

**EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH**  
**First Sunday In Lent**  
**February 22, 2026**

**Gathering In Community**

**Special Guest:** Máté Szigeti, Flute

**Prelude** Serenade by F. Schubert

**Choir Introit** Lord, Lift Up Our Hearts by W. M. Harris

**Peace Greeting:** Even Christ was tempted in the wilderness. Turn to your neighbour, who suffers as you do from daily temptation, and offer signs of Christ's peace.

The Peace of Christ be with you

**And also with you**

**Opening Hymn** Throughout These Lenten Days and Nights  
VU: 108

**Territorial Acknowledgement** Callie Archer

We gather today on this sacred soil of the Anishinaabe Peoples, the Haudenosaunee Peoples, the Huron-Wendat Peoples, and the Mississaugas of the Credit Nation. For thousands of years these people lived on this land, honouring the Creator and living in harmony with creation. We acknowledge their stewardship and relationship with the land, its plants and animals, the lakes and streams and their life forms throughout the ages. We accept the responsibility we have to nurture and protect this legacy. We seek to live in right relations with all.

## **Announcements**

Reverend Jan

## **Words of Welcome**

## **Theme Introduction**

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

## **Call to Worship**

In the wilderness of life, we are not alone.  
God is with us.  
On the challenging paths, God's guidance is ours.  
We will walk in God's ways of wisdom and truth.  
Come to listen.  
Come to learn.  
Come into God's presence,  
where you will find grace for the journey  
and love to sustain you.  
Come, let us begin our Lenten journey together!

## **Opening Prayer**

Walk with us, faithful traveller,  
as we journey with Christ  
through the season of Lent.  
Help us to overcome the temptations we face  
each and every day.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and send your angels to minister to us  
in times of weakness.  
Raise us to newness of life,  
through the gift of your Spirit  
and the love of Christ Jesus, our Lord.  
Amen

**Hymn**

Don't Be Afraid (sung several times)

MV: 90

## Seeking to Grow Spiritually

### Prayer for Illumination

Callie Archer

Loving God,

you have planted roots of faith, hope, and love  
deep in our souls.

We pray that these roots will be planted so strongly  
that we will be like trees planted by water.

As we hear your Word today,  
may your streams of blessing flow  
in and through us  
to nourish others along the way.

Amen

### Hebrew Testament Reading

New Revised Standard Version

#### Genesis 2: 15-17; 3: 1-7

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. <sup>16</sup>And the Lord God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, <sup>17</sup>but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?" <sup>2</sup>The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, <sup>3</sup>but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' " <sup>4</sup>But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, <sup>5</sup>for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and

you will be like God, [\[a\]](#) knowing good and evil.” <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

### **Gospel Reading** **Matthew 4: 1-11**

**New Revised Standard Version**

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tested by the devil. <sup>2</sup> He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterward he was famished. <sup>3</sup> The tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” <sup>4</sup> But he answered, “It is written,

‘One does not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’ ”

<sup>5</sup> Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, <sup>6</sup> saying to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

‘He will command his angels concerning you,’

and ‘On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.’ ”

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ ”

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, <sup>9</sup> and he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall

down and worship me.”<sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! for it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’ ”

<sup>11</sup> Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

**May God bless this reading of the Holy Word to our insight  
and understanding. Herein is Wisdom.  
Thanks be to God. Amen**

**Gift of Music**            Chopin: Variations of a theme by Rossini  
based on the Aria “Non Piu Mesta: from La Cenerentola.”

**Message**    Reflections for Black History Month    Reverend Jan

**Hymn**                      Forty Days and Forty Nights                      VU: 114

## **Service of Communion**

### **Invitation to Communion**

**Hymn to Begin Communion**    All Who Hunger (vs 1,2) VU:460

### **Communion Service**

**Hymn following Communion** All Who Hunger (vs 3)    VU:460

## **Responding In Care**

### **Invitation to the Offering**

**Doxology**    Your Work, O God, Needs Many Hands    VU: 537

### **Offering Prayer**

**Although we do not live by bread alone,  
we do need food to sustain us.**

**Although we do not yearn for injury or illness,  
they do come our way from time to time,  
and we do need healing.**

**Bless our gifts  
that they may be sustenance and healing  
for those in need.**

**Bless us to be sustenance and healing for the world.  
In Jesus' name we pray  
Amen**

## **Reaching Out In Love**

**Closing Hymn**      O Jesus, I Have Promised      VU: 120

**Commissioning**

**Extinguishing the Christ Candle**

**Benediction**

**Three-fold Amen**

**Postlude**      Swiss Shepherd      by Pietro Morlacchi

**Worship Resources:** *Gathering Magazine Lent/Easter, 2026 Year A* (page 10, 29-30); *Abingdon Worship Annual 2026* (pages 41-44); *Feasting On the Word: Year A, Volume 2*, (pages 26-44); *Texts For Preaching: A Lectionary Commentary Based on the NRSV – Year A* (pages 182-191). Used with Permission.

## **EAST PLAINS UNITED CHURCH AFFIRM STATEMENT**

We celebrate the richness of our community when we have diversity in age, gender identity, racial/cultural backgrounds, economics, class, sexual orientation, and family configurations fully participating in all aspects of the life and work at East Plains United Church. We commit to continuing education to promote understanding and create a safe environment for all.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Christian Education thanks everyone who contributed to the success of our Valentine's Bake Sale & Lunch: to those who baked and bought the wonderful assortment of baked goods; to those who prepared the food for lunch; to those who decorated the hall, plus Theo 😊

We are very pleased to report that approximately \$1,200 was raised. This money will go towards the education of our student Joseph Wasswa, who is in his 4<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school in Uganda.

