

March 23 – Lent 3 Care and Compassion: Lost and Found

Gathering and Preparation

Prelude

***Welcome and Announcements before 10am**

10am Livestream Commences

Welcome (Camera Shot of Each Church?)

Check In: Tell a story about finding something/someone you had lost.

First up, the lost and found has gone missing. It itself, is lost. So please try not to lose anything until we find it. - Michael Scott

Rumi reminds us, "What you seek, is seeking you."

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us." – Helen Keller

"We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us." – Joseph Campbell

No matter how much light I carry within me, there will always be times of feeling lost, being confused, seeking direction. It is the way of the human heart. - Joyce Rupp

Acknowledgement of the Land and Commitment to Reconciliation:

Ahniin, We acknowledge that the land on which St. Paul's United Church is located is the traditional land of the Wendat and Anishinaabe First Nations. We wish to acknowledge also the land on which Knox United Church is situated. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Chippewas. We join Mt. Albert as they acknowledge the Huron-Wendat, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinabewaki peoples, who lived in harmony with this land long before our ancestors arrived from Europe.

Today, our meeting places are still home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, including the Metis, our neighbours on Christian Island, Beausoleil First Nation, and the Chippewas of Georgina Island. We are grateful to have the opportunity to worship and work on this land. We are all Treaty People.

This week, we honour Kahentísa's Alfred, who has embraced the complexity of her personal history. She has chosen to celebrate the fact that she is a Mohawk woman by participating in the Miss Indigenous Canada as well as her Irish heritage when she presented herself as a candidate for the court of the St. Patrick's Day Parade representing the Chateauguay Valley Irish Heritage Association.

We commit ourselves to walking in a new way together: a path of healing and hope. Chi-Meegwetch

Call to Worship

We come, because we seek God.

**Every morning, every day, every evening,
every moment, God is with us.**

We come, because we hunger for Christ.

**Jesus will feed us with hope,
will replace our emptiness with grace.**

We come, because we thirst for the Spirit.

**Who fills our yearning for peace,
who ends the drought of justice.**

So, let us worship in this space that God is creating,
where all are embraced.

Together we become beloved community.

(Adapted from Lectionary Liturgies by Thom Shuman)

Song of Praise: RHYTHM A'PEAL Handbell Quartet

"You Are My All in All" Composer Dennis Jernigan arr. by Sondra K. Tucker

Opening Prayer

Reader:

This week as we remember the Earth Hour challenge celebrated every year on March 22 (yesterday) we pray for ourselves in relationship with the earth.

Creating God,
You have called us to be in loving relations with all the Earth,
living with respect in creation, choosing love and seeking justice at all times.

Instead, humankind has acted in hateful ways, exploiting natural resources,
choosing power and seeking wealth in the present over future abundance.

We need your help to fight for a better future!

Help to reawaken our love for Creation, that is so magnificent that we, with all our creativity and knowledge, could never articulate it; and so passionate that we, with the personal price and communal cost, would still fight for it.

Help to deepen our relationships and love for each other:

Affirming the wisdom of youth strikers, so that we are not discouraged by empty platitudes and naysayers; and growing our community of allies, so that we can create a sustainable and faithful response to the imminent climate crisis.

For the sake of your majestic creation, and

For the love of all our relations. Help us to fight for a better future. Amen.

—A prayer for the Fridays for Future Climate Strike movement by Alydia Smith

Lighting of Christ Candle

Prayer:

As we light this Christ Candle,
may it remind us that Christ is in us and in our world.

Sung Response

Gather us in, ground us in you.
Gather us in, ground us in you.
Gather us in, gather us in,
Ground us, ground us in you.

Peace of Christ

Listening

Theme Conversation: The Flashlight

Children's Song: Like a Rock

The Story: Luke 15:1-32

Reader:

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

3 So he told them this parable: 4 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8 'Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost." 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother

11 Then Jesus said, 'There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me." So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and travelled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, "How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of

hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.'" 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." 22 But the father said to his slaves, "Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!" And they began to celebrate.

25 'Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, "Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound." 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, "Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!" 31 Then the father said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

Song for Reflection: Knox Choir "Draw Me Near the Cross"

Words Fanny Crosby Music William Doane arr. Patti Drennan

Sermon: Always Known

Responding

Offering of Thanksgiving

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." – Nelson Mandela

Offertory Music: St. Paul's Choir "My Shepherd Will Supply My Need" By Victor C. Johnson

Offertory Response VU#537 "Your Work, O God"

Your work, O God, needs many hands
to help you everywhere,
and some there are who cannot serve
unless our gifts we share.
Because we love you and your work,
our offering now we make:
be pleased to use it as your own,
we ask for Jesus' sake.

Celebrations and Concerns

Prayers of the People Reader:

Loving God,
we thank you for the journey of our lives,
and with its moments of joy and celebration.
In the quiet of this place, in a moment of silence
we offer you our own celebrations. ...

As we give thanks for the joy in our life, we also give to you the challenges we face
We remember especially the people and concerns
that have been recorded on our prayer lists.
In the quiet of this place, in a moment of silence
we offer you the prayers of our hearts. ...

God of steadfast love,
Imagination of the ages:
you offer to all that world where
 all thirst is quenched,
 all the hungry are fed,
 all strangers become family.

Jesus, friend of the poor,
Brainstormer of the kingdom:
you dare to envision that world
where we do not waste a single person,
 but offer hope to those in despair,
 bring light into every shadow,
 embrace the lonely and broken.

Spirit of discernment,
Artist of our lives;
you inspire us not to toss aside
any of the gifts of God, but
 to offer peace to angry hearts,
 to share joy with mourners,
 to welcome those whose ways are not ours.

God in Community, Holy in One,
continue to nurture us with steadfast grace,
even as we pray, saying,

We pray to the one who loves us as a mother, who is 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,
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 and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.

(Adapted from Lectionary Liturgies by Thom Shuman)

Going Forth

Song for the Journey: VU574 Come Let Us Sing of a Wonderful Love

Extinguishing of the Candles

Blessing

Closing: #214 May God's Sheltering Wings

May God's sheltering wings, his gathering wings protect you.
May God's nurturing arms, her cradling arms sustain you,
And hold you in his love, and hold you in her love.

Postlude (Played in each church after the Livestream ends)

Beyond Sunday: Lessons From My Cat

I am not a "cat person" or a "dog person." I am simply on the side of whichever animal is living at my house. Right now, it is a cat named, "Buffy the Cat Toy Slayer." She is kind of a delicate thing, and this hasn't been a good week for her. When animals are sick, or sick of us, one strategy they have is to hide. Sometimes Buffy does this when someone has held the outside door open too long. Suddenly there is a lot of running around trying to find her. Is she inside? Did she get out?

The thing is, we often don't find her. She finds us. At some point she appears in the hallway, sitting primly, looking at us like we have lost our minds, and we imagine a thought bubble saying, 'Why are you so frantic, I've been here the whole time.'

That happens to me a lot. More than I am comfortable with really. I run around and around and around... and then... there it is... the answer... and unlike my cat, it was there the whole time.

When you get lost in the woods the advice is to STOP (Stop, Think, Observe, Plan).

Being quiet. Being still. Thinking. Pondering.

These are hard things in our ALWAYS BE (closing, busy, insert action word here) culture. Lent is a chance for us to be deliberate. To check and see if we are feeling a bit lost. Then STOP. Breathe. And see if the answer is there. Looking at us. Like it has been there the whole time.

Blessings of Peace and Quiet
Rev Kirsty