

First Reading: Numbers 21:4-9

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-10

Gospel: John 3:14-21

Anthem: *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

Sermon: "A Snake and a Cross"

Vik Davie

Amy Hendricks

GOD CALLS US TO RESPOND

Hymn: 135 VU *Beneath the Cross of Jesus*

Minute for Mission

Pamela Cunningham

Offertory Sentence and Prayer

Offertory Response (104 MV Know that God is Good)

Know that God is good, know that God is good,

know that God is good, God is good, God is good.

C'est vrai: Dieu est bon! C'est vrai: Dieu est bon!

C'est vrai: Dieu est bon! Dieu est bon! Dieu est bon!

Prayers of the People

Hymn: 625 VU *I Feel the Winds of God Today*

Commissioning and Benediction

Choral Benediction (213 MV Take Up his Song of Peace)

Take up his song of love and go into the world.

Take up his song of love in every moment.

In every moment of the journey, we're laying down our lives;

lay them down, in love, lay them down, and take up his song.

Postlude

A warm welcome to everyone who is joining us for worship. May this time help you draw to closer to God and your neighbour. We recognize that we gather in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People, and we seek to be good neighbours to the First Nations

Greeting at the door is Glenna Quinn

Coffee Hosts are Michèle Ashby and Tim Hinds

Scriptures for Next Sunday

Jeremiah 31:31-34 • Hebrews 5:5-10 • John 12:20-33

Even then, grace

*But God, who is rich in mercy,
out of the great love with which God loved us,
even when we were dead through our trespasses,
made us alive together with Christ. - Ephesians 2.4-5a*

Even when we were dead, Paul writes.

Even when we turned away
from the One who had created us.

Even when we lived
in the grip of what drew our gaze from God.

Even when we were oblivious.

Even when we followed a path fashioned of nothing
but our own desires.

Even when we wandered
far and willfully away.

Even when we forgot to look past our own feet
and to see the wonders not of our making.

Even when we failed to stand in awe,
to breathe thanks,
to lean into the love
that had waited long for us.

Even when, Paul writes.

Even when,
even then:
grace.

~ written by Jan L. Richardson, and posted on The Painted Prayerbook.
<http://paintedprayerbook.com/>

The prayers and Christian sympathy of the congregation are extended to the family and friends of *Alice Baxter* who died last week. Visitation is 3-6pm at MacIsaac Funeral Home with the funeral Monday at 11 am here at St. James. Please keep her brother George (Anne) and sisters Anna (Allan) Adams, Ruth Bent, and Clare (Johnny) Savoie and the whole family in your thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

Ca you help with the Easter Sunrise Pancake Breakfast? We're looking for interested individuals who can help out with the breakfast after the sunrise service. If you can help please speak with Rev. Peter

Our clocks are springing ahead, Snow melting away so its Time to think about "The Daffodil Tea , March 23/24 from 2pm- 4pm" , \$14.00 for Lunch with all the tea you can drink, so save the date and join us. We are looking for donations of uncut Squares, dainty cookies, lemon tarts and pork pies, etc. Food can be dropped of Friday from 1pm- 3PM AND doors open Sat at 9am. Thanking you in advance.

THIS WEEK AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, March 10.

11:30 am There is a UCW meeting immediately after service in the meeting room.

Tuesday, March 12

10:00 am Hot Meal Program
3:00 pm Meditation Group in Meeting Room. For more information, call Fran @ 902- 863-3546
4:00 pm Finance and Stewardship in the Meeting Room
7:00 pm Worship Committee via Zoom

Wednesday, March 13

10:00 am United Church worship at the Maples

Thursday, March 14

10:00 am Hot Meal Program
7:00 pm Senior Choir. New Members welcome!

Connections Newsletter is inviting submissions for the Spring edition. Personal reflections, poems, pictures and other expressions of the life and

work of St James are welcome, as well as book reviews and celebratory notices. Email to stjamesconnections@gmail.com or dropped off at the office by noon on *Tuesday March 12th*.

Your Social Justice Committee reminds you that 14 March is the United Church's **National Affirming / PIE Day**. PIE = Public. Intentional. Explicit. These are the standards to which we hold ourselves, and our welcome when we become affirming, welcoming, or inclusive communities. The day is a chance to serve some pie and roll out the PIE by celebrating the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ and Two Spirit people in faith communities and beyond, across Canada. [taken from the national UCC site] Also celebrated by mathematicians as π Day!

