



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

March 22, 2026

Fifth Sunday in Lent

Find this service at www.graceunitedthornbury.ca/live

Leading us today in Worship:

Minister: Rev. Dr. Brian Goodings

Director of Music: Dr. Christopher Burton

Lay Reader: Sandy Eagles

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

Asterisk * Indicates when the congregation may stand if able.

Scripture for meditation: Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. John 11:1

We Gather Together in Community

PRELUDE:

"Gnossienne #1"- E. Satie

"A Stewardship Second:"

Our stewardship reflects our relationship with God; our relationship with God transforms our stewardship.

WELCOME:

Extinguishing Fifth Candle of Lent: Vu #144 (v.1)

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

***Oh! Sometimes it makes me tremble, tremble, tremble.
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?***

**OUR COMMITMENT to SAFER 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 safer, inclusive and generous space for all who are seeking a faith community. We offer full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, all races, ages and abilities in the life and work of the ministry.

In gratitude and respect, The United Church of Canada gathers, worships, and works on Indigenous lands across Canada.

LENTEN PRAYER:

(adapted from W. Brueggemann)

○ God, we ponder your wonders and cycles of creation.

We make our doxology as large as we can to match your massive quiet presence

But then in slow times and lesser venues we know you also to be the God of small parables:

**One widow and one orphan
One healing touch**

On good days, even when we feel small, we know your marvelous presence and quiet-crystal-voice.

It is in response that we pour out our lives and all that is precious in worship

We are grateful for your tiny-sparrow-graces that bespeak spring-life among us.

MELODY of ASSURANCE: VU # 288 (V.3)

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow-
Wondrous the portion thy blessings provide**

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
 Morning by morning new mercies I see;
 All I have needed thy hand hath provided-
 Great is thy faithfulness, ever to me!

***OPENING HYMN: VU #186 “Now the Green Blade Rises”**

- 1 *Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
 wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
 love lives again, that with the dead has been:
 love is come again, like wheat arising green.*

- 2 *In the grave they laid him, love by hatred slain,
 thinking that he would never wake again,
 laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen;
 love is come again, like wheat arising green.*

- 3 *Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,
 he that for three days in the grave had lain;
 raised from the dead, my living Lord is seen;
 love is come again, like wheat arising green.*

- 4 *When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
 your touch can call us back to life again,
 fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been;
 love is come again, like wheat arising green.*

Lighting the Children’s Lantern

Theme Conversation: *Springing to Life*

We Listen Together

SCRIPTURE READING: John 11: 1-45 (Story of Lazarus)

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This illness does not lead to death; rather, it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again? Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble because the light is not in them." After saying this, he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him." The disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right." Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him." Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews

had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary and told her privately, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It

was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upward and said, "Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Many of the Jews, therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

RESPONSE: VU #376 "*Spirit of the Living God*" (v. 1)

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
 Melt me, mould me, fill me, use me.
 Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

ANTHEM:

"Love Knocks and Waits" - D. C. Damon

SERMON: "*Grave Concerns*" Rev Brian Goodings

PASTORAL & LORD'S PRAYER:

***HYMN: MV #93 “What Calls Me from the Death”**

1. **What calls me from the death where I have rested?
Why am I now emerging from my tomb?
I sense that I am coming to be tested.
Is this my second birthing from the womb?**
2. **Now I can hear the voice of Jesus calling,
but it is not the Saviour's voice alone,
for others share their words as tears are falling.
Collectively, they roll away the stone.**
3. **The remnants of my past I now am shedding;
the bits of cloth that cling I now discard.
And in this new direction I am heading,
I know that I will find my own reward.**
4. **No matter that my tomb was of long standing,
that change seemed futile, out of reach for me.
If I accept the life that God is handing,
my blessing is a new identity.**

We Respond to God's Word

INVITATION to the OFFERING:

Today we are invited to be part of a resurrection story, a story to transform doubt into belief. We take this moment to share our resources, and consider these questions: what new life can come of our generosity? What role does faith in a living God play in our propensity to share? When we are called to act, to come out, how do we respond? Let us ponder these things and give generously to this community of faith, and to Mission and Service.

PRAYER of DEDICATION of OUR OFFERINGS:

God of life, breathe your spirit into these gifts, that they may bring hope in our congregation and community—in Canada, and across the world through the work we do with Mission and Service. In the name of him in whom we have light and life. Amen.

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Mail: Grace UC, 140 Bruce St. S. PO Box 219, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
or **Offering Plate at the back of the sanctuary.**

Tap your debit card at the door of the church, or Donate to Grace United Church Thornbury through **CanadaHelps.org**. Our account is set up with them now and it is easy to register. Tax receipts are given automatically at the time of giving.
Care, Prayer, Share

DEDICATION VERSE: VU # 579 (v.2)

**The church is wherever God’s people are helping,
Caring for neighbours in sickness and need.
The church is wherever God’s people are sharing
The words of the Bible in gift and in deed.**

What’s up at Grace?

We Begin our Service in the Name of Christ!

***Hymn Vu # 375 “Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness”**

Refrain:

**Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,
blow thro’ the wilderness calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness,
Wind, Wind on the sea.**

Wind, Wind on the sea.

**4 You call from tomorrow, you break ancient
schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow the captives dream dreams,
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes,
with bold new decisions your people arise.
Spirit, Spirit of gentleness,
blow thro' the wilderness calling and free,
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness,
stir me from placidness,
Wind, Wind on the sea.**

***COMMISSIONING,**

***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:

"Widmung" - R. Schumann

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Call to Worship: adapted from W. Brueggemann
Prayers written by Rev. Dr. Brian Goodings.

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Prelude: "Gnossienne #1" - E. Satie

Anthem: "Love Knocks and Waits" - Words and Music: D. C. Damon

Postlude: "Widmung" - R. Schumann

