

# *Welcome to Aurora United Church*

*...uniting hearts and hands on the journey.*



## *LENT 1*

*Wilderness Wanderings: Caring for God's Creation*

*Honouring Black History Month*

*February 21, 2021*

*We sing of Jesus, a Jew, born to a woman in poverty in a time of social upheaval and political oppression. He knew human joy and sorrow. So filled with the Holy Spirit was he that in him people experienced the presence of God among them. We sing praise to God incarnate. (A Song of Faith. A Statement of Faith. UCC, 2008)*

**SEEKING GOD TOGETHER**

**PRELUDE** Create In Me (T.Talbot) The Acappella Company YouTube

**WELCOME & CONGREGATIONAL LIFE**

**PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP** *Lighting of the Christ Candle*

***Acknowledgment of Territory***

*As we come into worship today, we acknowledge that we reside and worship on the traditional lands of the people of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation... and acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

In the beginning, when God created,  
God looked at the world and ‘called it good.’

**Even now, God is creating, calling us to  
join the work of making the world good.**

Earth and water and air, plants and animals  
and people, made from dirt and word and love.

**God gifts us all of this and more, so that  
we can glorify and enjoy God forever.**

Come, let us step onto the Lenten path together,  
mindful of God’s intent for the world and us...

**following Jesus through this time of great  
challenge.**

We are not alone.

**We are not alone.**

**HYMN** Sing Praise to God, Who Reigns Above (G.E.Harkness) VU 216

Sing praise to God, who reigns above, the God of all creation,  
the God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation;  
with healing balm my soul is filled, and every faithless murmur stilled:  
to God all praise and glory!

What God's almighty power hath made, God's gracious mercy keepeth:  
by morning glow or evening shade God's watchful eye n'er sleepeth;  
within the shelter of God's might, lo! all is just and all is right:  
to God all praise and glory!

Our God is never far away, but through all grief distressing,  
an every-present help and stay, our peace, and joy, and blessing;  
as with a mother's tender hand, God gently leads the chosen band:  
to God all praise and glory!

Thus all my gladsome way along, I sing aloud thy praises  
that all may hear the grateful song my voices unwearied raises.  
Be joyful in your God, my heart! Both soul and body take your part:  
to God all praise and glory!

***LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY*** Jen, Damien, Sabrina & Alexis Hanna

Between his baptism and the beginning of his adult ministry,  
Jesus went into the wilderness for forty days 'to be tested.'

***The desert is a dangerous place and Jesus was hungry, cold  
and tired. He was also tempted and tormented, but he didn't  
give up.***

When things get tough, how do we remember God  
is there for us?

*(The first Lenten candle is extinguished.)*

*Let us pray...*

**God of wilderness places and the places of our lives, we step  
onto the Lenten path as pilgrims travelling your road together  
through death to resurrection. You meet us with arms filled with  
bread to eat and water to drink; you place your loving hand on our  
shoulder and remind us that we are never alone in you. Amen.**

**SUNG RESPONSE** Tree of Life and Awesome Mystery (*M.Haugen*) VU 121

**From the dawning of creation,  
you have loved us as your own;  
stay with us through all temptation,  
make us turn to you alone,  
make us turn to you alone.**

**THEME STORY** What is Lent? (FUMC Westfield Youth) YouTube

### **FINDING GOD TOGETHER**

**SCRIPTURE** Genesis 9:8-17 (The covenant between God and Noah.) NRSV  
Holly Williamson

<sup>8</sup>Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, <sup>9</sup>“As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, <sup>10</sup>and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. <sup>11</sup>I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

<sup>12</sup>God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: <sup>13</sup>I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup>When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. <sup>16</sup>When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” <sup>17</sup>God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

**GIFT OF MUSIC** “How Can I Keep From Singing” (*arr. Arnold Sherman*)  
Ontario Guild of Handbell Ringers. (OGEHR) Virtual Project, including AUC  
handbell ringers: Lisa Kyriakides, Anne Ella Arnold, Joyce Hagarty, Pat Innes, Jennifer Schafer,  
Nancy Birtch, Laura Wells, Sue Linley.

