



March 3rd, 2024

Third Sunday of Lent

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Find this service at www.graceunitedthornbury.ca/live

Leading us today in Worship:

Minister: Rev. Dr. John G. Smith

Music Director: Dr. Christopher Burton

Scripture Reader: Shirley Woolner

Chair of the Congregation: James McKinlay

Secretary of the Congregation: Joan McKinlay

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

We Gather Together in Community

PRELUDE:

"Little Preludes" (selected) J.S. Bach

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.

***HYMN: VU #232 Joyful, Joyful We Adore You**

**1. Joyful, joyful we adore you,
God of glory, life and love;
hearts unfold like flowers before you,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,
drive the gloom of doubt away;
giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day.**

**2. All your works with joy surround you,
earth and heaven reflect your rays,
stars and angels sing around you,
centre of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
sound their praise eternally.**

**3. You are giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Source of grace and fount of blessing,
let your light upon us shine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.**

**4. Mortals join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us,
joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward
in the triumph song of life.**

OPENING PRAYER:

God, you have made us and we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

**We are small, yet we are powerful.
We are sometimes hard edged; but sometimes incredibly soft.**

Our skin is porous yet we often hold on to that which hurts us.

We are conscious of beauty, yet we cannot fathom it in others sometimes.
Sometimes we stand tall with pride;
Other times we shrink in our smallness.
Yet even when we are compressed, our hearts can expand in a moment.

**Thank you for making us.
We are so simple, yet so complicated.
Like your love.**

As we contemplate your love, help us to open our minds and spirits
to this world which you so dearly love.
You made it, every aspect of it, and you love it, every aspect of it.
Help us to cherish the earth the same way.

**Help us to love the birds, but also the bugs.
Help us to love the warmth of the sun, but also the storm clouds.
Help us to love the ones who love us,
but more importantly to love those we feel we cannot love.**

In our prayers we hold in the palm of our hands:
those who are sick, those needing healing of some kind,
those experiencing grief or sadness, those who are isolated or alone.
We hold those who are struggling, those who are just emerging from pain,
those who are shutting down.
O God, you love them all. Hold them too in the palm of YOUR hand.

**As we seek a future stretching toward the seven generations,
Help us preserve all that is life-giving.
Help us see that our actions today are in fact the seeds of life for tomorrow.
Help us to care for creation, and also for one another.
We pray all these things with great love,
trusting your love to hold us as we pray, AMEN**

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, AMEN.**

We Listen to Together

SCRIPTURE READING:

John 15: 9 – 17

(The Message version)

"I've loved you the way my Father has loved me. Make yourselves at home in my love. If you keep my commands, you'll remain intimately at home in my love. That's what I've done—kept my Father's commands and made myself at home in his love.

"I've told you these things for a purpose: that my joy might be your joy, and your joy wholly mature. This is my command: Love one another the way I loved you. This is the very best way to love. Put your life on the line for your friends. You are my friends when you do the things I command you. I'm no longer calling you servants because servants don't understand what their master is thinking and planning. No, I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father.

"You didn't choose me, remember; I chose you, and put you in the world to bear fruit, fruit that won't spoil. As fruit bearers, whatever you ask the Father in relation to me, he gives you.

"But remember the root command: Love one another."

RESPONSE:

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

Thanks be to God!

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

We Respond to God's Word

Call to Order

Opening Motions

- a) Establishment of quorum**
- b) Nomination and Election of Meeting Chairperson**
- c) Nomination and Election of Meeting Secretary**
- d) Motion regarding temporal matters: Mover/Seconder: that adherents, people who are active in the life and work of Grace United Church but are not members, be given the ability to speak to the meeting and vote on temporal matters.**
- e) Motion regarding agenda: Mover/Seconder: that the agenda for this meeting be approved.**
- f) Motion regarding minutes of Annual Congregational Meeting March 5, 2023**
 - i. Attendees at the 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting**
 - ii. Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting March 5, 2023**

- g) Mover/Seconder: that the minutes of the congregational meeting of March 5, 2023 be approved as circulated.

Questions and Reflections on the Annual Report for 2023

In Memoriam

***HYMN: VU # 494**

Those Hearts That We Have Treasured (vs. 1&2)

*1. Those hearts that we have treasured,
those lives that we have shared,
those loves that walked beside us,
those friends for whom we've cared,
their blessing rests upon us,
their life is memory,
their suffering is over,
their spirits are set free.*

*2. They still give hope and comfort,
they did not lose the fight,
they showed us truth and goodness,
they shine into our night.
Remember days of gladness;
remember times of joy;
remember all the moments
that grief can not destroy.*

New Business

- a) Nominations Report
- b) Adoption of Slate of Nominees
- c) Grace United Church Thornbury Marriage Policy
- d) Motion about the date of the next Annual Congregational Meeting, to be held on _____,
or at the call of the Chair of the Congregation, or the Minister. Proposed Board and
Committee Members for 2024.
- e) It is moved that the congregation of Grace United Church Thornbury approve the new
Marriage Policy as drafted by the Affirming Ministry Leadership Group and approved by the
Church Board for the congregation's consideration.

f) Moved that Grace United Church support and affirm the establishment of an Autonomous National Indigenous Organization, as proposed in Remit 1, and approve the appropriate changes needed in the Basis of Union.

g) Grace United Church Staff

h) Grace Goals for 2024

- i. Support social justice issues in our Church and community with a focus on green initiatives, becoming an Affirming Ministry, and promoting Georgian Bay Home Share
- ii. Strengthen spiritual growth and care within the congregation
- iii. Increase the recognition and profile of Grace United Church within the community
- iv. Recruit a new minister

j) Budget 2024

Covenanting with the Elected Board Members and Goals of the Congregation

Church Board Motion

Mover/Seconder: that the Church Board be granted interim powers to conduct emergent business from the close of this meeting until the next Annual meeting of the Congregation on _____.

Declaration of Closing of Meeting

We Go Out to Serve

***HYMN:** VU # 420 Go To The World

1. *Go to the world! Go into all the earth.*

*Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,
baptising as the sign of our rebirth.*

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

2. *Go to the world! Go into every place.*

*Go live the Word of God's redeeming grace.
Go seek God's presence in each time and space.*

Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

3. *Go to the world! Go struggle, bless and pray;
the nights of tears give way to joyous day.*

*As servant Church, you follow Christ's own way.
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

4. *Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,
for I am with you 'til the age shall end,*

**when all the hosts of glory cry 'Amen!'
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

***GRACE BEFORE LUNCH**

***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:

**" Six Variations on a Swiss Theme"
L. van Beethoven**

LITURGY SOURCES:

Opening Prayer: written by Rev. John G Smith.

HYMNS and SUNG VERSES:

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SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Scripture Passage from the Message

Prelude: "Little Preludes" (selected) J.S. Bach

Postlude: " Six Variations on a Swiss Theme" L. van Beethoven