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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)*

February 23, 2025- Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany

GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER

Prelude: *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* Michèle Ashby
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)
Jesus said: Love one another.
**We come to worship God who is love,
that we may learn to love one another.**
Jesus said: No longer do I call you servants; now I call you my friends.
We come to worship God, whose friends we are in Christ.

Opening Prayer (together)
**Loving God, open our hearts
that we may feel the breath and play of your Spirit.
Open our hands that we may reach out to one another,
Open our lips that we may drink in the delight and wonder of life.
Open our eyes that we may see Christ in friend and stranger.
Breathe your Spirit into us, and touch our lives with the life of
Christ, Amen.**

Hymn: 333 VU *Love Divine*

Children's Time and the Lord's Prayer
Hymn: 46 MV *Bless the Lord*

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Responsive Reading: Psalm 37 (p. 763 VU)
First Lesson: Genesis 45:3-11,15 Christine Morrison
Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:35-38,42-44 Diane Theuerkauf
Gospel: Luke 6:27-38
Anthem: *Gather by the River to Pray* (Pepper Choplin)
Sermon: "Yes, Jesus Said That"

GOD CALLS US TO RESPOND

Hymn: 684 VU *Make Me a Channel of Your Peace*
Offering and 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: 595 VU *We Are Pilgrims*
Commissioning and Benediction
Choral Benediction: (431 VU Sing Amen)
(Sing Amen) **Amen we praise your name, O God**
(Sing Amen) **Amen we praise your name, O God**
(Sing Amen) **Amen, amen, amen, amen,
amen, we praise your name O God.**

Postlude

A warm welcome to everyone 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.

The Church Office will be open this week on Tuesday and Thursday morning from 10 am-12 pm. The voice mail, emails, and secure mail slot will be checked regularly.

Scripture for Next Sunday

1 Samuel 3: 1-19 • Matthew 10: 5-15



Mission and Service Partners Support Displaced Women and Children in DR Congo

In the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), conflict is worsening, forcing hundreds of thousands to flee. According to the UNHCR, 400,000 people have been displaced this year alone, adding to the 4.6 million already seeking refuge in North and South Kivu. To date, at least 900 people have lost their lives and the figures are expected to increase.

As people flee, some find refuge over the border in neighboring Uganda. The UNHCR Refugee Arrival Monitoring Dashboard reports that Uganda receives a daily average of 270 refugees from DRC since January 1, 2025.

During this crisis, the Global Partnership team at The United Church of Canada is centring its response on global partners. Early in February, ACT Alliance members issued a Call for Increased Support, given the rising violence and death tolls. As a member of ACT Alliance, The United Church of Canada is accompanying Église du Christ au Congo (ECC)—a Mission and Service partner—who are providing food, shelter, clean water, and mental health support to affected communities. ECC, a member of ACT Alliance, is also responding through the current ACT Alliance Appeal – CEA241.

The ACT Alliance Appeal raises funds to support displaced people, particularly women and children in the DRC. The Global Partnership team asks for you to pray for the people and partners who are in the midst of this crisis, and to donate through the Global Emergency Response Fund. (The link for donations can be found by clicking on "Links for February 23, 2025" at www.stjamesuc.com)

Pray also for the Congolese-Canadian members of the United Church across Canada who may have family and friends who are vulnerable to the conflict.

The prayers and Christian sympathy of the congregation are extended to Linda Darwish and family following the death of her mother *Najla Ghantous Darwish* in Montreal earlier this week. Please keep Linda and her family in your prayers during this difficult time.

THIS WEEK AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, February 23

11:30 am A shared meal in the hall following worship which leads into our Congregational Annual Meeting. Everyone is welcome!

Tuesday, February 25

11:00 am Community Hot Meal Program
2:30 pm Meditation Group in the Parlour. Contact Fran for more information 902 870-1198.

Thursday, February 27

11:00 am Community Hot Meal Program
7:00 pm Choir practice

The Rev. Peter Smith is on Study Leave from Monday, February 24th until Monday March 3rd. If there is a pastoral emergency during this time please call the Rev. Meredith Marple at 902-863-0452.

Next Sunday we are pleased to have the UCW leading our service of worship with a special service to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada.

Income Tax Receipts for 2024 are available at the door. Please make sure you stop and pick yours up before you leave. If you donated through Canada Helps those receipts were emailed to you or can be resent at <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/tax-receipts/> (all you need is the email address you used for your donation).

African Heritage Month in the United Church- As people of faith, we know every part of humanity is a reflection of the wisdom and the power of God, and yet all of our collective humanity has been diminished and ruptured through the enslavement of African peoples and the colonization and exploitation of those same peoples land. Chinua Achebe shares the African proverb that states, “Until the lions have their own

historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” It is important for people of African descent to tell their/our truths, stories and histories. It is important for all of us to protect and preserve, to celebrate and enjoy the wisdom and beauty of God in our siblings of African descent, and by doing so, know God and ourselves in a deeper way.

Your Social Justice Collective is concerned about climate change.

Quotes to consider: “I hold a vision of this blue green planet, safe and in balance. At the end of the Fossil Fuel Era, we are emerging to a new reality. We are ready to make the next leap – as momentous as abolishing slavery or giving women the vote.” – Elizabeth May // “To all of you who choose to look the other way every day because you seem more frightened of the changes that can prevent catastrophic climate change than the catastrophic climate change itself. Your silence is worst of all.” – Greta Thunberg // “Change is never easy, and it often creates discord, but when people come together for the good of humanity and the Earth, we can accomplish great things.” – David Suzuki

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lions Pancake and Sausage Breakfast on Sunday February 23 from 9-12 at the Lions Den 13 Highland Dr. ext. Donations at the door and proceeds will go towards providing Lions Stoves for Ukraine.

NEW: Biweekly Book Club “Are you new to the Palestine Movement and want to learn more? Do you want to learn more about Zionism, Colonialism, Israel and Palestine? Then this club is for you! Open to all abilities and skill levels. See below for the book description:

‘The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine’ by Rashid Khalidi
“A book which approaches the twentieth century as a century of denial for Palestinians: denial of statehood, denial of nationhood and denial of history. Drawing on his family archives, Khalidi reclaims the fundamental right of any people: to narrate their history on their own terms. This text will help you understand the early context of the Zionist project; and moves through critical moments within a hundred year long war of occupation, dispossession and colonisation.”

First meeting: Feb. 28 at 4pm in the Meeting Room at the People’s Place Library. Open to students and the community. Masking required due to prevalence of flu -will be provided. @StFXforPalestine

