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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 22, 2026- First Sunday of Lent

GOD BRINGS US TOGETHER

Prelude *Prelude* (Walther)

Welcome and Announcements

Introit: (400 VU Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying)

*Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
send us love, send us power, send us grace!*

Call to Worship (responsive- from Joel 2:13)

Let us rend our hearts and not our garments;

Let us turn back to God.

For God is gracious and compassionate,

God is patient and abounding in love.

Prayer of Approach (together)

God of the Wilderness, God of the Journey,

soften our hearts and open our ears

that we might heed Wisdom's call.

Stir us to vision and action,

that we may extend your love

wherever there is need for hope and healing, Amen.

Hymn: 559 VU *Come, O Fount of Every Blessing*

Children's Story and the Lord's Prayer.

Hymn: 365 VU *Jesus Loves Me*

GOD SPEAKS THROUGH SCRIPTURE

Responsive Reading: Psalm 32 (p.759 VU)

First Reading: Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Gospel: Matthew 4:1-11

Anthem: *Ain't But One* (Duke Ellington) bass guitar: Graem Littleton

Sermon: "Wisdom from the Wilderness"

GOD CALLS US TO RESPOND

Minute for Mission

Stewart MacPhee

Offering Invitation and Prayer

Offertory Response (227 VU For the Fruit of All Creation v3)

For the harvests of his Spirit, Thanks be to God;

For the good we all inherit, Thanks be to God;

For the wonders that astound us,

For the truths that still confound us,

Most of all that love has found us, Thanks be to God.

Prayers of the People

Hymn: 460 VU *All Who Hunger*

Celebration of Holy Communion (see insert)

Hymn: 641 VU *Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song*

Commissioning and Benediction

Choral Benediction (298 VU When You Walk From Here)

When you walk from here, when you walk from here,

walk with justice, walk with mercy, and with God's humble care.

Postlude: *Heaven* (Duke Ellington)

Carolyn Curry & Graem Littleton

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.

Storyteller at Children's worship is May MacKenzie

Coffee Hour Hosts are Beryl Duggan and Joan Poole

Scriptures Next Sunday

Genesis 12:1-4a • Romans 4:1-5 • John 3:1-17

To help us mark Black History Month, we would like to celebrate a long time member of our congregation – Pat Skinner! Pat was a member of the St James United Church family for 20 years before she unfortunately died in a tragic automobile accident in 2013. Born and raised in Upper Big Tracadie, she graduated from the Coady Institute and joined the St Francis Xavier Extension Department where she helped many people in her role as a Community Development Officer. She also worked at the National Philatelic Centre for sixteen years. Pat participated fully in congregational life, serving in many roles, including as church secretary for a time. The day before she died she was planning the Black History Sunday Service. All this while spreading joy with her God filled smile and infectious laughter. Her love and dedication to her family was central to a life built around social justice causes.

In 2006 Pat received the Nova Scotia Human Rights Award for her outstanding contributions to eliminating the racism and inequalities faced by African-Nova Scotians. Her appointment in 2010 to the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission helped her do enduring provincial work. A founding member of both the Black Cultural Society of Nova Scotia and the Black United Front, she was volunteering with the Antigonish-Guysborough Black Development Association just before her death. In 1998 the Town of Antigonish recognized Pat with a Certificate of Appreciation for her outstanding contributions to Antigonish and the surrounding area. She served our community with strength, integrity and dedication in countless ways and numerous capacities.

The racial prejudice Pat experienced fired her determination to fight racism at a young age. Her fearlessness in recounting those anecdotes moved many of us. Such as when she spoke of not being permitted to try on clothing in a local store because “It would make the clothing dirty, and no one will try on something a Black woman wore.”

We continue to celebrate with gratitude a life devoted to eradicating prejudice and improving the lives of African-Canadians. We at St James, and across Nova Scotia, are blessed to have witnessed her shining example of Jesus’s teachings. We miss you Sister and know you are smiling down on us. We are all better for Pat’s lasting legacy!

THIS WEEK AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, February 22

10:30 am The season of Lent begins and we gather around the table and celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Tuesday, February 24

11:00 am Community Hot Meal Program
2:30 pm Mediation Group in the parlour.