**GOSPEL** Mark 1:9-15 (The baptism, temptation, and mission of Jesus.) NRSV

<sup>9</sup>In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. <sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased." <sup>12</sup>And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup>He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him. <sup>14</sup>Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup>and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

*Come to the quiet...a time for reflection*

## **SERMON** Wandering in Place

**HYMN** Jesus, Tempted in the Desert (*H.Stuempfle*) VU 115

Jesus tempted in the desert, lonely, hungry, filled with dread:  
'Use your power,' the tempter tells him, 'turn these barren rocks to bread!'  
'Not alone by bread,' he answers, 'can the human heart be filled.  
Only by the Word that calls us is our deepest hunger filled!'

Jesus tempted at the temple, high above its ancient wall:  
'Throw yourself from lofty turret; angels wait to break your fall!'  
Jesus shuns such empty marvels, feats that fickle crowds request:  
'God whose grace protects, preserves us, we must never vainly test.'

Jesus, tempted on the mountain by the lure of vast domain:  
'Fall before me! Be my servant! Glory, fame, you're sure to gain!'  
Jesus sees the dazzling vision, turns his eyes another way:  
'God alone deserves our homage! God alone will I obey!'

When we face temptation's power, lonely, struggling, filled with dread,  
Christ, who knew the tempter's hour, come and be our living bread.  
By your grace, protect, preserve us lest we fall, your trust betray.  
Yours, above all other voices, be the Word we hear, obey.

**SHARING GOD'S LOVE**

*A Statement about the gifts we bring in worship for the life of the church....*

**OFFERTORY PRAYER**

**PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LORD'S PRAYER**

**HYMN** Creator God You Gave Us Life *(J.Snowdon) MV 27*

Creator God you gave us life, your image formed within our souls,  
yet through the mist of time and space, we search for that which makes us whole.

*Through hands that paint majestic skies, and voices chanting melody,  
with words that reach beyond the page, we comprehend your mystery.*

In every flower and every tree, we see your great diversity,  
yet greater still we see your love, expressed in our humanity.

*Through hands that paint majestic skies, and voices chanting melody,  
with words that reach beyond the page, we comprehend your mystery.*

When with our hearts, our hands and minds, we share our gifts with all the world,  
our spirits soar beyond the veil, to touch the very face of God.

*Through hands that paint majestic skies, and voices chanting melody,  
with words that reach beyond the page, we comprehend your mystery.*

**COMMISSIONING & BLESSING**

As we travel on this Lenten journey,  
**we know that God leads and guides us.**

As we travel on this Lenten journey,  
**we dream and work with the Spirit for a world  
where peace and harmony are restored.**

We bless each other today,  
**held in the love and peace of God.**

And now, let us go gladly into the world as we are able...  
to be filled with the love of God. Dance to the song of the Spirit  
and reflect the Christ in each new day. Amen.

**POSTLUDE** My Soul Has Been Anchored in the Lord (*D. Miller*)  
Fisk Jubilee Singers



The United Church of Canada acknowledges that its buildings and ministries, from coast to coast to coast  
are on traditional Territories of Indigenous Peoples.



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***Participating in Worship today...***

Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar

Jen, Damien, Sabrina & Alexis Hanna/ bell-ringers, Lisa Kyriakides, Anne Ella Arnold,  
Joyce Hagarty, Pat Innes, Jennifer Schafer, Nancy Birtch, Laura Wells, Sue Linley/  
Holly Williamson.

***With thanks to...*** Noah Comar, videographer, and to Bob Kyriakides,  
video editor...and to all who are filming at home in order to participate  
in worship in some way! ☺

**The hymn recordings today are from...**

More Voices, audio CD (U.C.C., 2007), YouTube