Please take a few minutes to view this beautiful, moving prayer by a Christian Palestinian woman: (the link will be posted on the website) <https://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/27548>

UPCOMING AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, March 17

11:30 am Outreach and Communication gathers in the Meeting Room

Saturday, March 23

2:00 pm Daffodil Tea

Tuesday April 16- Saturday April 20

We're having our pictures taken! This spring the congregation is having Universal Portrait Studies come to take pictures in our congregation. More information to follow in the weeks to come.

The Youth Choir, under the direction of Carolyn Curry, will participate in service on Sunday, May 5. Practices will be held on Sundays from 11:40 AM to 12:30 PM from April 5th to 28th. All community youth age 9 and up are welcome to attend. Please see Claire MacDonell or Carolyn for more information.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunday, March 24 from 9-12 at the Lions Den, 13 Highland Drive. Lions Pancake and Sausage Breakfast Donations at the door for young child's surgery.

JUSTICE AND PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

On March 18th, the NDP Motion on Gaza (see below) will be debated and voted upon. Please call, email or meet with your MP to talk about this motion (contact information is after the motion). This is an important opportunity for Canadians to tell their representatives they want Canada to shift its policy on the Middle East.

NDP Opposition Day Motion
To be debated March 18, 2024

February 27, 2024 Ms. McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona) —
That, given that,

- (i) the situation in the Middle East is devastating to many Canadians, particularly those with friends and family members in the region,
- (ii) the death toll in Gaza has surpassed 30,000, with 70% of the victims women and children,
- (iii) the Hamas terrorist attacks on October 7, 2023, killed nearly 1,200 people and over 100 hostages remain in Hamas captivity,
- (iv) millions of residents of Gaza are displaced and at risk of starvation, death, and disease, and Gaza is currently the most dangerous place in the world to be a child,
- (v) the United Nations reports over 70 per cent of civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including homes, hospitals, schools, water and sanitation facilities, have been destroyed or severely damaged by Israeli military attacks,
- (vi) on January 26, 2024, the International Court of Justice ordered six provisional measures, including for Israel to refrain from acts under the Genocide convention, prevent and punish the direct and public incitement to genocide, and take immediate and effective measures to ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance to civilians in Gaza,
- (vii) Israelis are still at risk of attacks by Iran-backed terrorist groups including Hamas and Hezbollah,
- (viii) the forcible transfer and violent attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank have significantly increased in recent months,
- (ix) the casualties of the war on Gaza and the Hamas terrorist attack include Canadian citizens,
- (x) Canadian citizens remain trapped in Gaza, blocked from leaving,
- (xi) Jewish, Muslim, Arab, and Palestinian Canadians have reported an

increase in hate-motivated attacks and racism since October,
(xii) Palestinians and Israelis both deserve to live in peace, with full enjoyment of their human rights and democratic freedoms,

the House call on the government to:

- (a) demand an immediate ceasefire and the release of all hostages;
- (b) suspend all trade in military goods and technology with Israel and increase efforts to stop the illegal trade of arms, including to Hamas;
- (c) immediately reinstate funding and ensure long-term continued funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and support the independent investigation;
- (d) support the prosecution of all crimes and violations of international law committed in the region, and support the work of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court;
- (e) demand unimpeded humanitarian access to Gaza;
- (f) ensure Canadians trapped in Gaza can reach safety in Canada and lift the arbitrary cap of 1,000 temporary resident visa applications;
- (g) ban extremist settlers from Canada, impose sanctions on Israeli officials who incite genocide, and maintain sanctions on Hamas leaders;
- (h) advocate for an end to the decades-long occupation of Palestinian territories and work toward a two-state solution; and
- (i) officially recognize the State of Palestine and maintain Canada's recognition of Israel's right to exist and to live in peace with its neighbours.

How to reach the Honourable Sean Fraser

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When you've been in touch with your MP, what else can you do?

- Continue to pray for justice and peace.
- Share this Take Action with others to spread the word
- Go to the United Church of Canada website (<http://united-church.ca>) and learn more about how together we can continue to pray, advocate, and donate in Support of Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel.