

SEEKING GOD TOGETHER

PRELUDE Trumpet Voluntary (*J. Stanley arr. C. Seipp*)
Tim Birtch & Margaret Wolf, trumpets

WELCOME & CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

Lighting of the Christ Candle

Acknowledgment of Territory/Every Child Matters
Mary Munro

INTROIT There Is a Time (*C. McDade arr. L. Pedersen*)

CALL TO WORSHIP

As we travel this Lenten pathway,
we journey together, a community of faith.

**As we travel the Way of Jesus,
we journey together, but also alone.**

Practicing our faith:

living Christ's call

to love God with all that we are,

to love our neighbour

as we love ourselves.

Practicing our faith in gratitude,

we are stewards on the Way.

(Richard Bott, adapted.)

***HYMN** Soil of God, You and I (*Hannah/Melhorn-Boe*)
MV 174

Soil of God, you and I, stand ready to bear
seeds of faith nourished by God's tender care.
Growing in everyone for here God is found.
All stand together, we are...Holy ground.

Soil of God, you and I, now ready to be
part of God's promise, for others to see.
Open to everyone for here God is found.
All stand together, we are...Holy Ground.

Soil of God, you and I, now called to rebirth,
joining as partners with all of the earth.
Living in harmony for here God is found.
All stand together, this is...Holy ground.

LENTEN CANDLE LITURGY

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 life is difficult, how do we remember
that God is always with 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
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.**

FINDING GOD TOGETHER

RESPONSIVE READING Psalm 25 p.7
(Lead me in your truth, O God.) Paula Hanna

ANTHEM Kyrie (*Sherri Porterfield*)

GOSPEL Mark 1:9-15 p.34-35 *Pew Bible NT*
(The baptism, temptation, and mission of Jesus.)

Come to the quiet...a time for reflection

SERMON Into the Wild

***HYMN** Jesus, Tempted in the Desert p.7-8

SHARING GOD'S LOVE

OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

OFFERTORY Mein Sehnen, mein Wähnen
(Pierrot's Tanzlied) from Die Tote Stadt (Erich Korngold)
Ocean Yin, Baritone

***DEDICATION** Christ Has No Body Now but Yours
MV 171 **Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands but yours. Here on this earth,
yours is the work, to serve with the
joy of compassion.**

***OFFERTORY PRAYER & Prayer Shawl Blessing**

PRAYER PRELUDE Let My Spirit Always Sing MV 83
**Let my spirit always sing, to your Spirit answering,
through the silence, through the pain know my hope
is not in vain, like a feather on your breath
trust your love, through life and death.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE & LORD'S PRAYER
VU p.910

***HYMN** O Jesus, I Have Promised p.

***COMMISSIONING**

And now, may God give us strength for the journey;
may Christ give us direction for our lives;
and may the Spirit give us hope in abundance
for the days ahead.

***SUNG BLESSING** May the Love of the Lord *MV 218*
May the love of the Lord rest upon your soul.
May God's love dwell in you, throughout every day.
May God's countenance shine upon you and be
gracious to you. May God's Spirit be upon you
as you leave this place.

POSTLUDE Trumpet Voluntary (*W.Boyce arr. C.Seipp*)
Tim Birtch & Margaret Wolf, trumpets

What is Lent?

The season of Lent is preparation for Easter. The word
'Lent' refers to the lengthening days at this time of the year in
our part of the world. The season begins on Ash Wednesday
and lasts for 40 days (excluding the Sundays) recalling the
Israelites wandering for 40 years in the desert and the 40 days
Jesus spent in the wilderness.
The liturgical season of Lent is a time when Christians around
the world prepare their spirits for the commemoration of
Jesus' resurrection into our hearts and lives.



Mission and Service

Empowering Women and Families with Diversified Farming

For International Development Week 2024 (February 4-10) The United Church of Canada highlights Mission and Service Partners who are contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

My name is Doreen Mwende. I am 23 years old. I am married and have one lovely girl child who is now six. I live with my husband, two sisters-in-law, and my mother-in-law. My husband has just been employed as a teacher in one of the secondary schools in Tharaka, and I am a farmer.

I had my first farm in January 2016; it was almost one acre. I had no idea what farming was in particular. I cleared everything from the land, burnt crop residues to make it clean, and made sure I ploughed my land at the start of every season. My first harvest was terrible—I harvested just one 90 kg bag of cowpeas even after some good rains. I persisted for the next two seasons until I saw my sister-in-law, who had joined National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) training, covering her soil with stalks from the previous harvest and digging some planting basins for planting maize. At the end of the season, the harvest really repaid her work. The following season I started copying from her, and my harvest started improving. I had no idea what I was copying from my sister-in-law was part of conservation agriculture (CA).

In August 2018 the NCCCK team visited, and I was chosen for training. I incorporated what I learned, and my harvest became stable. Yields increased from one 90 kg bag to three 270 kg bags. I was able to raise the amount needed to connect my land to irrigation water (80,000 ksh), and this helped me produce even during the off season. In 2020, during COVID, I had my sisters-in-law at home, and I actively involved them in the farm. The harvest was nice and we were able to buy a plot of land. I also bought a cow that has given birth to two calves in the past two years.

I also learned about other activities from NCCCK staff, such as kitchen gardening and poultry keeping. During the dry season, I irrigate some crops around my house, like onions, sugarcane, kale, and banana trees. This has continuously provided green and fresh foods for my family. I also started poultry keeping, and I can easily sell chickens to fund my planting, weeding, and pest control.

I feel economically empowered as a woman, as my contributions to the family is felt. My husband now comfortably pays the school fees for my sisters-in-law, since I can feed the family. NCCCK has mentored me from a young, shy girl to a big, courageous woman who can now take part in leadership in the community. I now feel that even if the NCCCK conservation agriculture project phases out today, I personally would sustain a lot of what I have learned from them.



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



AURORA UNITED CHURCH



An Affirming Congregation

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Rev. Lorraine Newton-Comar & Rev. Andrew Comar
Music Coordinator—Margaret Heney



LENT 1
Honouring Black History Month
February 18, 2024
11:00 AM

The desert waits, ready for those who come, who come obedient to the Spirit's leading; or who are driven, because they will not come any other way. The desert waits, ready to let us know who we are—the place of self-discovery. (Ruth Burgess)

RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 25

R To you, O god, I lift my soul, to you I lift my soul.

To you, O God, I lift my soul; my God, in you I trust.
Let me not be put to shame, nor let my foes gloat over me.

**Let none who wait for you be shamed;
let them be shamed who wantonly break faith,**

Show me your ways; teach me your paths.

**Lead me in your truth and teach me;
for you are God my saviour.
For you I wait all the day long. R**

Remember your mercy, O God, and your steadfast love, for they are as old as time.

**Do not remember the sins and offences of my youth.
According to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O God? R**

You are upright and good, O God, therefore you show the path to those who go astray.

You guide the humble to do what is right, and teach the lowly your way.

All your ways are loving and sure

**for those who keep your covenant
and commandments. R**

Jesus, Tempted in the Desert

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 stilled!'

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.

O Jesus, I Have Promised

O Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; remain for ever near me, my Saviour and my friend: I shall not fear the journey if you are by my side, nor wander from the pathway if you will be my guide.

O let me feel you near me: the world is ever near; I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear; my foes are ever near me, around me and within; but, Jesus, then draw nearer and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear you speaking in accents clear and still, above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will; O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control; now speak, and make me listen, O guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, you have promised to all who follow you, that where you are in glory your servant shall be too. And Jesus, I have promised to serve you to the end; O give me grace to follow, my Saviour and my friend.

