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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 30, 2025- Fourth Sunday in Lent

### **GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER**

Prelude

Introit: (108 VU Throughout these Lenten Days and Nights v 1)

*Throughout these Lenten days and nights  
we turn to walk the inward way,  
where, meeting Christ, our guide and light,  
we live in hope till Easter Day.*

Call to Worship (responsive- from Hosea 6:3)

Let us strive to know God,  
**whose coming is as sure as the sunrise.**  
God will come to us like the rain,  
**like spring rains that water the earth.**

Opening Prayer (together)

**God whose love made us,  
we come to you in this season of turning and returning.  
We do not know how to seek you with our whole hearts,  
but we know you are the source of life and hope.  
God whose love remakes us,  
in the midst of our lives, we turn toward you.  
Receive us with our broken hearts, troubled consciences, and  
conflicted spirits and touch us again with your grace, Amen.**

Hymn: 271 VU *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

Prayer of Confession (together)

**God of mercy, we don't like to think of ourselves as prodigals. Yet  
even if we haven't run away in the same manner as the young man  
in the parable, the truth is that we have sometimes distanced**

**ourselves from you, we have not always used our gifts wisely, and we  
have in more subtle ways acted out our rebellion. Forgive us, we  
pray, and welcome us home for we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Children's Time and the Lord's Prayer

Hymn: 225 VU *We Praise You For the Sun*

### **GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SCRIPTURE**

Responsive Reading: Psalm 36 (p. 762)

First Lesson: Joshua 5:9-12

Second Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Gospel: Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Anthem

Sermon: "The Love of the Father"

### **GOD CALLS US TO RESPOND**

Hymn: 112 VU *O God, How We Have Wandered*

Offering Prayer

Offertory Response (540 VU Grant Us, God, the Grace of Giving)

*Grant us, God, the grace of giving, with a spirit large and free,  
that ourselves and all our living we may offer faithfully.*

Prayers of the People

Hymn: 574 VU *Come, Let us Sing of a Wonderful Love*

Commissioning and Benediction

Choral Benediction: (967 VU Amen)

*A-men, a-men, a-men*

Postlude

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**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.

**Coffee Hosts** this morning are Fred and Sheila Davison

**Scripture for Next Sunday**

Isaiah 43:16-21 • Philippians 3:4b-14 • John 12:1-8

### **What is YOUTH@REGION?**

Y@R is a place of community and a place of faith where United Church youth, between grade 6 and grade 12, meet from across Bermuda, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the Gaspé. The group creates an inclusive, diverse and safe community for youth in the name of Christ. We provide a place for youth to explore their faith and to learn more about the United Church of Canada while sharing in music, worship and fun in a spirit-filled community.

### **WHEN IS YOUTH @REGION**

Y@R runs from Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup> until Sunday June 1<sup>st</sup> (around noon). It will take place during the Centennial Gathering of Bermuda-Nova Scotia and Fundy St. Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Councils at Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB.

### **COST AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

The cost of Youth@Region is \$130 per participant. This fee includes all activities, meals, accommodations, and a t-shirt. There are youth going from St. James again this year so travel isn't a problem.

Don't let the cost frighten you from applying - in the past the Church Council and UCW have helped make the event possible for any youth wanting to attend.

Interested? Talk to May, Rev. Peter, or someone who went last year! They can answer questions about what it is like or find the answers for you.

## THIS WEEK AT ST. JAMES

**Tuesday, April 1**

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

**Thursday, April 3**

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

**The Church Office** will be open this week on Tuesday and Thursday, and Friday morning from 10 am-12 pm. Messages are checked regularly.

**Does pancakes on Easter Sunday sound good to you?** We're looking for some help again this year in making the pancake breakfast happen on Easter Sunday. If you can help please speak to Rev. Peter following service or this week at minister@stjamesuc.com

Your Social Justice Collective reminds you that April 4th is the **International Day for Mine Awareness & Action**, intended to raise awareness about landmines and speed their eradication. To learn how the highly developed sense of smell and light weight of African giant pouched rats, (nicknamed 'HeroRATs'), make them ideal detectors of landmines, check out apopo.org/herorats. It is also **National Refugee Rights Day** – a time to celebrate the advances that have been made in the protection of refugee rights in Canada. Also an opportunity to strengthen our advocacy for refugees, displaced persons and immigrants. Antigonish has recently benefited greatly from the influx of Syrians, Ukrainians and others, to our midst – please welcome them warmly whenever you have a chance!

**Your kind donations** for the Antigonish Community Fridge and Pantry are greatly appreciated. Whenever you are able to do so, please place your donations in the donation box in the narthex. Thank you.

**Broadview Magazine Subscriptions.** If you are interested in renewing or subscribing to Broadview (which contains thoughtful articles on spirituality and the United Church) please contact the office before June 8<sup>th</sup> to take advantage of the group rate (\$30/year).

## UPCOMING AT ST. JAMES

**Sunday, April 6** - Guest speaker, Kathryn Anderson will visit us to share the story of Breaking the Silence coffee, as well as Guatemala's struggle for democracy and human rights. She has also had a chance to visit the Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network's fair trade coffee partner, the Highlands Ctee. of Small Farmers, so she will have lots to share about this amazing organization, as well. All are welcome to attend, approximately 11:45 am in the meeting room.

**Saturday, April 12th** from 12 pm- 2pm The UCW are holding their Daffodil Luncheon in the hall. Chicken Salad and Dessert. \$15 at the door. Come enjoy the food, tea and coffee, and the arrival of spring!

## COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Antigonish RCMP detachment and the Antigonish Women's Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association** are hosting an event March 31st at 1 pm at the Antigonish Legion. Lynn Gallant-Blackburn will be discussing her personal journey after the murder of her sister, Paula Gallant, who was a victim of intimate partner violence. Lynn has written a book which outlines her years of advocacy work across sectors and tells how Paula Gallant's family navigated life after her murder.

**Monday** March 31st 7:15, John Paul Center. Milling Song invitation. All are welcome and no experience needed. We plan to review a couple of songs and add a song by Bard MacLean. He was an established poet from Scotland who settled in Glen bard (James River). So far we have had several sessions which were well attended and fun for all involved. For those who will attend for the first time please note that Abby MacDonald will lead us, teach us the chorus and then turn us loose while leaders sing the verses.

**Hello Spring!** Handmade Market on Saturday, 5 April from 10 to 2 at the Heatherton Community Centre. Please check out the Facebook event page for information on the vendors participating with baked goods, jewellery, wood crafts, photography, house plants, garden & flower seeds, Easter themed decor and much more. There will also be corn chowder and biscuit for \$5.00 along with a beverage that can also be purchased. If you wish to participate, please contact Malcolm at malliemac131@gmail.com