### Next Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> will be a Celebration of Scouting in Aldershot for 65 years!

Our guest preacher will be Rev Bruce Dickson as Rev Jan has another commitment. A light lunch will be prepared for all to enjoy following the service in Peart Hall.



**SOLO presents AIDA on Mar 7 at 7:30 pm at the Burlington Performing Arts Centre**  
Tickets at <https://burlingtonpac.ca>  
<https://southernontariolyricopera.com>

**WORLD DAY OF PRAYER**—On Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm, St. Matthew On-The-Plains will be hosting this annual event. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**



**NOTE:** *Thank you from the Ferguson family for your prayers and expressions of sympathy on the death of Duncan (Joyce Smith.)*

The Community Connections Ad-Hoc Team has been exploring ways to use our building space more effectively to serve the wider community.

On Thursday, April 16th (afternoon), we will partner with Community Development Halton to host a **Community Connections Event in Peart Hall.**

Local non-profit and grassroots organizations will gather to identify community needs and explore how our space might support their programs and services.

Please stay for Coffee today to learn more, mark your calendars and support this event with your prayers.

### Jan's Journal



Unfortunately, the Ash Wednesday service had to be cancelled due to the inclement weather on February 18th. I feel as though I am watching a play and I have missed the opening act! Without an Ash Wednesday service and the experience of the marking of a cross on my forehead, it feels to me as though a very important grounding for my journey through Lent is missing.

As we begin Lent, we come prepared to cleanse our souls and purge our spirits of all impurities. We ask for God's blessing, and God's gift of love and mercy, a sign as we commit to our willingness to walk with Christ through difficulties and challenges, pain and suffering.

Our journey through Lent is not intended as a time of guilt. It is intended as an opportunity to examine our lives in terms of our relationship with God. What might I change in my life in order to walk more closely with God?

As I burned the palm fronds from last Palm Sunday on the weekend, I thought of the symbolism of my action. Through God's love and guidance, the errors I have made during the past year have been turned to ashes and blown away in the breeze. I am free to begin again, implementing the changes I need to make, as a result of my indiscretions. Rather than focusing on self-denial, let's focus on what we might gain through our Lenten journey.

Lent is not a season of penitence. It is a season of growing. Lent is not a season of guilt. It is a season of invitation. Lent is a journey of interior change during which we ask ourselves: "How then shall I live?" I encourage you to reflect on this as you embark on your personal journey through Lent this year.

#### News for this week:

- The Valentine's Lunch and Bake Sale was a great success last Sunday! Thank you to Pat Vollick, members of the Support Group, and all others who helped to make this event happen!
- The Community Connections Team has been very busy since last July exploring the goal of making the church building an asset in the Aldershot community. East Plains has partnered with Community Development Halton to plan and implement a community discussion, which we hope will help to identify the needs of the community and possible ways in which space at East Plains might be available to fulfill some of those needs. A Community "Round Table" discussion is planned for Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 p.m. in Peart Hall. Representatives of community-based organizations and programs will be invited to attend, but more importantly, you are invited to attend. In order for the congregation of East Plains to decide on a path forward, everyone needs

to be involved. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this very important event.

- As a preparation for this event, you are invited to stay following worship this Sunday (**February 22<sup>nd</sup>**) for refreshments in the Gathering Place. While you are enjoying the refreshments, the Community Connections Group will show a PowerPoint presentation, and explain the work that has been accomplished to date. Please plan to stay and bring your questions!!
- The church has been buzzing this week with plumbers, and representatives of the HVAC company, as well as insurance appraisers and a team of assessors for asbestos abatement. Gayle Burnison will have an update report for us soon.
- I will be away on **Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**. I am the Pastoral Charge Supervisor for Palermo United Church. The congregation will be holding their Annual Meeting for 2025 on March 1<sup>st</sup>. I must attend that meeting. Since I have not yet mastered the ability to be in two places at the same time, we were in need of someone to lead worship at East Plains that Sunday. As it happened, Dave Howard and Barbara Masfield contacted me to ask whether there could be **a special service to celebrate sixty-five years of Scouting in Aldershot**. They were hoping that the service could take place on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Consequently, plans are being made for this special service, which will be led by Reverend Bruce Dickson. I am sorry that I will miss it!

When I refer to 7<sup>th</sup> Aldershot Scouting, this includes Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Venturers. The Girl Guides of Canada have also had groups of Sparks, Embers, Guides, and Pathfinders who have met at East Plains. If you know of anyone who has been a leader or a participant in any of

these groups over the years, please invite them to come to worship on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The service will be followed by a lunch, which will be prepared and served by the East Plains Support Group.

- World Day of Prayer always takes place on the first Friday of March. This year, that is **March 6<sup>th</sup>**. The service for 2026 has been written by women of Nigeria. The service is celebrated all across the world. The service will take place at St. Matthew on the Plain Anglican Church, Burlington at 1:30 p.m.
- Would you be interested in learning more about Dementia? Horseshoe Falls Regional Council is offering a workshop on Dementia on **Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>** between 7-8:30 p.m. The presenter is Janet Kennedy. It is a Zoom presentation. If you are interested, you need to register to receive the Zoom link. You can do that on the Horseshoe Falls Regional Council website: [hfrucc.ca](http://hfrucc.ca)
- The Annual Meeting for 2025 will be held following worship on April 19, 2026. If you are the Chair of a Ministry Team, please submit a report for the Annual Report to the church office by the end of March. Please mark your calendars with this date and plan to attend the Annual Meeting following worship on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

You can reach me at: [revjanmcc@gmail.com](mailto:revjanmcc@gmail.com) or on my cell phone: 905-630-8202.

Blessings,

Pastor Jan