Wednesday, February 26

7:00 pm Choir practice in the Sanctuary

Thursday, February 27

11:00 am Community Hot Meal Program

Today's anthem was composed by Duke Ellington as one of about 20 pieces for a 1965 sacred concert which included vocal soloists, a choir and a large stage band.

2025 Congregational Annual Reports and Detailed Financial Statements are available this week at the door. Electronic Copies will be available the website (<http://www.stjamesuc.com>)

Coldest Night of the Year Saturday, February 28th at 4pm. There are a group of people from St. James and St. Paul's who are walking to support the Naomi Society as they build new facilities here in Antigonish to help the most vulnerable among us. If you want to join and walk 2km or 5km please go to <https://en.cnoy.org/location/antigonish> and join or donate to "Some of the Saints (St. James and St. Paul)."

UPCOMING AT ST. JAMES

Sunday, March 1

11:30 am Our Congregational Annual Meeting will take place in the hall following a shared meal. Members of our Church Council are bringing Chili, Soup and Rolls for the meal (vegetarian options are available). Members of the congregation are invited to bring a desert to share or to stay afterwards and help clean up.

Celebration of Holy Communion

for the First Sunday in Lent

St. James United Church, February 22, 2026

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

God of mercy, it is not always easy to give you thanks and praise. When our hearts ache and our spirits falter, it is difficult to think of anything other than ourselves and our pain.

In your mercy, remember us even when we forget about you.

God of love, you do not forsake us. When we wander, you seek us out. When we stumble, you support us. When we are in distress, you reach out to us.

In our times of need, surround us with your love and shelter us in your care.

God of grace, you provide for us. Through the words of scripture, through the compassion of others, through each new day, you offer us the possibility of life and the potential of a new tomorrow.

In our uncertainty, remind us of your presence and your promises.

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!
Bless'd is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!*

God of hope, you know our need and answer it through your gifts to us. As we come before you with bread and cup remind us again of what you have done for us through Jesus Christ and what you continue to do for us through your Holy Spirit.

For what is impossible for us is possible for you.

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again

As we take this bread and break it, we remember Jesus' death upon the cross. As we share this bread, let your Spirit move among us and bring healing and peace.

For Jesus said "This is my body which is broken for you"

As we take this cup and drink, we remember the new covenant made by Jesus. As we share this cup, let your Spirit fill us with assurance and comfort.

For Jesus said "This is my blood which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins."

God of grace, let this time of communion be filled with more than simply the sharing of bread and cup. Let us taste the eternal and experience the possibilities that you have set before each of us. By your mercy, in your grace, and through your love answer us for we come before you God most holy, in Jesus' name,
Amen, Amen, Amen.

Prayer after Communion (together)

Eternal and Loving God, for the bread which we have eaten and the cup we have tasted, we praise and thank you. For you have touched us by your Holy Spirit, and challenged us to live as your people, through Jesus Christ, Amen.

This prayer is from *All Things are Ready* by Peter Andrew Smith © 2007 CSS Publishing. Used by Permission.

With no specific Social Justice dates this week, the SJ Collective wishes to draw your attention to the good work of the Kids First Family Resource Centre. They provide programs and parenting support to preschool children and pregnant women. Donations are used for transportation, nutritious snacks for children and milk for healthy pregnancies. If you are able to, please consider donating. (902) 863-3848

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.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Antigonish Lions Pancake and Sausage Breakfast Sunday February 22 from 9-12 . Donations will benefit the Antigonish Food Bank.

Tuesday, February 24 at 7:00 pm **Black X-cellece Panel** hosted once-again by renowned leader Kwame Osei '10 and will feature: Rebecca Mesay (2020) Ellis Ffrench (2013) Alexandra Hall (1998) and Augy Jones (1990) To register please go to <http://www.alumni.stfx.ca/blackxcellecepanel2026>

Good Stories to Live By: A fresh look at the Bible. Join us for a relaxed, open minded exploration of the stories of Jesus- teacher, healer, leader, and troublemaker. Details: Thursdays Feb 26, Mar 26, Apr 23, May 28 and June 25 @ 7pm @ St. Paul's Anglican Church. More info? Naterz@gmail.com or rector3harbours@gmail.com.

Wild Grief Mandala. Guided participatory experience of sharing in community. Saturday February 28th 1-3 pm. Bethany Resource Centre 75 Marian Dr. Antigonish. Free event. Register at www.fireloch.com