

Welcome to Aurora United Church

...uniting hearts and hands on the journey.



Hill of Crosses-- Jurgaiciai, Lithuania

LENT 4

Wilderness Wanderings: Caring for God's Creation

March 14, 2021

When our broken love is the only love we can have, we are easily thrown into despair, but when we can live our broken love as a partial reflection of God's perfect, unconditional love, we can forgive one another our limitations and enjoy together the love we have to offer. (Henri Nouwen)

SEEKING GOD TOGETHER

PRELUDE God So Loved the World (*J. Stainer*)
Te Deum Chamber Choir/Matthew Christopher Shepard, conductor.
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception—Kansas City, Missouri

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

As long nights give way to light
and winter sleep to fresh beginnings,
we come to worship
to be reminded of God's love for us.
Like the green shoots of renewed life,
stirring beneath the soil,
we welcome an awakening
of God's word in our lives.
Awake to the moving of God's
Spirit in creation in the season of Lent
and in all time,
we bring our care and our love
for the Earth, for its people,
and for one another.
Let us worship!

HYMN Sing Your Praise to God Eternal VU 244

Sing your praise to God eternal, sing your praise to God the Son,
sing your praise to God the Spirit, living and forever One.
God has made us, God has blessed us, God has called us to be true.
God rules over all creation, daily making all things new.

Join the praise of every creature, sing with singing birds at dawn;
when the stars shine forth at night-fall, hear their heavenly antiphon.
Praise God for the light of summer, autumn glories, winter snows,
for the coming of the spring time and the life of all that grows.

Praise God on our days of gladness for the summons to rejoice;
praise God in our times of sadness for the calm, consoling voice.
God our Maker, strong and loving, Christ our Saviour, Leader, Lord,
living God, Creator, Spirit, be your holy name adored!

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY Charlotte & Isabelle MacLuckie

On this fourth Sunday in Lent we remember with
joy that God's ways are not our ways and that God's
ways will challenge all our well-laid plans.

(Fourth candle is extinguished.)

God helps us to see what is really important.

Let us pray...

**Compassionate God, help us to see with your eyes
and to love with your heart. Amen.**

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

**Gentle Jesus, mighty Spirit,
come inflame our hearts anew,
we may all your joy inherit
if we bear the cross with you,
if we bear the cross with you.**

THEME STORY What is Love? (*Samaritan's Purse*) YouTube

FINDING GOD TOGETHER

SCRIPTURE Ephesians 2:1-10 (Saved by grace.) NRSV Noah Comar

²You were dead through the trespasses and sins ²in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— ⁶and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

GIFT OF MUSIC The Seal Lullaby (*Rudyard Kipling/Eric Whitacre*)
The AUC Chancel Choir—200th Anniversary Concert, 2018

GOSPEL John 3:14-21 (For God so loved the world.) NRSV

¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. ¹⁷“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.”

Come to the quiet...a time for reflection

SERMON In God

HYMN Come Touch Our Hearts (*Gordon Light*) MV 12

Come touch our hearts that we may know compassion,
from failing embers build a blazing fire; love strong enough
to overturn injustice, to seek a world more gracious,
come touch and bless our hearts.

Come touch our souls that we may know and love you,
your quiet presence all our fears dispel; create a space
for spirit to grow in us, let life and beauty fill us,
come touch and bless our souls.

Come touch our minds and teach us how to reason,
set free our thoughts to wonder and to dream;
help us to open doors of understanding, to welcome
truth and wisdom, come touch and bless our minds.

Come touch us in the moments we are fragile,
and in our weakness your great strength reveal;
that we may rise to follow and to serve, steady now
our nerve, come touch and bless our wills.

Come touch us now, this people who are gathered,
to break the bread and share the cup of peace;
that we may love you with our heart, our soul, our mind,
our strength, our all, come touch us with your grace.

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 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (C.Wesley/R.H.Prichard) VU 333

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation
enter every trembling heart.

Come almighty to deliver;
let us all thy grace receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee,
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

COMMISSIONING & BLESSING

And now, may the God of creation
create in us new hope for the future.

**May the Christ of the common road
guide our every step,**

and may the Spirit of Compassion
instill in us a deep sense of caring
for everyone we meet.

Amen.

POSTLUDE My Song is Love Unknown (*J. Ireland/D. Cherwien*)
The Choir of Kings College, Cambridge



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
Charlotte & Isabelle MacLuckie, Noah Comar, The AUC Chancel Choir

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* (The United Church
of Canada, 2007), *Voices United Accompaniment Collection Volume 1* (performed by
Lydia Pedersen, The United Church of Canada, 2009) and YouTube