



Thornbury, Ontario
Grace United Church
Bold. Nurturing. Liberal. Christian.

February 25th, 2024

Second Sunday of Lent

Find this service at www.graceunitedthornbury.ca/live

Leading us today in Worship:

Guest Minister: Rev. Dr. John G. Smith

Music Director: Dr. Christopher Burton

Scripture Reader: Norine Baron

Leader: regular font ~ **All: bold font** ~ *Sung words: bold italics*

We Gather Together in Community

PRELUDE: "Deep River" Spiritual, arr. C. Burton

WELCOME:

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE:

Even though it is Lent, we light the Christ candle.

For the world needs this light; the world needs OUR light.

During our observance of Lent this year,

May the Christ candle remind us of the fragility of light.

May the purple colour remind us that Christ's light is eternal.

And may these Lenten days bring us closer to the beauty of his light.

May the light of Christ be with you all;

And also with you.

OUR COMMITMENT to SAFE SPACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the LAND:

We believe all people are made in the image of God and are entitled to dignity and respect. At Grace United Church we try to offer a safe, inclusive and generous space for all who are seeking a faith community – people of all gender identities, sexual orientations, races, ages and abilities. We are committed to continuing to learn and grow as we prepare to become an Affirming congregation.

Grace United Church is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Petun, Huron-Wendat, and Mississauga peoples, located within the boundary of Treaty 18 region of 1818. We humbly acknowledge the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of Canada As traditional stewards of the land on which we work and worship and are committed to working actively toward genuine restitution and reconciliation.

INTROIT: VU #381 “Spirit of Life”

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;

move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close; wings set me free;

Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

OPENING READING: (From Psalm 4)

It is love that brings us here, week after week.

It is love, treasured, love unmeasured, that brings us here week after week.

It is love which lives deep down in our souls.

Love generates love, and inspires us to acts of loving service.

May our worship bring us closer to Love Eternal.
 May the grace of Love sit tenderly upon our hearts.
 May the beauty of Love be like a sweet pot of honey,
 The taste of which never leaves our senses.

**It is love which lives deep down in our souls.
 Love generates love, and inspires us to acts of loving
 service.**

Oh that we might sit and contemplate the love of God all
 day long!

Oh that we might dwell in God's temple, and be filled
 with God's beauty and grace,
 Like a river which never ceases to flow.

But by design, O God, we see the shape of love's
 presence in our hearts.

You use it to move us to action, to service, to re-creating
 the world as you want it to be.

**It is love which lives deep down in our souls.
 Love generates love, and inspires us to acts of loving
 service.
 May it be so today and forever! AMEN!**

***HYMN: VU #108 Throughout These Lenten Days and
 Nights**

**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.**

**2. The pilgrim Christ, the Lamb of God,
 who found in weakness greater power,
 embraces us, though lost and flawed,
 and leads us to his Rising Hour.**

**3. We bear the silence, cross and pain
of human burdens, human strife,
while sisters, brothers help sustain
our courage till the Feast of Life.**

**4. And though the road is hard and steep,
the Spirit ever calls us on through
Calvary's dying, dark and deep,
until we see the coming Dawn.**

**5. So let us choose the path of One
who wore, for us, the crown of thorn,
and slept in death that we might wake
to life on Resurrection Morn!**

**6. Rejoice, O sons and daughters! Sing
and shout hosannas! Raise the strain!
For Christ, whose death Good Friday brings
on Easter Day will rise again!**

OPENING PRAYER:

Let us come to this moment of prayer with open hearts,
and the wisdom born of our thousands of prayers in this
place over the years.

Let us listen to the world around us.

Let us hear the sounds of beauty and delight.

But let us also hear the sounds of pain and suffering,
joylessness, despair.

Let us listen to the beating of our own hearts.

And to the wisdom of the children in our lives.

**Let us consider the wisdom of the time set aside for
church, for spiritual reflection, for spiritual rejuvenation.
We are so thankful for this sacred place
And for the wisdom it holds for us as we seek to be people
of spirit in these times.**

Let us open our hearts to the suffering of our world.
 Let us hear the cries of those kept in captivity, as
 hostages.

Let us hear the pain of innocent victims of war and
 hatred.

Let us hear the voices still yearning to be expressed.

