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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 1, 2026- Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER

Prelude *Stand by Me*, feat Martha Palmer

Welcome and Announcements

Introit: (79 VU Arise your Light Has Come vs1)

***Arise, your light is come! The Spirit's call obey;
show forth the glory of your God, which shines on you today.***

Call to Worship (responsive)

What does the Lord require of you?

To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with our God.

God does not call us to ease or to comfort.

But to presence, and abundance, and grace in our struggle.

Let us worship God who believes in us,

and trusts in us, and abides with us.

Let us worship God who will ask much of us,

but will be beside us every step of the way.

Prayer of Approach (together)

God of wisdom and blessing,

We come into the warmth of your presence and

find shelter and welcome in the strength of your promises,

For you give blessing when the world condemns,

you bring freedom when culture confines,

and you speak truth when society lies.

Embrace us with your love in this hour of worship

as we offer our thanks and our praise,

for we gather as your people in Jesus' name, Amen.

Hymn: 42 MV *Praise God for this Holy Ground*

Children's Story and the Lord's Prayer.

Hymn: 701 VU *What Does the Lord Require of You*

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Responsive Reading: Psalm 15 (p.736)

First Reading: Micah 6:1-8

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12

Anthem: *Let Us Serve* (Don Besig/Nancy Price)

Sermon: "What Now?"

Bill Marshall

Minoli Amit

GOD CALLS US TO RESPOND

Hymn: 145 MV *Draw the Circle Wide*

Offering Invitation 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: 686 VU *God of Grace and God of Glory*

Commissioning and Benediction

Choral Benediction (79 VU Arise your Light Has Come vs4)

Arise, your light is come! The mountains burst in song!

Rise up like eagles on the wing; God's power will make us strong.

Postlude

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

Greeting at the door are Members of Finance and Stewardship

Storyteller at Children's worship is Candice Sullivan

Coffee Hour Hosts are Joe Apaloo and Sherry Bowman

Scriptures Next Sunday

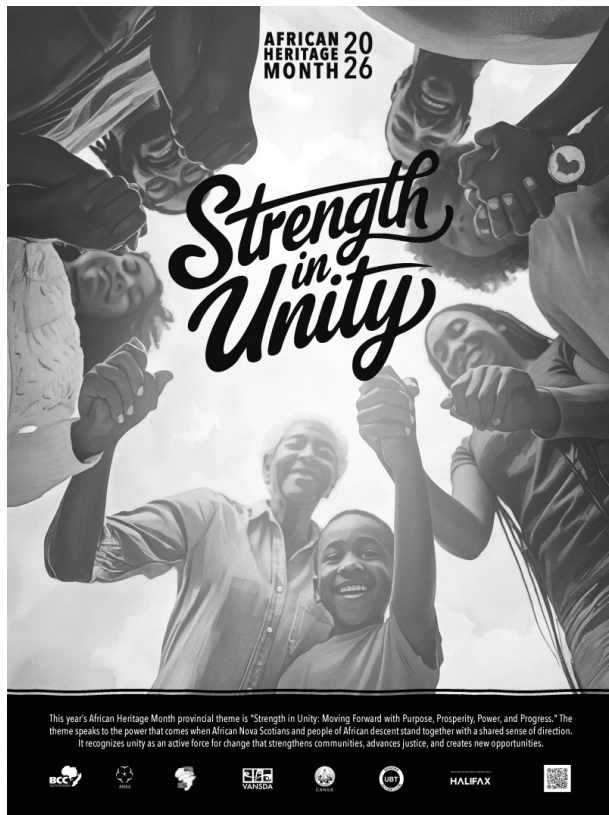
Isaiah 58:1-9a • 1 Corinthians 2:1-9 • Matthew 5:13-20

This Sunday is the first week within African Heritage Month a time to honour and celebrate the contributions of Black people in Canada and to look at the past while giving thanks as we look forward to the future.

The 2026 theme for African Heritage Month is: “Strength in Unity – Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power and Progress.”

The theme reflects the strength that grows when communities come together with shared purpose. It honours the progress made through solidarity and the power of unity to create lasting change.

This year’s theme also highlights the importance of intergenerational connection. Elders, as knowledge keepers and leaders, carry the stories that help us understand where we come from. Youth bring new energy and vision to carry that legacy forward. Together, they show us that unity is not only our history. It’s our way forward.



THIS WEEK AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, February 1

12:00 pm **North of Nowhere** Book Discussion. For those registered, sessions begin at 12 pm today after church.

Tuesday, February 3

11:00 am Community Hot Meal Program
2:30 pm Mediation Group

Wednesday, February 5

7:00 pm Choir practice

Thursday, February 6

11:00 am Community Hot Meal Program

Are you interested in helping tape our Sunday service? Training is provided and it is just to tape the service (although if you have experience editing you are more than welcome!). If you (or your family) is interested please speak with Rev. Peter, Paul or Jonathan.

UPCOMING AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, February 8

10:30 am Our African Heritage Service.
11:30 am UCW gathering in Meeting Room

Sunday, February 22

10:30 am We gather around the table to share the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday in Lent.

Today marks the start of African Heritage Month! The 2026 theme focuses on "Strength in Unity: Moving Forward with Purpose, Prosperity, Power, and Progress" –celebrating the collective strength, wisdom of elders, and enduring legacy of African Nova Scotians. There will be more later this month. Your Social Justice Collective also notes this is the start of World Interfaith Harmony Week, whose theme “Creating Sacred Space: Awakening the Heart” is an invitation into a shared journey. Throughout the week, explore how compassion, wisdom and spiritual insight live at the centre of all our traditions. And the 6th is

the International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation – an annual awareness day that is part of the UN's efforts to eradicate the barbaric practice of female genital mutilation.

The Church Council met mid-January via Zoom to review the Annual Reports for 2025 and to consider the budget for 2026. The Annual Reports and Financial Statements will be available in mid-February and the Congregational Annual General Meeting will be on Sunday, March 1st after morning worship and following a shared meal in the hall.

Just a reminder that because of policies in place at St. Martha's hospital that patients or their families have to request visits from clergy. If you are in the hospital and would like a visit from Rev. Peter please call 902-863-2859 or tell one of the staff or chaplains at St. Martha's.

2025 Tax Receipts for donations made to St. James and St. David's by envelope or through PAR or EFT, are available at the door. Just a reminder that the receipts this year will include donations made from March 1 until December 31 2025. That is because in early March 2025, following CRA instructions, we issued receipts for donations made in January and February of 2025 which could be used on your 2024 tax return. That was a one time change made because of the postal strike in late 2024.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, February 3

11:00 am African Heritage Month sponsored by the Town of Antigonish, the Municipality of the County of Antigonish, and St. Francis Xavier University. Joyce Family Atrium in the Mulroney Center on St Fx Campus. Celebrate with us as we officially launch African Heritage Month with community partners, speakers, and shared reflections.

