

First United Church

March 17, 2024

10:30 a.m.

Fifth Sunday in Lent



Purpose: Building Relationships,
Living God's Transforming Love.

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Bulletin Art: "Colours of the Rainbow" by Cathie Stewart Savage

- Is a request to stand in body or in spirit

Prelude Rain Down Your Love on Your People & All are Welcome

arr. Mark Hayes

Listening as we Gather

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

One: We begin our service with gratitude and respect as we remember together that this land, this planet is sacred. We are on holy ground.

All: Earth is our only home, and we are related to it as part of the web of life.

One: We lament that we have not honoured our deep relationship with the earth. The climate crisis is one result of our overconsumption and wastefulness. We commit to learning and practicing better care for the earth.

For thousands of years, Indigenous people have walked on this land; their relationship with the land is at the centre of their lives and their spirituality. We are gathered on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Chonnoton, and Anishinaabe and acknowledge their stewardship of the land throughout the ages. We lament that we have not honoured their ways, nor their spirituality and we all live with the consequences.

All: We seek to live into right relationship with all Indigenous people with whom we share the land. We commit to listening to and respecting their wisdom.

Affirming Statement

Opportunities for Ministry and Fellowship

Centering

- **Introit** With Open Hearts (Refrain)

Mary-Ellen Kish

Lighting of the Christ Candle and procession of the Word

There once was someone who said such wonderful things and did some amazing things that people couldn't help but follow him. As they followed they asked lots of questions. Once they asked him who he was, and he said "I am the Light."

Affirm United resource

- **Call to Worship**

One: Gathered together, we proclaim the Good News of God publicly, intentionally, and explicitly: This community joyfully affirms God's love for 2SLGBTQIA people.

All: We worship our Maker, who delights in diversity;

One: The presence of God welcomes the fullness of who we are.

All: We Worship the Lover, who in Jesus reached out and accepted and embraced everyone, despite all social, class, ethnic and spiritual barriers.

One: We are people who desire. Who long. Who practice love in many ways.

We celebrate love that is platonic and love that is erotic.

Love that is queer and love that is collective.

**All: We are people who want to know and be known -
for who we've been, who we are, and who we are becoming.**

One: How wonderful are the many works of God's creative hand!

May all who long for Love's embrace feel their Holy worth.

**All: We Worship the Keeper, the Spirit who continues to break down the
walls that divide us. Thanks be to God!**

*Very Rev. Gary Paterson
Affirm United resource*

- **Opening Hymn** Though Ancient Walls

VU 691

Prayer of Approach

Opening Prayer

Prayer of Illumination

Listening For God's Word

- **Hymn** I Am the Light of the World

VU 87

A Story for the Young at Heart

Readings from Our Tradition

Jeremiah 31:31-34

(Reader: Nancy Lennox)

One: Herein Lies Wisdom.

All: Thanks Be To God.

Responsive Psalm 119:9-16 (VU 838 Part Two, Refrain 2)

John 12:20-33

One: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

All: Thanks Be To God.

Ministry of Music – Gallery Choir - Never the Blade Shall Rise - K.Powell
Karen Yeats, recorder

Reflection: Public-Intentional- Explicit

- **Hymn** My Love Colours Outside the Lines MV 138

Responding to God's Word

Call to Offering

Offertory True Colors by Cyndi Lauper
Lenny Muth - soloist

Dedication of Offering What Can I Do? MV 191

Prayer of Dedication

All: Beloved One, we offer our thanks for the holy witness in the lives of LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit people. In queer love and in trans and intersex bodies, we experience Christ enfleshed. In the faith of those who have been persecuted by the church, Christ is revealed. In the queer practices of community, of love that takes risks, and of telling the truth—even when it's costly—Christ lives on. In gratitude for these and all the sacred gifts of the LGBTQIA+ and Two-Spirit community, we give our thanks and offer these gifts. Amen.

Call to Prayer Take, O Take Me As I Am MV 85

Prayers of the People

One: Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

One: Parent, Teacher and Spirit...

We pray for those harmed by bad theology, carelessly spouted from pulpits, pews and dinner tables. We know that these ideas hurt and kill. Protect your children, God, surround them with a phalanx of strength and compassion. Raise up a community around them, our community, who will shield them under our wing. Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

One: We pray for those turned away from their homes because of who they are, who they love, or the ways they express their authentic selves. Open up new homes and communities for them where they are fully accepted. Draw them to you with the warm glow of your loving hearth. Raise up a new dwelling place for them, our community, who will welcome and embrace them as one of our own. Living and Loving God,

Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

One: We pray for those searching for their true self and purpose in a confusing world. Allow the person you created them to be to break through the noise and competition, allowing them to live fully into their intended self. Manifest in them your Spirit of confidence and creation. Raise up a mirror for them, our community, where they can see their wondrous self reflected. Living and Loving God,

Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of love.

One: Transform us, Creating and Recreating Spirit, in your ever-divine image. An image expressed in the diversity of the created world. Allow us not to be held back by past versions of ourselves, but to find liberation in the unfolding of our lives. While growing in us compassion and understanding for who we once were. Help us to honour our past, present and future selves. Living and Loving God,

Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

One: Reveal your radical Kin-dom, not just a little more each day, but in great sweeps of justice and mercy. Opening up new paths in front of us, strengthening our weary limbs when we feel rundown. We want to see your dream for our world revealed in our life time, Kin-dom come and will be done. We want to be a part of your Great Working of Love. Living and Loving God,

Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

One: We also name specific concerns and joys from our community now... [take time to name, silently or aloud, prayers from your community of faith and local context].

Living and Loving God,

All: May our mouths and hands be tools of justice.

The Lord's Prayer (A Paraphrase)

Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all. Loving God, in whom is heaven. The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the earth! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.

With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us. In times of temptation and test, spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.

- **Sending Hymn** All the Colors of the Rainbow

Carl P. Daw

Sending Forth and Benediction

- **Benediction Response** Amen

VU 967

Recession of the Light and Word

Postlude: Trumpet Tune on "Gather Us In"

M/Haugen/Mark Himmelman