

St. James United Church

A Community of Friends in Faith
330 Elizabeth Ave, St. John's, NL A1B 1T9



The people of St. James United Church are eternal seekers who value diversity within our congregation, our city and all of society. We affirm each person's uniqueness and believe that all persons deserve to be valued, treated with equity, and respected. We are all children of God, walking many paths of spirituality.

Further, we proudly and publicly declare our commitment to practice radical hospitality and strive in every way to provide a safe and supportive place for all persons to participate in the worship and work of our church.

Guided by the teachings of Jesus, we embrace all persons, regardless of creed, race, age, ability, economic status, cultural and ethnic background, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, or any other difference that has led to marginalization or oppression.

March 27, 2022, Fourth Sunday in Lent

Leading Worship: Rev. James Ravenscroft
Accompanist: Amy Dalziel
Choral Leadership: Alba Chen and the Senior Choir

We Come to Worship

MUSICAL PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF CHRIST CANDLE

We light the candle as a sign of Christ's spirit both with and within us.

WELCOME: *We extend greetings in Innu-aimun, Mandarin and Tagalog.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND AND KINSHIP

We take time to give thanks for the land and the Indigenous peoples who continue to steward it; we also commit to be an inclusive community for all.

CENTRING REFRAIN: "Be Still and Know That I Am God" (anon)

Be still and know that I am God. (x3)

OPENING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: *Today we quiet our minds and hearts as we look for wisdom in the visual medium of art.*



CENTRING REFRAIN: "Be Still and Know That I Am God" (*anon*)

Be still and know that I am God. (x3)

OPENING PRAYER (*in unison*)

God of patient love,
may we learn from you the way of mercy,
for you are one who both awaits the wayward's return
and goes in search of the prideful,
eagerly embracing them both.
Soften our hearts, that we too may welcome all who seek
a place at the table of your unconditional love.
We pray in the name of the One accompanying us
on our way. Amen.

HYMN: "O God, How We Have Wandered" *Voices United* 112

1 O God, how we have wandered
and hidden from your face;
in foolishness have squandered
your legacy of grace.
But how, in exile dwelling,
we turn with fear and shame,
as distant but compelling,
you call us each by name.

2 And now at length discerning
the evil that we do,
by faith we are returning
with hope and trust in you.
In haste you come to meet us,
and home rejoicing bring,
in gladness there to greet us
with calf and robe and ring.

3 O God of all the living,
both banished and restored,
compassionate, forgiving,
our peace and hope assured.
Grant now that our transgressing,
our faithlessness may cease.
Stretch out your hand in blessing,
in pardon, and in peace.

We Share

OUR LIFE AND WORK

We acknowledge the connection between our work and worship as we announce what is going on in our congregation and community.

RECOGNITION OF OFFERINGS

We acknowledge the ways people contribute to the community of faith and wider community, especially by way of supporting St. James UC financially.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

ANTHEM: "God So Loved the World" (John Stainer)

We Listen

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: *We take time to acknowledge the places and situations in our lives where we need healing and forgiveness.*

SUNG VERSION OF PSALM 51

According to thy steadfast love have mercy, Lord, on me:
in thy compassion great, blot out all my iniquity.

Wash me from sin; completely cleanse me from iniquity,
for my transgressions I confess; my sin I ever see.

For thou desirest truth, O Lord, within the inward part;
thy wisdom, Lord, then may I learn; oh teach my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop; make me clean and whiter than the snow;
thy joy and gladness let me hear; thy healing let me know.

Blot out all my iniquities; thy face hide from my sin;
create in me a clean heart, Lord, a spirit right within.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

READINGS: Joshua 5:9-12

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

Excerpt from *The Story of a Soul* by Thérèse of Lisieux

CENTRING REFRAIN: "Be Still and Know That I Am God" (*anon*)

Be still and know that I am God. (x3)

MESSAGE: "A Tale of Two Brothers"

We Respond

HYMN: "God of Still Waiting" *More Voices* 20

1 God of still waiting,
God of deep longing,
God of the heart's true rest:
hold us in fathomless peace,
guard us with unwaning love.

2 Spirit of promise,
Spirit of purpose,
Spirit of ceaseless prayer:
bathe us in life full and free,
kindle our wonder and hope.

3 Word who comes to us,
Word who lives with us,
Word who disturbs and heals:
silence our chattering fears,
waken our unconscious faith.

4 Word true and faithful,
hope-bringing Spirit,
God of enfolding love:
come in your fullness and grace;
work through our lives for your praise.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

We take time to pray for the needs of our global and local communities, knowing that what we pray for we in turn are called to do something about.

THE PRAYER OF JESUS *(based on the spoken language of Jesus)*

Name of names, our small identity unravels in you; you give it back as a lesson. Help us let go, clear the space inside, so your Name comes to live. Let your counsel rule our lives, clearing our intention for co-creation. Help us love beyond our ideals with acts of compassion for all. Give us the food we need to grow each day; untangle the knots within so we can mend our hearts' ties with others. Don't let surface things delude us, but free us from what holds us back. From you is born all will, from age to age renewed. Amen.

We Leave to Serve

HYMN: "O Jesus I Have Promised" *Voices United 120*

1 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,
not wander from the pathway
if you will be my guide.

2 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.

3 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.

4 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.

BENEDICTION

One: As we go from here in this time of self reflection,

All: may we be blessed in seeking to know Jesus more deeply.

One: May we follow along the path he has walked before us,

All: arriving at Easter in a spirit of renewed love and joy.

MUSICAL POSTLUDE

St. James United Church

Lead Minister:	James Ravenscroft, OM
Youth/Christian Education Minister:	Susan Sheppard, DLM
Minister Emeritus:	Rev. Dr. Donovan Brown
Music Director:	Amy Dalziel
Associate Music Director:	Alba Chen
Technology Support:	Jake Thompson
Office Administrator:	Tracy Bishop
Church Custodian:	Bruce Winsor