Let us hear the depth of what it means to be human, as
 we seek to respond to these cries.

O God, we are grateful for your love.

**For it grounds us and holds us in these times in which we
 live.**

**Your love is so embedded in our hearts and souls,
 We resonate with it and respond with it, doing the best we
 can.**

In this Lenten time, let us bring our hearts and minds
 together

And join with the wisdom of the whole earth,

To seek peace and healing, kindness and love for all.

We pray in Christ's name. AMEN

We Listen to Together

A Theme Conversation: The Way of Beauty

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Isaiah 43: 18-25

(NRSVUE)

Do not remember the former things
 or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing;

now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness

and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honor me,
the jackals and the ostriches,
for I give water in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.
Yet you did not call upon me, O Jacob;
but you have been weary of me, O Israel!
You have not brought me your sheep for burnt
offerings
or honored me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with offerings
or wearied you with frankincense.
You have not bought me sweet cane with money
or satisfied me with the fat of your sacrifices.
Rather, you have burdened me with your sins;
you have wearied me with your iniquities.
I alone am the one
who blots out your transgressions for my own
sake,
and I will not remember your sins.

Mark 2: 1-12

(NRSVUE)

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door, and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay.

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."

Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves, and he said to them, "Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and take your mat and walk'?"

But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— ¹¹ "I say to you, stand up, take your mat, and go to your home."

And he stood up and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

RESPONSE:

These words from scripture are meant to guide us, nurture us, and teach us.

Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM: "Let Us Love One Another" Arnold B. Sherman

SERMON: "When There's a Big Hole in the Roof

We Respond to God's Word

***HYMN for LENT:** MV # 157 I Am A Child of God

*1. I am a child of God,
I am a glimpse of God's new creation.
I am a child of God,
I am a child of God.*

*2. I am an endless prayer,
I am a yearning for contemplation,
I am an endless prayer,
I am an endless prayer.*

*3. I am an angry voice,
I am compassion and consternation,
I am an angry voice,
I am an angry voice.*

*4. I am a cry for peace,
I am commitment and dedication,
I am a cry for peace,
I am a cry for peace.*

*5. I am a song of joy,
I am the moment of jubilation,
I am a song of joy,
I am a song of joy.*

PRAYER OF DEDICATION OF GIFTS AND SELF:

The work of creating a world that works for all,
requires many gifts, many talents, many resources.
***We bring all that we have, our courage, our strength,
our prayers and our dreams,
our gifts of time and treasure,
and all the love and acceptance we embody,
to create God's world of justice and joy.***

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

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Care, Prayer, Share

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER: (VU #910)

WHAT'S UP AT GRACE?

We Go Out to Serve

***CLOSING HYMN:** VU # 642 **Be Thou My Vision**

- 1. Be thou my vision, O joy of my heart;
 naught be all else to me save that thou art,
 thou my best thought, by day or by night,
 waking or sleeping thy presence my light.**
- 2. Be thou my wisdom, my calm in all strife;
 I ever with thee, and thou in my life;
 thou loving parent, thy child may I be,
 thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.**
- 3. Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight
 be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
 thou my soul's shelter, thou my high tower;
 raise thou me heavenward, O power of my power.**
- 4. Riches I heed not, nor vain empty praise,
 thou mine inheritance, now and always;
 thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
 great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**
- 5. Great God of heaven, after victory won,
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun!**

**Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O ruler of all.**

***COMMISSIONING:**

***SUNG BENEDICTION: Go Now in Peace**
Go now in peace. Never be afraid.
God will go with you each hour of every day,
Go now in faith, steadfast, strong and true,
Know God will guide you in all you do.
Go now in love, and show you believe.
Reach out to others so all the world can see.
God will be there, *within, around, above.
Go now in peace, in faith and in love.
Amen, amen, amen.

***alternate words: watching from above**

POSTLUDE: “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” arr. C. Burton

LITURGY SOURCES:

Opening Reading: From Psalm 4, written and arranged by Rev. John G Smith.

Prayers: written by Rev. John G Smith.

HYMNS and SUNG VERSES:

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SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Scripture Passage from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE)

Prelude: “Deep River” Spiritual, arr. C. Burton

Anthem: “Let Us Love One Another” - Arnold B. Sherman

Postlude: “We’ve Come This Far by Faith” arr. C. Burton