Merging Waters United Church

Sunday Morning Worship

"LENT V"

Sunday, March 17, 2024

WELCOME / BIENVENUE

People of all ages, identities, and walks of life are welcome.	Toutes et tous sont bienvenus, peu importe l'âge, l'identité ou les conditions de vie.
Wherever you are, whoever you are, we welcome you in love and community to worship.	Peu importe où que vous soyez, qui que vous soyez, nous vous accueillons dans l'amour et la communauté pour louer Dieu ensembles.
Wherever we are, we're close in one another's hearts.	Notre amour n'est jamais limité par la distance.

Please join in the responses in **bold text.**

Keep our worship scent-free! To help fellow worshippers with chemical sensitivities, please do not wear perfume or scented products (lotion, hair spray) if attending in person.

To protect personal privacy, please do not take photos or videos without authorization.

LIFE AND WORK OF THE PEOPLE

ACKNOWLEDGING TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

One: Creator, we come together today as diverse, united peoples to give thanks to you, Maker of Heaven and Earth.
All: We come to listen, to learn, to sing and pray, to consider our place in the order of things you have created and are creating.
One: It is right and good to give thanks for the land on which we stand, for this is wisdom we learn from Indigenous peoples of this land—that we are one with the earth, its waters, air, animals, and plants.
All: Such wisdom, our interdependence with all life, is something too easy to forget in our busy lives! It is a gift and a challenge to us to remember.
One: And so, we take time to acknowledge the lands on which we now live.
All: Many of us have come from other places, arriving from distant shores, our families arriving years ago or some of us more recently. When settlers came, they were met by others who were already here, already knew these lands, already lived rich and full lives based on ancient and proud cultures.
One: Let us take time to name the peoples of this land now.

Kanienkeha: ka

Anishinaabe

Huron-Wendat

O God, as we acknowledge the peoples who have lived on and stewarded these lands since time immemorial, and their continued claims to the land, help us to become neighbours that we might live together in better ways.
All: For we are all kin in Christ, "All My Relations," with each other and this earth, its waters, air, animals, and plants.

MUSICAL CENTERING MV # 7

Gather Us In

THE LIGHT AT OUR CORE

Light a candle at home if you wish!

Lest we think that Lent is only a sombre time, let us remember that it is also a rich and abundant time. Just as the desert is not a barren place but, in fact, a very fertile yet largely unknown place, Lent provides opportunities for us to see and experience incredible abundance and extravagance. Too often, we miss these moments because they appear alongside difficulties and sadness.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: After the dormancy of winter,
People: new growth springs to life.

Leader: The birds return from their southern home.
People: Buds emerge on the trees as they discover again the warmth of the earth.
Leader: Crocuses and other early spring flowers begin to carpet the land as it throws off its wintry coating.
People: The creation awakens to the possibilities of spring.
Leader: Life shows itself in every corner of the earth.
People: God is our Creator, who continues to create in the rhythm of life we call the seasons.

Leader: Come let us worship. Come let us enter into the Spirit of God's creative moments. Come let us sow the seeds of new life.

Adapted from Miles J. Russell, "Seeds of Life," Mandate *41:2 (May 2010), pp. 17–18. Used with permission of* Mandate.

SONG: **Voices United #703–** In the Bulb There is a Flower

PRAYER OF APPROACH

Prayer of Confession
(inspired by John 12:20-33)

Lord, we confess that we love our lives as they are.
We struggle with even the *idea* of change.
We wrestle with the thought of doing things differently.
But we know that the life we cling to is only a half-life.
Only you, O Lord, can give us true life in full.
Forgive us for holding onto the wrong things.

Teach us by your Spirit to *let go* of our agendas and assumptions.
Help us to let go of our self-righteousness and false notions of power.
Give us the strength and courage to try new things.
Encourage us – and even push us –
to let go of ourselves so we can fully embrace you, Holy God.
We pray these things in the name of Christ Jesus. Amen.

~ written by Amy Loving, and posted on **The Worship Closet: The Place for Creative Worship Ideas.** http://worshipcloset.com/baptism-of-the-lord-sunday-year-b-words-for-worship/

Words of Assurance (Based on Psalm 51)

Hear this good news: God has mercy according to God's steadfast love. God restores in us the joy of salvation and sustains in us a willing spirit so that we may once more journey together with Christ.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

SCRIPTURE John 12:20-33

E.P.I.C. worship (Experiential, Participatory, Image-driven, and Connected)

APPLICATION FOR TODAY Making compost is a painful process

OFFERING

When we give, we are contributing to more than our own well-being. Also, our giving is not just to pay the bills and salaries. Our giving is something more. Our giving is a sign of commitment to participate in the work of God by watering the parched earth with our acts of caring and conservation, not only for our sake but for every person and creature of earth. Your gifts large and small bring about possibilities that are blessed by God. Please give by contribution online or by placing your offering in the offering plate.

Adapted from Kelly Sprinkle, in *Gathering*, Lent – Easter 2024, p. 35.

MUSICAL OFFERING Bringing in the Sheeves

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit" (John 12:25)
O Jesus, work in us so that we might live holy lives, bearing fruit for your coming kingdom.
May we hold loosely to our wealth and to our mortal lives upon the earth.
Through our offering this day, we seek to serve you and follow you. May it be so, as we pray in your name. Amen.

Taylor Croissant, in *Gathering*, Lent – Easter 2024, p. 35.

SONG: Voices United #409 **Morning Has Broken**

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY / PRAYERS OF JOY AND CONCERN

THE PRAYER OF JESUS / THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, **hallowed be thy name,** **thy kingdom come,** **thy will be done,** **on earth, as it is in heaven.** **Give us this day our daily bread,**	**Notre Père qui es aux cieux,** **que ton nom soit sanctifié,** **que ton règne vienne,** **que ta volonté soit faite** **sur la terre comme au ciel.**

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.	**Donne-nous aujourd'hui notre pain de ce jour. Pardonne-nous nos offenses comme nous pardonnons aussi à ceux qui nous ont offensés. Et ne nous soumets pas è la tentation, mais délivre-nous du mal. Car c'est à toi qu'appartiennent le règne, la puissance et la gloire, pour* les siècles des siècles. Amen.**

SONG: **More Voices #174 –** Soil of God, You and I

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

In every death, there is life – this is the big message of Lent and Easter. The grain of wheat will die and will, through death, grow to provide nourishment for others. In the death of relationships, of health, of faith, and of all that may be dear to us, there is always the invitation to deeper life. In our final death is the call to everlasting life.
As we go from this place, this is the message we trust, that, “in life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.”

Brad Cole, in *Gathering*, Lent – Easter 2024, p. 36.

May the love of the Creator, our Holy Parent,
The courage or Christ, our Brother,
And the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, our Companion,
Be with you this day and forever more.
Amen.

MUSICAL SENDING Hymn to Freedom

music by Oscar Peterson, words by Harriette Hamilton

Thank you for joining in worship today ♡

MERGING WATERS UNITED CHURCH

A community of caring within the United Church of Canada
24 Maple, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue
Lisa Byer-de-Wever, Pastor
Michael Woytiuk, Ministry of Music
Jo-Anne Windover, Office Administrator
office@mergingwaters.ca
(514) 457-5819
www.mergingwaters.ca

UPCOMING SERVICES at 10:30 a.m.

March 24 to 31	Holy Week! Please see the poster for all details
April 7	Second of Easter Communion